

Community, Nationalism, and Soccer in America's Heartland

Globalization and Postville, IA

by

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## ABSTRACT

On May 12, 2009, hundreds of Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) raided Agriprocessors, a meat packing plant in the sleepy town of Postville, Iowa, and arrested 389 workers. These workers, primarily Spanish speaking immigrants from Guatemala and Mexico, were charged with felony aggravated identity theft. This criminalization of immigration is a critical point in immigration policy in the United States, representing a ritual performance of the exclusion of immigrants from American society. In stark juxtaposition to the raid itself, the community of Postville was working to welcome the very immigrants that were targeted by ICE. In attempts at inclusion, Postville had created an adult soccer league that provided a sense of community and identity for immigrants. Using the classic anthropological method of ethnography, this research draws on extensive time immersed in the community of Postville to conduct a qualitative case study of the day-to-day meanings of immigration in the United States. This dissertation examines the adult soccer league and the ICE raid as examples of cultural performances of inclusion and exclusion by using anthropological concepts of nation, sport, and performance. Performance is used to mark national identity in both instances—a shifting, hybrid ‘transnational’ identity in the case of the immigrants playing in the soccer league—and a clearly delineated ‘American’ identity in the case of the ICE raid. Moreover, national identity is tied to other aspects of identity, such as gender. As the performances create national ‘imagined communities,’ they also gender their participants and nations themselves. Ultimately this reveals the way that immigration itself is gendered,

and the way in which American immigration policy is designed to promote an American national identity. These efforts are not only to the detriment of immigrants in the United States as laborers but also to the communities with jobs that draw these workers. The case study of Postville provides a lens to examine the meanings of immigration policy from the ground up and in the lives of those it impacts most—immigrants and the communities in which they reside.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Postville, Iowa, the ICE Immigration Raid and Aftermath ..	4
Research Method and Theory .....	7
Data Collection and Methodology .....	8
Data Analysis and the Cultural Performance Analysis	
Spheres (CPAS) Method.....	12
Dissertation Framework .....	17
2 THE ETHNOGRAPHER (SPHERE E) AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL	
THEORIES .....	19
Nationalism.....	21
The Modernists .....	23
Vernacular Nationalism .....	26
The Global System and Ethnography .....	28
Sport and Anthropology.....	29
A History of Neglect.....	30
From Tylor to TASP .....	32
The Underlying Assumptions .....	35
Classification Dilemma.....	35
Competition.....	37

CHAPTER	Page
Post TASP .....	41
Active Audiences .....	41
Violence and Sports .....	42
Sports and Media .....	43
Globalization.....	44
Nationalism.....	45
Performance .....	46
Conclusion .....	50
<b>3 SPHERE C &amp; NARRATIVES .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Home of the World.....	56
Slaughterhouse Blues .....	58
The Methods of Killing.....	59
The Ethics of Killing.....	60
If You Build It, They Will Come.....	62
Culture Clash .....	64
Inclusion: Helping Services of Northeast Iowa .....	65
Exclusion: ICE and Homeland Security .....	70
Inclusion: Local Critics of the Raid .....	75
Elizabeth’s Emails .....	75
abUSed: The Postville Raid .....	76
The Postville Project.....	78

CHAPTER	Page
Project Jubilee.....	79
Local Governments.....	80
Conclusions.....	82
4 SPHERE I & PUSH/PULL.....	84
Macro: Socioeconomic Push and Pull.....	86
Push: Green Revolution and Free Trade.....	87
Green Revolution.....	87
Free Trade Agreements: NAFTA and CAFTA ....	88
Pull: Meat Packing Industry and Cheap Labor.....	91
“Micro”: The Ethnographic Experience of Push and Pull.....	94
Push/Pull Performance: Teatro Indocumentado.....	95
Postville as ‘Pull’ and ‘Tether’: The Script of Inclusion ..	98
Conclusions: Postville’s Performance ‘in situ’.....	101
5 SPHERE PP AND PRE- AND POST RAID PERFORMERS.....	104
Sport and Pre-Raid Primary Performers.....	106
Dueling Sports.....	106
Adult Soccer League.....	107
High School Baseball in Postville.....	111
Sport and National Identity in Anthropological Context	113
Sport and Identity Formation in Pre-Raid Postville.....	119
Sport Performance as Gendered Texts.....	122



CHAPTER	Page
ICE Raid and Post-Raid Primary Performers .....	125
Immigrant Detainees and Texts of Exclusion.....	127
Gender and Primary Performers .....	129
Feminine Texts of Exclusion .....	131
Masculine Texts of Exclusion.....	132
The Masculine Immigrant.....	135
Conclusions: (Re) Imagining the Nation .....	137
6 SPHERE A & HYBRIDITY.....	141
Postville: Foundation for Hybridity.....	143
Hasidic Judaism .....	146
Immigration.....	148
The Concept of Hybridity .....	151
Othering .....	155
Villain Complex.....	156
Conclusion: Cultural Audience and American Identity Re- Imagined .....	162
7 SPHERE P, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSIONS: THE POSTVILLE CASE STUDY .....	161
Postville as Performance: CPAS and the ICE Raid Fusion Point.....	162
Nationalism and Community .....	164
Sport, Identity Formation, and Immigration .....	166

CHAPTER	Page
Performance and “American Others” .....	168
Significance of Performance for Understanding Immigration.....	171
Inclusion and Exclusion: The Threat of Hybridity .....	172
The Hybrid Threat.....	175
Gender and Othering.....	176
Who ‘We’ Ban and the National Imagination .....	178
Structural Violence: Food Production, Immigration and Social Structure.....	178
Immigration Policy as Structural Violence.....	179
“Feeding Globalization”: Economic Structures of Violence .....	181
Food Culture .....	182
The Violence of the Slaughterhouse .....	184
Structural Violence and Daily Life .....	187
Engaged Anthropology and Immigration .....	190
REFERENCES .....	195
APPENDIX	
A HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL .....	219

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Cultural Performance Analysis Sphere .....	16

## 1 Introduction

*The story of Postville will open your eyes and shake your deepest human and patriotic convictions. It is at once an epic story of survival, hope, and humble aspirations, of triumph, defeat, and rebirth. You will see the profound personal sacrifice of dozens of simple parents, toiling to secure a dignified future for their children, tragically fall prey to a secular injustice, and yet rise as a living and enduring testament to the human spirit. This is the story of a Heartland town struggling to survive and keep together its multiethnic fabric against the arbitrary shredder in the blades of prejudice and globalization. It is the spectacle of the world's most powerful government crushing the lives of the most humble and destitute. But it is also the momentous history of a community and a nation rising together to reclaim its democratic values, its humanistic spirit, and its rightful place in the community of nations, as the last champion of liberty.*

Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas, Certified Federal Interpreter and  
Author of *Interpreting after the Largest ICE Raid in US  
History: A Personal Account* (Camayd-Freixas 2008)

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at 10 a.m., I sat in my office surrounded by stacks of papers in need of grading and working on a spreadsheet for calculating final grades. The building where my office was located in Decorah, Iowa, smelled like burnt coffee. By all accounts this was an otherwise normal day at the end of a semester. Fifteen miles away, however, at the same moment nine hundred government agents armed with assault weapons, and accompanied by helicopters and police dogs, raided a meat processing plant in a small Midwestern town. Arrest warrants were issued for six hundred ninety-seven workers at the plant. Three hundred eighty-nine were taken into custody. Even though no one resisted, those detained were linked together in groups of ten with individual five-point shackles, including handcuffs, ankle restraints, and a chain around the waist. A morning that initially had seemed normal to me quickly became the same day of a military style raid at Agriprocessors, the kosher meat processing plant in

Postville, Iowa. This raid would change the lives of the nearly two thousand residents of the town, uproot many of its citizens, drive families out of business, and forever change immigration policy in the United States. What was at the time the largest immigration raid in the history of the country, costing an estimated \$5.3 million dollars, had unfolded in the Midwest merely twenty minutes away from my own backdoor.

“Helicopters are circling around Postville,” are the first words I remember hearing about the raid. Postville is a generally a quiet place, with the exception of that particular day. Helicopters never fly over Postville, so it was rather striking when my colleague in sociology stuck his head in my office and told me of the raid. “They’re raiding the place. You should grab your tape recorder and go.” Since I could not go before handing out the final exam of the day, I searched for news on the internet. Coverage was already posting, but only confusion and speculation was being reported. Everyone knew that Postville had a large immigrant population. The legal documentation of these immigrants usually was not talked about, partially because of the polite Midwestern-way, often called “Midwestern nice.” Perhaps more importantly the residents of the town recognized the necessity of the immigrant population for the revival and continued survival of this small, Midwestern town. While the raid itself was relatively quick—lasting only about two hours, the effects took much longer to unfold.

This dissertation explores *why* the raid occurred and *what* this raid actually means for understanding immigration in the United States. Immigration is a topic

at the center of much current popular debate, and as such, the case study of Postville provides a lens through which to examine American meanings and policies surrounding immigration. This work looks at immigration on two levels: 1) the ‘local’ level—what it means for the lives and experiences of people in and around Postville, Iowa, and 2) the ‘global’ level—what it tells us about transnationalism, the global economy, and American immigration policy. The key questions I ask and answer through this research are: What does immigration policy and practice reveal about immigration in the American heartland? How does immigration policy shape the meanings and experiences of people’s everyday lives?

In order to explore these questions I use the anthropological lenses of nationalism, sport, and performance. Using anthropological concepts of nation, I explore the way that the raid was an enforced classification of national identity. Mixing the insights and challenging the assumptions of the most influential theorists of nationalism, I add perceptions and understandings from the anthropology of sports. While the theories of sport may seem a less obvious lens for viewing the events of Postville, an adult soccer league first drew my attention to this town and offers valuable lessons for understanding both nationalism and, ultimately, *why* the raid occurred at all. In addition, theories of performance recognize how the everyday functioning of Postville represents a process and a performance of nationalism situated in a particular local and global history. The raid, like the soccer league, was one part of this dynamic.

Drawing on these three lenses, I address the following questions: How does ‘nation’ shape identity, existing both in the imagination and in the reality of social experience? How does sport enable people to experience national identity, particularly in a transnational context? In what ways can a sport enable imagined and real communities, extending its meaning beyond the playing field and across borders? How can the concept of performance be used to understand nationalism, identity, and immigration—both at the level of sport and at the level of social policy? How did the soccer league as performance allow players to negotiate transnational identity prior to the raid? How is the raid itself a performance of American identity enforcement?

### **Postville, Iowa, the ICE Immigration Raid and Aftermath**

Immediately following the raid, the three hundred eighty-nine individuals who were taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) were bused to the National Cattle Congress grounds in Waterloo, Iowa, where makeshift holding cells and courtrooms had been set up in the stockyards previously used to hold livestock. Of the detainees, three hundred and six were criminally charged with false use of a Social Security number, aggravated identity theft, possession of counterfeit identification documents, and/or illegal reentry into the country. Eighteen court-appointed criminal attorney defenders, each working with seventeen clients, faced a government offered uniform Plea Agreement. The Plea stipulated that the defendants would plead guilty to “knowingly using a false Social Security number” in exchange for the more serious charge of “aggravated identity theft” being dropped; each would serve

five months in prison and be deported without a hearing. If they were to plead “not guilty,” the defendants would likely wait six to eight months in jail before a trial since they were not eligible for bail due to the immigration violations. Even if found not guilty, they would still be deported. The minimum sentence for a guilty verdict would be two years in prison. The Plea Agreement did not allow any modifications to be made based on individual circumstances.

Meanwhile back in Postville, nearly four hundred immigrants took refuge in St. Bridget’s Catholic Church for six days following the raid. Many had family members who were detained and others feared they might be targeted by future raids. At this point, almost half of the two thousand individuals residing in the town were either arrested or taking refuge.

While fear and chaos followed the raid, attention was brought to the situation through the work of community organizations. Organizations were initially formed to address immediate needs and to reunite or at least locate missing children and family members. The Hispanic Ministries based in St. Bridget's Church was probably the first responder, but as attention grew, so did the number of organizations involved. Churches held discussions, documentary viewings, marches, and prayer vigils. Local colleges hosted lectures, discussions, and forums. Personal stories were collected from those involved and sent out on email lists. The Agri Workers Relief Fund was established to help the workers affected. Food donations were accepted at the Decorah Public Library in the nearby town of Decorah, Iowa. On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, community organizations held a march and rally in Postville to focus attention on the need for immigration reform



and to show solidarity with those affected by the May raid. More than one thousand people participated in the event. Several smaller rallies, marches, and vigils were held, and this all climaxed on November 8<sup>th</sup>, when Nobel Peace Prize winner and Guatemalan human rights activist, Rigoberta Menchú visited Postville. During the events surrounding her visit, a candlelight walk to and from the Agriprocessors plant was held, and several shared their experiences of the raid. Agriprocessors did not shut down immediately after the raid, and it was shortly after this when economics forced its closure.

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, two weeks after Menchú's visit, the government of Postville began to officially get involved. The mayor presided over a meeting at City Hall of community organizations involved in the aftermath of the raid. Out of this meeting, a steering committee was formed to direct relief efforts, under the name *Postville Response Coalition*. Three days later, the Postville City Council passed Resolution #1039 stating that "the City of Postville has suffered from an economic and humanitarian disaster occurring throughout the summer and fall of 2008." This implemented a state of emergency in the city. Postville was officially declared a town of humanitarian and economic disaster. Federal and state funds were made available to assist with those affected by the raid (which had been funded by federal funds). Several months later, the facility that had once been Agriprocessors was bought and remade by a Canadian company – continuing the global circulation of capital.

Today, the impact of the raid is felt on a daily basis. Postville has lost around forty percent of its population and many of the stores have closed. A once

vibrant Main Street is now littered with ‘Going out of business’ signs and already boarded up buildings. A town that had been revitalized by the presence of immigrants was devastated by the raid. It is in this devastation where I explore the conflicting agendas of the ‘community’ and ‘nation.’ The community of Postville was multinational—a *mélange* of different meanings of nationalism and national identities. Through the raid and the prosecution of the detainees, the United States government stepped in to enforce both nation and national identity. The Postville that existed prior to the raid became a casualty of this enforcement.

### **Research Method and Theory**

The uniqueness of anthropology lies in its commitment to a tradition of field-based research, the source of our ethnographic description. From that social and cultural description, we derive theories of human behavior and gain perspectives on human understanding. Ethnography, while grounded in the specific, refers to the general and does so in a dialectical fashion (Kemper and Royce 2002: xiii).

Kemper and Royce capture the essential framework I utilize to better understand the meanings of immigration in both the context of Postville specifically and in American culture more generally. My research method relies on grounded fieldwork focusing on a case study of one community and the individuals within it, yet in doing so draws out theories about essentials of humanity: how identities are formed around nations and communities, how and why humans include and exclude, and how cultural perceptions shape human experience. Data was gathered through participant observation and analyzed through the ethnographer’s lens in order to understand Postville as a site of the intersection of local and global. Hence, this dissertation follows the unique

tradition of anthropology by documenting people's experiences and the events in Postville through fieldwork.

Through a comprehensive description of this social context, and by drawing on anthropological theories of nationalism, sport and performance, I argue that Postville is a case study of the performance of national identities, exhibited both in the soccer league at the local level and in the raid at the national/global level. In addressing this argument I am able to illustrate the dialectic of ethnography Kemper and Royce refer to above. The specific experiences in Postville are used to make sense of the meanings of human behavior surrounding immigration and belonging, yet concepts such as identity and nationalism are also used to better understanding ethnographic specifics of Postville. This commitment to the discipline's tradition of the dialectical nature of ethnography grounds this dissertation.

My methods and approach to data analysis reflect this. Postville is a unique and fascinating means by which to explore this dialectic because of the unique intersection of the local and global that occurred through the raid.

#### Data Collection and Methodology

I had not initially expected to be writing a dissertation about Postville. To some extent, the topic chose me. I first went to Postville in the summer of 2001. My wife and I had just moved from Phoenix, Arizona, with a population of around one and a half million to Decorah, Iowa, with a population of around ten thousand. I'd never been to the Midwest nor had I ever lived in a small town. Decorah is about twenty minutes away from Postville, and since we were coming

from the cuisines of Phoenix, many of the Decorah residents were excited to tell us about the Mexican restaurant that had just opened in Postville, a sign of the immigration and changes that the town was experiencing. When it was discovered that I was interested in sports and had previously studied Mexican professional wrestling, many were eager to tell me about an adult soccer league made up of immigrant workers in Postville. The restaurant was new; the league was in its second season. It was rightly assumed that I would be interested in both. In May of that summer, I went for dinner and stayed for a soccer game. Since my primary research interest lied in the intersection of sport and nationalism, the adult soccer league in Postville seemed like a perfect fit. I had begun conducting ethnographic research of the soccer league when ICE agents raided the primary job provider in the town. Before the raid, soccer matches were held on many Friday and Saturday nights during the summer. I attended games, went to organizational meetings, and talked to players. After the ICE raid, the league was disbanded. My attention shifted to rallies, community meetings, and public forums.

A case study design comes closest to approximating the research strategy used for this dissertation. The design was used to approximate behavior of real actors in a particular context in all its complexity, and my objectives in this design were to focus on realism and meaning and to collect as much data as possible through participant observation. In participant observation the researcher becomes a participant in the social event or group under study. Gans (1976) argued that participant observation is a somewhat generic term for a variety of

observational methods in which the researcher develops more than a purely research relationship with the people being studied. To be more precise, Gans (1976) argued that there are variations in the participant observation method that can be described in different ways based on the relationship of the researcher to the research. The three classifications described by Gans (1976) are researcher as observer, researcher as a participating observer, and researcher as an observing participant.

Participant observation for this case study involved a range of methods including direct observation, informal interviews, analyses of documents and artifacts, and critical self-reflection. This is exploratory and descriptive research in which a real group was studied in its natural and particular setting. As is often the case in a case study design, it is weaker on control and representativeness, but is very strong in the depiction of the realism and naturalness of the cultural context being researched. I used all perspectives and roles explained by Gans to outline the variations in participant-observation (Gans 1976). As a researcher, I was at times primarily an observer (particularly when attending soccer games prior to the ICE raid), I participated primarily as a researcher (particularly at meetings prior to the ICE raid), and at times I temporarily abdicated my role as researcher to participate in rallies and meetings as a community member after the ICE raid. Gans's ideas are echoed by Goldberg (2005), who described how participant observation requires research to be a personal experience. Because in some instances I was a member of the community in this case study, I was also able to draw on this to enrich the research itself.

While the research design focused on a particular case study (i.e. the ‘site’ of Postville), it is not necessarily single sited research. George Marcus offered several strategies for ethnographically approaching the complexities that a transnational, global society poses. While some have intensively focused on a single site within the world system context, Marcus (1998) examined how one could move away from the conventional single site “to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space” (79). The strategy that he offered is through multi-sited research. He argued this research is:

designed around chains, paths, threads, connections, and juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among the sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (Marcus 1998: 90).

The events of Postville are not limited to a single site. The connections and juxtapositions extend well beyond town limits and boundaries of the nation. Furthermore, research into sports offers a good case for using Marcus’s model. The soccer league that was primarily composed of immigrant workers at the plant was formed in an effort to welcome immigration into the rural Midwestern town. One of the newspapers for Eastern Iowa demonstrated the power of this sport in this context, proclaiming that “soccer is the international language among the residents of Postville” (Fernandez 2003). This is obviously in contrast to the desires of ICE and Homeland Security surrounding immigration. The raid demonstrates that immigrants are not welcome. As a result, the soccer league serves as a window into society in which organizers attempted to build a community inclusive of immigrants on a local level but national immigration

policies and strategies (such as the raid) attempted to build a community of exclusion. The juxtaposition of the soccer league and the ICE raid demonstrates that nationalism is not one-dimensional, something argued by many of the most influential authors regarding nationalism. The league and raid also show the significance of Marcus' ideas regarding multi-sited ethnography. These serve as "chains, paths, threads, connections" (Marcus 1998: 90) for understanding the complexities of identity and immigration in a transnational context.

#### Data Analysis and the Cultural Performance Analysis Spheres (CPAS) Method

The framework for my data analysis, and hence the structure and organization of the dissertation, come from a method that emerges from theories of performance: the Cultural Performance Analysis Spheres (CPAS) Method. The CPAS method was created by anthropologists Valentine and Matsumoto as an "interlinked method for conducting descriptive analysis of performance-centered cultural events" (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 68). Valentine articulates her motivation in the creation of CPAS, which also helps to demonstrate the distinct advantages for using this method:

Through the years, I've consulted numerous significant works in folklore, anthropology, and ethnography for methods that can help one organize the swirling experience of immersing oneself in a cultural performance... These and others have been helpful to me in developing CPAS as a contemporary, multilayered method for a performance ethnographer to use in understanding public-cultural performances. CPAS... is designed to encourage new thinking about framing performance ethnographically and to help researchers interpret, explain, reflect on, and communicate the contextual nature of cultural performances (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 69).

This method excels at allowing an anthropologist to reveal the intricacies, complexities, and context of performance, and was designed to do so using an ethnographer's lens, in other words using the performance to make sense of the culture and vice-versa. For this dissertation, I consider the everyday of Postville, Iowa, to be a performance of cultural significance. In order to deal with the 'scale' of this performance, the CPAS method becomes especially useful. While a cultural performance, it is not made up of a single event. Within the literature, performance was initially only used to refer to single events such as plays, concerts, lectures, prayers, ceremonies, festivals, etc. In this dissertation, however, I refer to performance as a *process* including multiple events. The CPAS method allows me to treat the process as the unit of analysis rather than any single event, allowing me to deal with the complexities of the social context.

The CPAS method is a process oriented method for conducting descriptive analysis of performance-centered cultural events and is designed to give linear form when there is simultaneous perception of multiple phenomena. The CPAS method models cultural performances as six interwoven spheres that compose the performance with three concentric circles enclosing three interlocking rings (see figure 1). Each is considered a domain of the overall cultural performance, and although analytically divisible, each domain permeates all other domains. The boundaries of the model are fluid and fuzzy. Thus, analysis of one domain requires analysis of all the others since every aspect in each sphere influences every other aspect. The principle domains in the CPAS method are Sphere E: Ethnographer, Sphere C: Cultural Context, Sphere I: Performance In Situ, Sphere



A: Audience, Sphere PP: Primary Performers, and Sphere P The Performance.

All domains overlap at a fusion point at the center of the conceptualization.

The CPAS method proves extraordinarily useful in anthropological analysis, but unfortunately has received limited use in the literature. However, the developers successfully used the method to describe and analyze the Yaqui Easter ceremonies in Guadalupe, Arizona (Valentine 2002), and the New Years' celebrations of Chinatown in San Francisco (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001). In both cases, the method successfully allowed the authors to textually represent a "dynamic amalgamation," (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 84) to recognize the context of the performance, and to foreground the ethnographer. By using the terminology and conceptualizations of cultural performance focused studies, the CPAS method recognizes the performer, the audience, and the text. The CPAS method also recognizes the everyday and the significance of the encircling ethnographer, cultural context, and ambiance.

I also draw on their use of CPAS for analysis since it proves particularly useful for making sense of the 'multi-sited' nature of research dealing with events of transnational significance, drawing again on Marcus's notions of multisited ethnography described above (Marcus 1998: 90). The treatment of performance as a process also allows for simultaneously examining the interactions of performers, audiences, and the performance, as well as giving me the ability to consider the place of these interactions within a larger sphere surrounding the event.

The soccer league in Postville is a part of, connected to, influenced by, and influences the other parts of the process/system. The ICE raid occurred at what in the CPAS model is known as a ‘fusion point’ at a historically specific moment that required all parts to come together. The CPAS method allows me to ‘see’ the multiple factors that gave rise to the ICE raid and were part of the adult soccer league. As an example, the raid occurred at a kosher meat processing facility in Postville where the slaughter and processing of animals produces a plethora of sounds and smells, and the mix is entangled in faceless abstractions of global economics and politics. Rather than seeing the performance as simply what is occurring at the slaughterhouse, or during the raid, applying the CPAS method allows me to treat the whole of these as the performance—examining each of these elements and bringing clearer understanding to the complex amalgamation.

The spheres can be analytically separated but are interwoven and simultaneously functioning. One part of this performance is the slaughtering and processing of animals, but when taken all together, the events that led to the ICE raid of Agriprocessors is clearer. Another way to explain this using the CPAS terminology is that each sphere permeates all others to a greater or lesser extent and influences the emergence of the cultural performance. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and the cultural performance emerges from the fluid boundaries of these spheres. In this way, the CPAS method allows me to better understand why the raid occurred and its meaning on the local, national, and global levels. For this dissertation, I will use the CPAS method to describe and analyze Postville before, after, and during the ICE raid at Agriprocessors. The

method will help reveal the ‘dynamic amalgamation’ that is the performance of the day to day in Postville, with the ICE raid and the adult soccer league at the performance center, and ultimately help to better understand not only this context but speak to issues of nationalism, globalization, and immigration more generally.

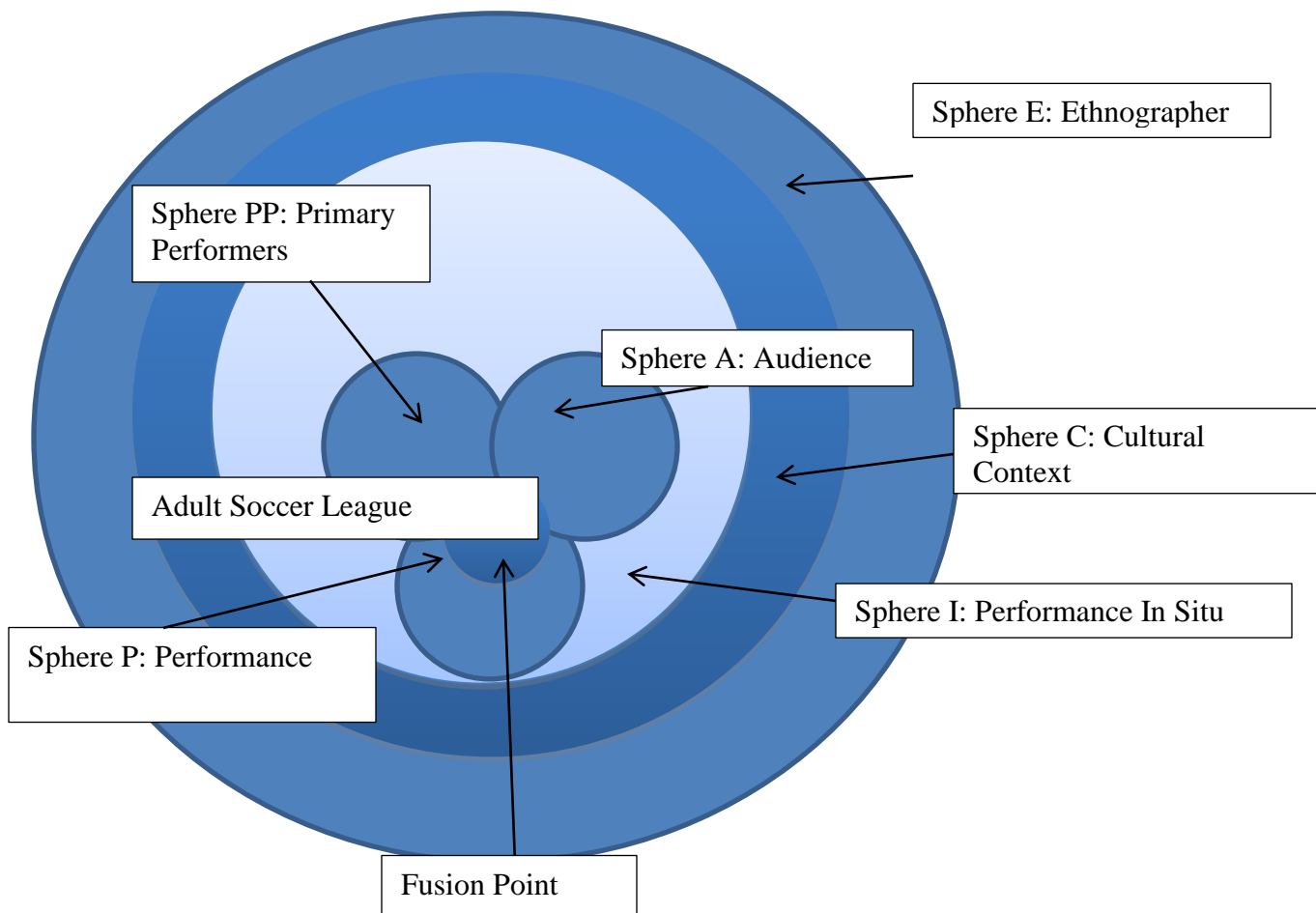


Figure 1. Cultural Performance Analysis Spheres.

## Dissertation Framework

In the chapters that follow, I document each of the spheres of Postville. In Chapter 2, I examine Sphere E: Ethnographer. My experience with sport, nationalism, and performance, are significant to my understanding of Postville, and the review of anthropological literature is important to provide the context for my understanding of the material. In Chapter 3, I address the next level in the CPAS conceptualization: cultural contexts. I circle closer to the events and examine these by considering some of the narratives that frame Postville and how these narratives may compete with one another to represent the nation and the community. In Chapter 4, I address sphere I, the performance in situ, which includes the push and pull factors of immigration itself and speaks to the global and transnational context of this performance. The physical location and the particular time at which it occurred are unique and significant to understanding the events. After describing ethnographer, cultural contexts, and Performance in Situ, I move toward the center of the CPAS diagram in Chapter 5. The information in this domain, Sphere PP, is concentrated on the principal actors in the performance. The adult soccer league and the formation of identity through sports and social structures will be examined in this chapter. Chapter 6 will consider Sphere A and the audience members as spectators. I discuss ideas of hybridity and enforced classification of identity, particularly as it relates to nationalism, and use the history of Postville to help address this more clearly. Chapter 7 addresses the semiotic texts of the performance, the focus of Sphere P. The semiotic texts are what is said or done that is symbolically significant to the

participants. For this chapter, I consider cultural ecology and the structure of violence behind the slaughterhouse. Finally, the CPAS method requires a return to that of the ethnographer and sphere E. In chapter 7, I do this by highlighting the fusion point at which all spheres overlap. I conclude by reviewing the performance complex that I presented in the previous chapters and by returning to the primary goal of the dissertation: understanding why the raid occurred and articulating what this reveals about immigration, about the global context in which we reside, and indeed about anthropology itself.

## **2 The Ethnographer (Sphere E) and Anthropological Theories**

The CPAS method that frames the structure of this dissertation begins with sphere E, what Valentine and Matsumoto (2001) have called the outermost domain, which carries both information about the ethnographic researcher and the relevant prior research. For them, this sphere is also the “one most removed from the dynamic center of the performance event” (72). So why is it relevant here?

Valentine and Matsumoto (2001) answer this, saying:

When ethnographers are present at cultural performances, they (and the experience, education and memories that brought them to this point) become part of the performance and influence perceptions of it (72).

The authors believe that it is crucial to know from the beginning what has influenced the researcher; these influences eventually formulates how research is conceptualized and understood. In a sense, sphere E is a key for unlocking the theoretical logic behind an analysis. Hence, what follows here is a review of the literature, of “the significant previous research on the topic that has influenced” (73) my thinking on the performance of Postville. As Goldberg (2005) argued, ethnography is a personal experience, perhaps even art (2005). These ideas reinforce Valentine and Matsumoto’s inclusion of sphere E since ethnography, like good art, requires the incorporation of personal experiences into the creation. Based on these two notions of ethnography and the CPAS method for describing and analyzing performance, the insights and inspirations that the ethnographer experienced through education are recognized as influential in my perceptions and understandings.

These theoretical underpinnings of my research are organized around three primary lenses that I use to unpack the meanings of Postville, as described in chapter 1: nationalism, sport, and performance. Not only does this chapter allow for the review of the important literature, it successfully helps provide the understanding of how I came to be where I am now in my own understanding of the material. Valentine and Matsumoto see this—“how past experiences form present views” (78) as vital for sphere E, for the CPAS method itself, and indeed for making sense of any anthropological research. I review both the insights the anthropological literature has provided and what I see as some of the ‘gaps’ or ‘shortcomings’ in the literature. Yet while there may be some shortcomings, the reason I use all three lenses in my analysis is that taken together they offer an excellent theoretical range for understanding Postville.

Initially I was drawn to Postville because of my own anthropological interest in sport in particular. Drawing on concepts of nationalism, I became interested in the relationship of sport audiences and society. Studies of nationalism offer some excellent insights for Postville, and pairing sport and nationalism allows me to consider this relationship. The goals, objectives, and assumptions guiding this dissertation are most influenced by the literature in these two realms of anthropology. Performance adds a layer of depth in my analysis, filling some of the gaps left by the literature on nationalism. By considering performance academically, I have also been able to best use the ‘case study’ approach to Postville. Not only does Postville become an ethnographic case study for considering immigration and the nation, two key performances—the adult

soccer league and the ICE raid—become case studies to make sense of Postville. Below I review the literature for each of these three academic realms and in the conclusion review their value to my analysis of Postville.

## **Nationalism**

I argue that the ICE raid and the performance of Postville more generally are about classification of national identity. Hence understanding the concept of ‘nation’ and its place within culture academically is vital. On the whole nationalism offers important ideas for making sense of the experience of being part of a group centered on national identity. My core inspiration for this, and perhaps one of the most useful concepts for understanding Postville is Anderson’s ‘imagined community.’ Anderson (1991) argued that nations should be considered as imagined, as limited, as sovereign, and as a community. He argued that nations have emerged as a result of social changes, specific historical forces, and changes in consciousness. Within these processes, Anderson emphasized the role of language, print, and literacy. He argued that the main causes of nationalism and the creation of an imagined community are the reduction of privileged access to particular script languages (e.g. Latin), the movement to abolish the ideas of divine rule and monarchy, as well as the emergence of the printing press under a system of capitalism, or *print-capitalism*. Print capitalism was identified as a medium for the diffusion of how people think about being members of a nation. Despite the insight, non-literate and non-intellectual consumers were neglected by the emphasis on print. Despite this limitation Anderson’s ideas are a powerful force for making sense of the experience of



national group identity, and with Postville allow a consideration of ‘nation’ beyond borders. What follows are other influential concepts of nation that have shaped my understandings of nationalism and of Postville in this global era of contested national identification.

The globalization of the contemporary world has resulted in a transformation of social geography and in an *organization of diversity* (Hannerz 1990). The organization of the diversity of the contemporary world results from the formation of communities within the global system. Nationalism is a fundamental framework for bounding communities and a significant analytical category needing further academic inquiry (e.g. Scholte 2000). The effects of oversimplified national sentiments can be seen in politicized conflicts, fundamentalist movements, ethnic violence, genocide, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism (e.g. Eller 1999). However, ethnographic inquiry suggests that nationalism may not be as coherent or one-dimensional as some of its most influential theorists on the subject have implied especially when considering where communities and nation-states meet. Investigations into sports offer a possibility for countering misuses, examining the dynamics of vernacular nationalisms, and exploring particular fashionings of identity at the intersections of community and nation-state contact zones. Theories of nationalism seem an appropriate lens for viewing the soccer league as nations contextualize the league’s formation and frame the competitions on the soccer field; for example, discussion may describe the Mexicans playing the Guatemalans in the immigrant

soccer league- even though not all of the players may be immigrants, Mexican, or Guatemalan.

### The Modernists

Four distinct theoretical orientations have often been used to encompass the development of theories of nationalism (e.g. Puri 2004). Several have argued from a *primordial* position and maintained that nationalism is intrinsic to human evolution. In responses to this position, *perennialists* have maintained that nationalism is a form of social organization and the product of cultural and historical circumstances. *Instrumentalists* have focused on the issues of power as key to understanding nationalism. Arguments from this position have stressed human manipulation and nationalism as a tool of power maximizing elites. The primordial, perennialist, and instrumentalist positions represent the earlier and more simplistic theoretical orientations for understanding and explaining nationalism, however discussions and debates from these perspectives have provided the intellectual context necessary for the emergence of the *modernist* perspectives on nationalism. Synthesizing the previous debates, modernists have argued that nationalisms are historic (rather than natural), that nationalism is a relatively recent phenomenon (rather than present throughout human existence), and that power is often reinforced through the state. The emergence of the theoretical orientations on nationalism can chronologically best be understood as four stages in which key historic events and individuals shaped the emergence of theoretical orientations (e.g. Özkirimli, 2000). These time periods include (1) the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, (2) 1918-45 post World War II, (3) from 1945 till the 1960s,

and (4) the 1980s on. During this final phase, the modernists began to emerge with the greatest influence on how nations and nationalism are conceptualized.

Many significant insights have resulted from the writings of the modernist theoretical orientation of the 1980s. Notable contributions from this perspective have recognized the nation as a community that is imagined and different than the physical state. Four notable theorists from this perspective include Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Anthony Smith, and Benedict Anderson. Gellner (1983) focused on an extension of authoritative knowledge to all denizens; Hobsbawm (1983) examined the ways that the powerful ‘invent’ traditions in order to create a sense of belonging, to legitimate power, and to transmit ideologies. Smith (1986) argued that although nationalism is a fairly recent phenomenon, nations emerge out of pre-existing groups. Anderson (1991) recognized the link between consumers and mediums of imagination by crediting mass-produced print capitalism as a vehicle for the transmission of national imagination. All were concerned with what makes and continues to make nationalism a credible set of practices and beliefs. All offer considerable insight, but there are criticisms for each.

Gellner developed a theory that held nationalism as a function and process of modernity that is driven by rational, administrative imperatives. He focused on an extension of authoritative knowledge to all denizens; “standardized... homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities...” (Gellner 1983: 55). McCrone (1998) argued that the writings of Gellner are at the heart of modern nationalism studies and “have been

central to how we understand the phenomenon [of nationalism] in the last thirty years” (64). Özkirimli (2000) argued that Gellner recognized the more cultural elements of nationalism in contrast to previous accounts of nationalism. Despite these insights, Gellner’s assertions suggest that subjects passively accept knowledge and identities, his focus was solely on high culture, and his account tends to emphasize the rational elements while neglecting the continual dynamics that may not always be rational (Edensor 2002).

Like Gellner, Hobsbawm contended that the nation is essentially a modern construct. He focused on the ways that the powerful ‘invent’ traditions “to create the illusion of primorality and continuity, to mask the fact that nations are invariably of recent vintage”(Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:2). Hobsbawm, and the contributors to his edited volume, focused on the large scale pageants and rituals devised in the nineteenth century by European elites. The purposes of these were to create a sense of belonging, to legitimate the power of institutions and ruling authorities, and to transmit ideologies of common values and beliefs. Like Gellner, Hobsbawm presented the masses as passive recipients of national agendas. In these cases, the masses were presented as powerlessly drawn together by ceremonies and unable to resist ingesting their ideological messages. Furthermore, Hobsbawm, like Gellner, failed to identify earlier cultural continuities. In addition, Hobsbawm neglected the ‘traditions’ that are grounded in everyday life.

While Smith agreed with the previously discussed authors that nationalism is a modern, cultural phenomenon, he insisted that nations have pre-modern

origins. Smith, a former student of Gellner, was critical of Hobsbawm's and Gellner's insistence on the modernity of nations. Smith (1986) argued that nations emerge out of pre-existing ethnic communities and was based on Barth's notion of ethnicity as a mode of distinguishing self from others (Barth 1969). His theory is useful for many reasons. For one, Smith's theory does not homogenize elites. However, the focus of his theory continues to be on the key role of the elites.

### Vernacular Nationalisms

While the modernist theorists rightly address many important facets of nationalism, nationalism is not as one dimensional as the most influential authors wrote. Faulty implications of their theories emerge as the masses are treated as passive recipients of national agendas, ideology is emphasized while social aspects are neglected, and ethnographic grounding is lacking to theorizations as if specific context is insignificant. In the process, vernacular engagements with the nation are neglected.

The social and ideological tension between belonging and exclusion as experienced in everyday life has notably emerged in literature on borders. While a nation is a community based on feelings of belonging, it is also defined by its geopolitical borders. The nation is not a physical thing in the sense that a state is, but the physical and conceptual borders that enclose and exclude membership are of enormous importance (e.g. Flynn 1997). Flynn (1997) examined the uses and impacts of political borders within the everyday lives of border dwellers within her examination of the Benin-Nigeria border. Issues such as economic

interdependence, the trans-border trade, and border identity arose within the everyday border experiences and transnational identities experienced. In the context of Europe, MacDonald (1997) argued that the increased permeability and weakening of political state boundaries within Europe has resulted in increased interest in defining identity (among Europeans and anthropologists alike): “as people and goods transverse them (borders) more easily...notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ become stronger” (1). Through a historical analysis, Sahlins (1991) examined the emergence of the national boundary between France and Spain, and in this analysis, recognized the active role that villagers within the French-Spanish borderland created national identity rather than having it imposed on them from the state level. When considering the US-Mexico border, the realities of nations can easily be seen surrounding issues of immigration, border security enforcement, and the issues that often arise concerning the U.S-Mexico borderlands and Greater Mexico (e.g. Alvarez 2000; Alvarez 2001; Anzaldúa 1999; Chavez 1992; Fernández-Kelly 1983; Heyman 2001; Vélez-Ibañez 1996). Ethnographic cases demonstrate that the community and its borders involve dynamics of belonging and exclusion that are two different but closely related features of the same issue.

The adult soccer league in Postville allows, and requires, that all of these aspects of nationalism be considered. Nationalism emerges from social and ideological processes, requires that non-elites be considered as agents in the social and ideological boundary making, involves issues of inclusion and exclusion, and is dynamic and historic. Furthermore, the modernists inferred that a community's

interests are subsumed under those of nation/state. This is not as simple, even as far from the border as Postville. The league is bracketed in time by the local level inclusive factors that led to its formation and the state level exclusive factors that led to the raid. Within the context of a global society, borders can simultaneously become more porous while at the same time being more securely defended as evident in Postville. Issues of national inclusion and exclusion were worked out in ways that offer challenges to the expectations of orthodox national models.

### The Global System & Ethnography

The physical and conceptual boundaries and borders of nations divide some and unite others in a situation that Malkki (1992) described as “transnational culture of nationalism.” Eric Wolf (1982) warned of falsely describing entities of the global system as distinctive and bounded objects, and warned against creating a model of the world that is like a global pool hall. He described that in doing so “...it becomes easy to (wrongly) sort the world into differently colored balls” (6). His point was that we must recognize the connections of interdependence in the world but must not essentialize and oversimplify the components of the system. Thus is the complexity of studying nationalism within the interconnected networks of the contemporary world. “The new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order” (Appadurai 1990: 296). The tensions of belonging and exclusion created by social imaginations and geopolitical borders must be recognized, and the element of time must be taken into account.

Scholars have attempted to account for the local influences of global connections in numerous ways (e.g. Appadurai 1990; Marcus 1998; Wolf 1982). Pratt (1991) examined *contact zones* or imaginary spaces "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power... as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (33). Challenging the view that globalization invariably signifies a "clash" of cultures, Tsing (2005) developed *friction* as a metaphor for the diverse and conflicting social interactions that make up our contemporary world. Friction gets in the way of the smooth operations of global power and explores abstract claims of global connections as they materially operate in the world (Yoo 2006). Tsing focused on one particular "zone of awkward engagement" (i.e. the rainforests of Indonesia), but provided a portfolio of methods to study global interconnections in the process. In the case of Postville and the adult soccer league, friction resulted as the borders of belonging clashed and the interests of the community lost to those of the state within this contact zone of awkward engagement.

### **Sport and Anthropology**

Sports are social and cultural constructions to which meanings are applied and negotiated as audiences interact with sports and sports with society. The dynamic relationships reflect, reinforce, and sometimes challenge the practices and ideologies of identity and power experienced in the everyday of cultures. The impact sports have on cultural beliefs and behaviors should not be trivialized. Through sports, cultural knowledge is expressed and learned, put into practice



through social behavior and the interpretation of this behavior, and shared systems of meanings emerge. The study of sports offers a perspective for the discipline to better envision and engage the new social and economic networks of interdependence and communication of the contemporary world. Anthropological investigations of the numerous extensions of sports beyond their literal and conceptual playing fields and into the relationships of sports, audiences, and society, offer renewed insights into more conventional concerns of culture change, socialization, and issues of identity (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, and nationalism). Despite the discipline's goal of better understanding humanity, the marginalization of sport studies continues in anthropology. Furthermore, anthropology's commitment to ethnography offers unique complements to the other disciplines that already approach sports (e.g. sociology, psychology, history, philosophy). Because sports touch so many lives, anthropology needs to examine sports more prominently as a discipline, and because of anthropology's commitment to ethnographic approaches, studies of sports need anthropology's influence in the examinations of sports.

#### A History of Neglect in Anthropology

Sports are generally included within the analytical category of "performance". Despite the discipline's attention to performance, and despite the inclusion of sports in the conceptualizations of the term, performances studies and theories remain absent in the construction of a history of the anthropology of performance (e.g. Blanchard 1995; Dyck 2000; Sands 1999). While the lack of ethnographic studies of sports significantly led to the failure of an anthropology of

sport to emerge, the absence of insights from performance studies additionally contributed to the lack of emergence. Performance has received ethnographic and theoretical attention from the discipline of anthropology and offers useful contributions to the study of sports, particularly when considering the relations of spectators to sports and sports to societies. Concerns with relationships of performances, audiences, and societies, have been major *themes in the history of* performance studies, and insights from these contributions are useful for anthropological investigations of sports. However, these insights have been neglected as a part of the emergent histories of an anthropology of sport.

A complex history of neglect and insight exists within the discipline of anthropology. Although the discipline has often disregarded sports as incidental to other issues (Blanchard 1995; Carter 2002; Miracle 2001), a rich history of useful theories, methods and practices has emerged in anthropology. Despite increasing ethnographic investigations of sports (e.g. Azoy 1982; Blanchard 1981; Jonsson 2001; Jonsson 2003; Klein 1997; Shore 1994; Shore 1996) and the discipline's historic focus on relevant performances (e.g. Beeman 1993; Carlson 1996; Hymes 1975; MacAloon 1984c; Schechner 1985; Schechner 1988; Turner 1967; Turner 1974; Turner 1982; Turner and Schechner 1986), an "Anthropology of Sport" is nonexistent as an intellectual paradigm, notwithstanding claims to the contrary (e.g. Blanchard 1995; Sands 1999). The nonexistence of an "Anthropology of Sport" is perhaps best exemplified by the lack of discipline specific journals dedicated to the study of sports and the lack of a disciplinary subsection recognized by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in

stark contrast to the numerous discipline specific journals from other social sciences (e.g. *Journal of Sports Economics*, *Sport Place: An International Journal of Sports Geography*, *The Journal of Sport History*, *The Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *The International Review for the Sociology of Sports*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *Sociology of Sport Journal* ).

#### *From Tylor to TASP*

The few histories of a purported anthropology of sport have generally identified three phases in the history of its emergence (e.g. Blanchard 1995), with later works adding to the established history without much alteration (e.g. Dyck 2000; Sands 1999). The history begins in the early stages of the discipline and climaxes with the emergence of The Anthropological Association for the Study of Play (TAASP). The stages presented are useful for establishing the presence of sport studies in anthropology and for consideration of the emergence of an anthropology of sports, but the underlying assumptions and absences are more telling of the ultimate lack of its emergence.

The early phase of the chronicled anthropology of sports witnessed the works of nineteenth and early twentieth century studies. This phase is exemplified by Edward Tylor's writings. In *The History of Games*, he examined the movements of the ball game as evidence of culture contact (Tylor 1879). Tylor discussed the role of sport studies and illustrated cultural diffusion by describing the ball game's movement throughout the Americas. In the same article, Tylor (1879) considered the significance of sports metaphors in language.

In a different article, Tylor (1896) argued that pre-Columbian contact of the old and new worlds is evident in the similarities of the ancient Hindustani game of *pachisis*, an ancient board game played with dice and counters on a cruciform board in which players attempt to be the first to reach the home square (known today as Parcheesi), and the Mexican game of *patolli*, a North American game analogous to dice. In retrospect of this phase, Tylor (1880) argued “games have... been scarcely used for the anthropological evidence they afford” (23-24).

Only occasional analyses of sports appeared in the anthropological literature during the first fifty years of the twentieth century (Blanchard 1995; Sands 1999). This time period signified the second phase of the emergence of a purported anthropology of sport and was marked by four significant publications. The collective anthropological works of Elsdon Best, Raymond Firth, Alexander Lesser, and Morris Opler have been presented as examples from this period (e.g. Blanchard 1995; Dyck 2000; Sands 1999). In 1924, Best (1924) described sports in his two volume ethnography, *The Maori*. In 1931, Firth (1930) described competitive dart throwing of older Polynesia. In 1933, Lesser (1933) examined the role of the Pawnee Ghost Dance hand game in the process of culture change. In 1944, Opler (1944) described the Jicarilla Apache ceremonial relay race in his article in the *American Anthropologist*. Opler (1944) began his account by arguing “few major ceremonials of any North American Indian tribe still remains as poorly documented as the Ceremonial Relay Race of the Jicarilla Apache” (75). Although speaking specifically of the Jicarilla Relay Race, the statement is applicable to sports in general during the first two phases.

During the third phase, from 1950s to the 1990s, several influential publications were printed that lead to the emergence of TAASP. In 1959, Robert, Arth, and Bush (1959) used the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) to cross-culturally examine the role of play and sport in societies. In 1961, Robin Fox (1961) analyzed the ways that newly learned baseball provided for the exercise of old forms of witchcraft among the Pueblo. In 1973, Clifford Geertz (1973) described and analyzed the Balinese cockfight and its relation to larger society. As a result to the growing attention, TAASP was organized in 1974, with sport considered a significant component of play and focus of the association. In 1987, the organization changed its name to The Association for the Study of Play (TASP). Blanchard (1995) argued that the organization of TAASP and the resulting TASP signaled the emergence of the anthropology of sport.

Although credited with signaling its emergence, TASP distracted anthropology's attention and a possible emergence of an anthropology of sport. While the intent of the name change may have been to increase and reflect interdisciplinary perspectives, anthropological approaches toward sports became less prominent, and underlying assumptions about sports were reinforced. Today, TASP presentations and publications are dominated by sociologists, psychologists, and those in the educational field. Out of those, a small number seem to focus on sports (e.g. McMahon, et al. 2005). Also, the limited attention to sports generally comes from more top-down theoretical perspectives and less from more ethnographically influenced bottom-up perspectives. In the process, underlying assumptions about sports implicit to etic categorization have been

reinforced. Simultaneously, the few different histories relayed mark similar studies and events in the emergence of an anthropology of sports, and each has been based on similar underlying assumptions of the category of sport.

### *The Underlying Assumptions*

The implicit assumptions embedded within studies of sports surface in the attempts to define and delimitate the analytical category “sport”. A classification dilemma of defining sports has resulted in distractions and assumptions that have diverted intellectual attention from an anthropology of sports. Distractions from ethnographic research have resulted as too much attention has been applied to constructing precise categorization, and culturally specific assumptions have become embedded in these categories. Both can be seen in the notions of competition that have dominated conceptions defining behaviors as sports. However, ethnographic research has sometimes produced results problematizing assumptions about competition and sports. While discussions of behavior definition and classification have been useful for thinking about sports, anthropology’s commitment to ethnography and attention to cultural specifics can complement the ongoing and unfinished discussions defining sport.

### *Classification dilemma*

Blanchard (1995: 29) described “a dilemma of behavior definition and classification” in distinguishing between sports, play, games, and leisure. The dilemma has resulted in numerous precise definitions of sport that have been generally guided by top-down perspectives. From the perspective of performance theory, Schechner (1988) distinguished between play, games, sports, theater, and

ritual. Distinctions in this typology were based on what he deemed certain key characteristics (i.e. time, objectives, productivity, and rules). In another typological scheme, the distinction between play and work was key to distinguishing the category of sport (Sack 1977). In what has been termed the Sack model, sport is considered in terms of its seriousness on the continuum of work (from work to play) and in terms of its degree of physical exertion (from athletic to nonathletic). Thus, behavior can be charted on a graph with work on one axis and athleticism on the other. Sports are considered more athletic and less work. In his study of modern sports, Guttman (1978) combined several classifications and presented a scheme of/for sports involving organization, competition, and physicality. Drawing from several of these typologies, Blanchard concluded that “sport, then, is a physically exertive activity that is aggressively competitive within the constraints imposed by definitions and rules” (59).

A classification dilemma of defining sports does exist but not as Blanchard argued. Martin (1999) described the dilemma, “thinking about sport seems to overwhelm or at least to complicate the terms and categories we use to comprehend it” (4). The problem does not require developing the correct typology for behavior, rather the problem results from a preoccupation with trying to develop such a typology and from the implicit assumptions that are incorporated into these typologies. First, too much time and attention has been devoted to constructing precise definitions and not enough has been directed toward the examination of cultural specifics that simultaneously may and may not

be considered sport. Less attention is needed on precise definitions and more needs to be placed on the relationships of sports and societies. Second, problematic assumptions are implicitly embedded within many of the definitions of the concept of “sport”. Furthermore, an overly false ‘need’ to classify as sport or non-sport has developed, and precisely defining sport has resulted in a preoccupation with constructing etic categories that overshadow emic cultural notions.

### Competition

Previous attempts to develop a precise typology have often focused on characteristics of sports rather than on the people who deem the behavior “sport”. Although the typologies have varied, most tend to emphasize competition as one significant characteristic. As one example that seems to summarize most others, Coakley (2001) argued that sports are considered

Institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by personal enjoyment and external reward (20).

Therefore, according to Coakley, sports generally are considered to involve notions of competition, institutionalization, physicality, and play. Along these lines, Martin (1999) considered the issue of competition, Guttman (1978) developed a classification of games that does not consider non-competitive games, and Sutton Smith (in Guttman 1978) deemed non-competitive games as pastimes rather than sports.



Ethnographic data does not always result in congruence with the conceptualizations that emphasize competition as a primary characteristic defining sport, and traditional notions of competition have been challenged by ethnographic experiences with sports. Ethnographic experiences suggest that competition is not always of central significance and is often more nuanced, more complex, or of secondary importance than western conceptualizations of sports. Several strategies have been employed by ethnographers to deal with the definitional dilemma that emerges in practice.

Spielvogel (2003) examined aerobics in Japan through an ethnographically grounded analysis. Addressing the definitional dilemma, Spielvogel (2003) argued that definitions that exclude feminine and “dance-y” sports (e.g. aerobics) are “rooted in narrow and sexist definitions of sports [that are] flawed both factually and ideologically” (54-5). She proposed a more inclusive conceptualization to emphasize athleticism over competition and explored the experiences of national identity, gender roles, and power. The proposed conceptualization of sports worked well with her ethnographic experiences and suggested not that one different definition of sports is needed but that different conceptualizations based on ethnographic experiences are needed.

Sports significantly figured into Jonsson’s examination of the social landscape of the Mien in the highlands of Thailand (in Jonsson 2001; Jonsson 2003; Jonsson 2005). He argued that participation and spectatorship of sports mobilizes ethnic identity within the national space. Within this context, the competition of the sports (and the precise classification of the behavior as “sport”)

was of secondary importance to Mien experiences and expressions of identity. Jonsson concluded that sports provide a zone of contact in which ethnic identity is constructed and negotiated in the national sphere. His presentation challenged top-down methods of classification that have often placed competition as a primary characteristic of sports. In Jonsson's case, sports were defined by the Mien not the anthropologist. Jonsson examined their use of sports in ethnic mobilization rather than critiqued the appropriateness of the "sport" label for the behavior.

In an example that demonstrated necessary alterations from an anthropologist's initial understanding based on western notions of sports and competition, Maybury-Lewis described the Xavante log race observed in his ethnographic research among the indigenous group of Brazil. Maybury-Lewis first described the race in the ethnography of his fieldwork (Maybury-Lewis 1965) and later in a reflection of the work (Maybury-Lewis 1992). In the race, two teams ran along a trail for several miles with a lead runner for each team carrying a tree trunk on his or her shoulder. Teammates ran beside the tree trunk carrier, and the log was relayed to a fresh runner as needed (and sometime before). However, Maybury-Lewis (1992) eventually concluded that the race was not about winning. In one case, he observed prior to the race that one log weighed significantly more than the other. However, the two logs were used despite his vocalized concern, and not surprisingly during the race, the team with the heavier log, started lagging farther and farther behind the team with the lighter one. To help them catch-up, members from the faster moving team, ran back to

help with the relay of the heavier log. In the end it was described as one of the most beautiful log races ever, as the finish was close and the team with the heavier log grew to include all original members, most of the other team, and spectators from neither team.

Competition has been used as a primary characteristic of sports in defining behavior, however these cases demonstrate the problematics of competition when applied to ethnographic experiences and possible strategies for dealing with this issue. Spielvogel developed an alternative academic definition of sport to better address her ethnographic experiences. Jonsson examined the specific meanings and relationships of sports to society that emerged among the Mien without getting bogged down in the academic typologies. Maybury-Lewis longitudinally demonstrated the underlying assumptions of competition that were implicitly guiding his understandings of the log race. Additionally, notions of competition as a primary characteristic of sports have been additionally challenged by ethnographic studies of professional wrestling (e.g. Campbell 1996; Figueroa 1999; Henricks 1974; Levi 1999; Mazer 1998; Mondak 1989; Morton and O'Brien 1985; Webley 1986), the Balinese cockfight (Geertz 1973), and the song duel among the Inuit (e.g. Blanchard 1995), among other cases. In each of these, culturally specific manifestations of behaviors labeled "sport" are in conflict with less grounded conceptualizations of the analytical category of "sport" and illustrate the problems with assumptions of competition. Ethnographic experiences suggest that competition is not always of central significance and should not be the basis for conceptualizing or classifying behaviors as sports.

Furthermore, Western and capitalistic nations of winning appear embedded within the classification.

### Post TASP

The discipline of anthropology has contributed little to increased interdisciplinary attention to sport studies following the emergence of TASP (Sands 1999). During this time period, individual anthropological examinations of sports have occurred and have highlighted potential contributions that an anthropological perspective offers, however these works remain marginalized from the mainstream of the discipline. An anthropology of sport subsection has yet to emerge, but when attention has focused on sports, concerns with the dynamic relationships with societies have led to a diversity of approaches to the many issues of identity. An ethnographic focus offers promise for the full emergence of an anthropology of sports and highlights the contributions offered by the discipline.

### *Active Audiences*

The active participation of audiences has been one area within the study of sports that has resulted in neglected insights (e.g. Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998; MacAloon 1984b; Redhead 1997). As one example, Crawford (2004) argued that the divisions between audiences and sporting event are never clear-cut because

It is also the consumers of cultural products, such as sporting events, who give these their meaning and social importance, through their conversations, patterns of consumption and social interaction (3).

Recognizing the dynamic reception and active engagement of fans, Crawford (2004) examined the diverse ways that sports are experienced and argued for a theory of sport fandom that takes into account the mundane contexts of everyday lives, social networks, and consumer patterns. In a study considering the experiences of fandom, Collins and Vamplew (2002) examined the connections between alcohol consumption and sport spectatorship. Collins and Vamplew (2002) constructed a cultural history based on the largely uninvestigated connections between sports and alcohol and argued that “the consumption of alcohol is almost an intrinsic part of the spectator experience” (69). In doing so, the authors examined a neglected aspect of spectators’ experiences and recognized the dynamic reception of sports that extend beyond the literal playing fields. Resulting from the sole focus on British soccer, the specifics of the history may not be representative of all sports and spectators, but the results highlighted representative “links between drinking and sports and issues such as masculinity, class and regional identity” (3). Both studies examined and shed light on issues of audiences as performers in everyday lives.

### *Violence and Sports*

Violence and sports has been a significant issue in the study of sports that has often involved the active engagement of spectators in the appropriate social, historic, and cultural contexts. As an example, soccer hooliganism, defined as the violent displays of fans devoted to specific soccer teams, has been the object of numerous of these studies (e.g. Dunning, et al. 1984; Horak 1991 ; Redhead 1997; Young 2002). Shore(1996) presented soccer hooliganism as an example of

pathological emphatic engagement. Armstrong and Young (1997) explored how soccer hooliganism has been “too easily categorized as deviant and disgraceful” (175). They used “partisan fanship” to refer to the behavior and explored the label that they argued results from more complex social relationships of authority and control. Hooliganism provides a reworking of the urban, working-class and the object of and for social control when the proper contexts are considered.

### *Sports and Media*

The audience component of the performance is further complicated and made more complex by considerations of the media and engagement/consumption of sports. Works within this trend have recognized the connection between the two, the active engagement of the audience, and the emergence of a new social phenomenon. Wenner (1998) edited a volume that examined the ways in which sport and varied forms of media interact with culture and argued “the cultural fusing of sport with communication has resulted in a new strain called *mediasport*” (xii). In one example of an examination of *mediasport*, Whannel (2000) explored audience experiences of watching sports on television and the role of televised sport in the marital relationship. Crawford (2004) discussed the uneasy fit between Rinehart’s discussion (in Rinehart 1998) of the active participation of spectators at live events and the ways that sports media constructs and directs its audience. As one example, football hooliganism is further problematized when considering media coverage and audience consumption of it. Giulianotti (1999) argued that because of the amount of media coverage that football hooliganism receives, it has a much larger readership than those directly

involved in hooligan activities. Crawford (2004) argued that football hooliganism has developed into a genre of popular entertainment as it has been the theme for newspaper and magazine articles, television shows, videos, books, films, and even a video game. Further complicating the separation of audiences and sports, several have examined audience experiences through the internet, online games, and cybersport (e.g. McDaniel and Sullivan 1998; Scherer 2007; Serazio 2006). The scope of contexts widens as actively involved audiences grow with the exponential growth of technologies.

### *Globalization*

Issues of globalization have been a major focus in studies of sports. Carter (2002) highlighted and reviewed three major thrusts within this realm. First, he presented studies that focused on the links between modern sport and colonial projects (e.g. Guttman 1996; Mangan 1986). Second, Carter identified studies that focused on the rise of global administrative bodies in the global context. Examples of this trend often focus on the Olympics (e.g. Barney, et al. 2002; Lenskyj and Burstyn 2000; MacAloon 1984a; Senn 1999). The third thrust highlighted by Carter was on the movement of athletes across geographic and political divides (e.g. Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001; Maguire and Bale 1994). In complement to the trends identified by Carter, Maguire (2000) addressed global interconnectedness and the different local manifestations of globalization as experienced through sports. Maguire (2000) focused on the local experiences during the historic phases of *sportization*, the flow of ideas and practices of sports within the global network of interdependencies. Further fruitful studies of sports

and globalization have resulted from concerns with the media and the issues of commodification. The intersection of globalization, media, and sports led Whitson (1998) to describe the new economy of professional sports and the global consumer. Describing the merging of this intersection, MacClancy (1996) argued that sports are now the third largest world industry behind oil and cars. Furthermore, several have focused on sports figures. Jackson (1999) examined the global commodification and the local manifestations and meanings of the professional basketball player Michael Jordan. In another case, Metcalf (2001) explained his work with the Upriver Malaysian Borneo people and the “disjuncture” of his research goals of better understanding the meanings of indigenous rituals and a local fascination with Hulk Hogan and U.S. professional wrestling.

### *Nationalism*

An ethnographic and theoretical seedbed for sports studies and anthropology has resulted from the relationships of sports to nations, nation making, and nationalisms. In addition to globalization and sport, Carter(2002) argued that nationalism has been the other major thrust in anthropological sports studies. Sports have functioned within the idea of imagined community as set out by Benedict Anderson (Mayall and Cronin 1998) and examinations have occurred in a variety of geographic locations (Carter 2002). Based on her work with Brazilian soccer, Lever (1995) argued that large scale organized sport represents a mechanism for building unity and allegiance to the nation. Arbena (1992) presented the roles of sports in the promotion of nationalism in Latin America and



described how sports help in the building of national loyalty, in the cultivation of national pride, and in the promotion of negative images of foreigners. Emphasis on the Olympic games further demonstrates nationalism as a focus in ethnographic examinations of sports (e.g. Dyreson 1998). While some academic studies have focused on sports and nationalism, nations have also focused on sports. Hoberman (1984) argued that nation states have often “tapped into the practices and symbolism of athletes and sports in order to aid in their legitimating discourse.” Furthermore, media extends the relationships of sports and nationalisms. For example, Rowe, McKay, and Miller (1998) examined the mythologizing role of the media in the symbolic nation-making process through sport and how “the media constitutes an uneasy junction between the terms audience and nation” (128).

### **Performance**

Anthropology has been a rich source for the discussion of performance, and performance itself has become an important tool for making sense of cultural experiences and their meanings in peoples’ daily lives. Indeed, performance is one of the three . Much of this has been a process of recognizing the relationships of audiences to performers and performances to societies. This increased awareness of the significance of the contexts in which performances occur provides the analytical framework for this dissertation.

Beeman (1993) argued that the most significant early anthropological examinations of performance were contributed by Bateson and Mead (1952) and the accompanying monographs by Jane Belo (1960; 1970). However, these

tended to reflect prevailing theoretical perspectives rather than addressing the contexts in which the performances occurred (Reed 1998). In any event, their work on trances and dances in Bali laid the foundations for considering performance a legitimate field of study (Beeman 1993). Their work would lead to what has been described as a “breakthrough into performance” (Hymes 1975) that Turner attributed the new to a shift in anthropology from structure to process (Turner and Schechner 1986). Following the breakthrough and the intellectual shift in the discipline, sociocultural anthropologists, anthropological linguists, and folklorists studied performance in various cultural institutions ranging from ritual (e.g. Turner 1974; Turner 1982; Turner and Schechner 1986), to interaction structures in language (e.g. Beeman 1986; Briggs 1988; Irving 1979; Sherzer 1987), to folkloric narrative genres (e.g. Bauman and Babcock 1984; Bauman and Sherzer 1989; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1980).

The theoretical model that has most often been applied during this history recognizes production, text, and audience as integral components of performances. Increasing attention has been placed on the interactions of the components and on the dynamics of reception (e.g. Bahr, et al. 1997; Bauman and Babcock 1984; Dorson 1972; Flores 1995; Kapferer 1983; Limón 1998; Peña 1985; Peña 1999; Rappaport 1968; Schechner 1985). Audiences are no longer viewed as passive recipients of performances but rather as actively involved in the production of performances.

Another significant contribution from anthropology’s focus on performance has resulted from explorations into the relationships of performances

and societies. In 1959, Singer (1959) coined the concept of *cultural performance* to describe and analyze how cultural content is transmitted and encapsulated in discrete events. Cultural performances are marked by a defined set of performers and audiences interacting in a finite quantity of time (Singer 1972). The relationship of performance and culture became a matter of increasing attention, and focus moved from the texts of performances (or component analysis) to the function and contexts of performances (Carlson 1996). Dorson (1972) deemed the new orientation a *contextual approach*. The assumptions and implications of cultural performance were the foundation.

The main emphasis of the concept cultural performance is that the performance is set apart from the ordinary time, place, and occasion. Although still highly influential, the set apartness can be considered a “conservative interpretation of performance’s role in culture” (Carlson 1996:16). While cultural performance emphasizes the *set-apartness* of performances in societies, Victor Turner’s work challenged this conceptualization of performance and emphasized the *in-betweenness* of performances in societies. In-betweenness emphasizes a different relationships of performances and society in which performances become sites of negotiation, particularly when the dynamic reception of the audience is taken into account. Turner (1986) argued:

This relationship is not unidirectional and ‘positive’- in the sense that the performative genre merely ‘reflects’ or ‘expresses’ the social system ... [but] is reciprocal and reflexive- in the sense that the performance is often a critique... of the social life it grows out of, an evaluation... of the way society handles history (22).

Turner's insights into the dynamic and bidirectional relationships of performances and societies are very insightful and potentially very useful. Ethnographically demonstrating Turner's theoretical insight, Richard Flores (1995) argued that performances "are not mirrors of the real but events constructed from the same historical and social processes of the everyday, aesthetically reconfiguring the world of those who produce them" (2). In his study of the folk performance of the Mexican Shepard's play of south Texas, the interrelations of social processes and cultural performances required the examinations of performed texts in their proper social, historical, and cultural context. Flores's analysis recognized the interrelations of elements of the performance and the contexts in which they occur and were/are created.

The notion of cultural performance is a useful tool that provides a frame for critical reflection on communicative processes (Bauman and Briggs 1990) whether in cultural performance as a bounded event or in the interactions of daily life. Performance of the self in everyday interactions is theorized as a means of constructing and reproducing identity. Goffman (1959 #462) defined performance broadly, as any public activity that influences other people. Goffman extended performance to everyday interaction. Thus, the politics of identity can be conceptualized as emergent from the performance of the self and the texts of everyday in context. Along these lines, Royce (1982) explored the performance of ethnic identity; Butler (1988) developed the notion of the performativity of gender. Furthermore, the ethnographic encounter between

anthropologist and subject has also been examined as a performance (e.g. Keane 1995).

## **Conclusion**

While an adult soccer league first drew me to Postville, the literature on sport alone is not enough to make sense of this community. To do this, my conceptual toolkit draws on three realms of literature: nationalism, sport, and performance. In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature in each of these areas to provide a context for understanding each anthropologically. Through this examination, I have also framed sphere E by laying out “the significant previous research on the topic that has influenced” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 73) my research and this dissertation. Taken all together, these three realms can (and have) influenced each other and my interpretations of Postville. Each makes an important contribution to understanding why the ICE raid occurred and the meanings of the events of Postville.

The literature on nationalism is in many ways the foundation of this dissertation. Anderson (1991) in particular has served as one of the most influential theorists in my understanding of Postville. His sense of communities being ‘imagined’ has allowed me to think of a national identity that could exist beyond national borders. Given the transnational nature of immigration, and of those working in slaughterhouses in Postville, this becomes a powerful way to understand the way people can feel ‘included’ and ‘excluded’ from the nation, depending on the context. Specifically in Postville, communities become

imagined by either including immigrants, such as through the adult soccer league, or excluding them, such as with the ICE raid.

Yet the focus in the literature on the imagination and the ideology of nationalism has also meant that some of the social aspects of the nation, such as the practices associated with nationalism, or the active role that people themselves play in creating national identity through their actions, have been somewhat neglected. In *Postville*, I look at the way the community actively builds a type of transnational identity from the 'bottom up,' something that some of the theories of nationalism cannot account for. To help fill in some of the gaps left by these theorists, the literature on both sport and performance become especially valuable. When these are married, they provide the most complete picture for ensuring a holistic analysis of the *Postville* context. Theories on sport and performance consider the social, especially the role that the actions of people within a community take on shaping identity. Jonsson's (2003) research on the way in which sports allow for the mobilization of ethnicity among the Mien is an excellent illustration of this. These concepts are crucial to an understanding of *Postville*, where the adult soccer league is used as an expression of an inclusive national identity.

Unfortunately, sport has historically been neglected by the discipline, as the review of literature notes. The literature on sport has also historically tended to focus too much on the sport itself, without a consideration of the context in which it is occurring. Examples of this include such ethnographically rich cases of Opler's (1944) research on the Jicarilla relay race, which does not take into

account the reservation system in the United States, and Geertz's (1973) seminal work on the Balinese cockfight that does not take into account the national context that allowed and required the cockfight. While more recent research has started to take this into consideration, this is a gap in the literature on sport. However drawing on theories of performance helps to address this gap. Performance literature has been quite concerned with context, represented well in the development of concepts of 'cultural performance.'

Like the literature on sport, the concepts from literature and theory on performance has been crucial in addressing some of the shortcomings of nationalism by focusing on the social and the everyday, something set in motion by authors like Goffman (1959) in particular. Unlike the study of sport, performance has been a recognized part of the discipline of anthropology and there is a wealth of literature to draw from. Because of this, adding a layer of performance to thinking about sport also helps to advance sport literature itself. In other words, performance becomes a valuable theoretical tool to understand sport anthropologically. Applying theories of performance to Postville recognize how the everyday functioning of the community represents a process and a performance of nationalism situated in a particular local and global history. The raid, like the soccer league, was one part of this dynamic.

Understanding Postville is in many ways about thinking beyond borders. Nationalism is often used as a framework for collective solidarity in the interconnections of contemporary globalization as cultures of the contemporary world have been brought together by new communication technologies,

international businesses, and world-wide environmental problems. Considerable attention has rightly focused on nationalism, however only a relative few have examined the “dynamic, ephemeral and grounded ways in which the nation is experienced and understood through popular culture” (Edensor 2002:vi).

While many other disciplines have grasped the opportunity to investigate sports within the global society, anthropology has remained relatively silent in its treatment of sports (Blanchard 1995; Carter 2002; Miracle 2001). Despite notable exceptions that have taken advantage of the discipline’s rich history of useful research methods, analytical techniques, and theoretical insights (e.g. Azoy 1982; Jonsson 2003; Klein 1991; Klein 1997; Shore 1996), anthropological investigations have often only treated sports with “description [that] is brief and more or less incidental to other issues... [and] not as something to be studied in and of itself” (Blanchard 1995: 2). This dissertation addresses this void by exploring the numerous extensions of sports beyond their literal and conceptual playing fields and examining the ways that the extensions are used in the construction of national communities.



### 3 Sphere C & Narratives

As you drive into Postville, Iowa, a sign welcomes you to “Postville: Home of the World.” Surrounding the blinking red light that represents the four-way stop on Main Street (there are no stoplights in the town), you will see the first and largest Mexican Restaurant, *Sabor Latino*, along with a variety of businesses, including the Norwegian inspired gift shop *Ole and Lena’s Antiques and Collectibles*, the laundromat with the Spanish name *La Lavanderia*, the Jewish *Hershal’s Deli*, and the aptly named *Corner Bar*. Not even a mile away at the literal and figurative center of Postville one will find what was until recently the largest employer in Northeast Iowa, Agriprocessors, Inc., a kosher meat processing facility. The scene is uniquely Postville by its location and context, but it is not necessarily unusual. Small towns across the United States—historically particularly the Midwest—have been dealing with the demographic changes and multi-cultural contexts that emerge from the influx of laborers to meat processing plants. However one event makes Postville particularly unique, and this chapter addresses that event—the ICE raid—and the specific social context that will help understand why the raid occurred and its meaning within the community and beyond.

This chapter is framed around the next level of the CPAS model—cultural contexts (see figure 1). After considering the domain of the ethnographer in the previous chapter, the domain of this chapter circles closer to the event and considers the cultural context or sphere C in the CPAS model described in the first chapter. According to Valentine and Matsumoto cultural contexts “are filled

with interlocking features that give meaning to the lives, and influence the behaviors, of individuals, families...groups” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001:73). Sphere C essentially acts as the “map of reality” for understanding cultural worldviews and provides a framework by which the anthropologist can make sense of cultural performances. This chapter lays out the virtual ethnographic map of Postville through the exploration of Sphere C and the competing cultural narratives that exist in the context. Here I use the term ‘narratives’ to help capture the multiple voices represented within this context. These narratives are by no means exhaustive—certainly there are voices and cultural concerns I am not capturing—but they are the central narratives for understanding immigration in Postville, the ICE raid, and the value of community and identity as it relates to the adult soccer league in the town. I organize the chapter into three themes: 1) Home of the World, 2) Slaughterhouse Blues, and 3) If You Build it, They Will Come. Within these three themes are multiple voices, and hence I address these by examining the narratives that emerge from these voices.

The first theme, *Home of the World*, is one of the most significant for framing Postville as the odd multicultural pastiche I describe in the first paragraph. *Slaughterhouse Blues*, the second theme, captures that there were narratives that emerged around the meat-processing plant—some of which were not even narratives that came from within Postville itself. This theme explores legal issues surrounding the business of animal slaughter and the uniqueness of Agriprocessors as a kosher slaughterhouse. The final theme of *If You Build it, They will Come* focuses on the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of Postville—pre- and post-

raid—and hence is the theme containing the most ‘voices’ or narratives within it. It is within this theme that one will also find the most *competing* voices, or those narratives which often had goals in conflict with one another.

There is no single, absolute cultural context of any event. Any is going to be multivocal, polysemantic, and relative to time. The cultural context of Postville is no exception. The narratives themes I use frame the significance of events in Postville before, after, and during the immigration raid. Each theme provides a structure for better understanding the everyday life of Postville and offers different means of understanding decline and revival in the American heartland. Although they do not come together for a simple fit, taken together, they provide a cultural context for the everyday happenings of Postville and allow me to construct sphere C in the CPAS model. Each ‘voice’ addressed within the chapter draws the reader one step closer to understanding why the raid occurred and its significant implications.

### **Home of the World**

As the ‘home of the world’ I describe above, Postville contains people and businesses representing a unique Midwestern brand of diversity. If one drove through Postville in 1990, it might have been confused with a Norman Rockwell-esque, all-white small town. Yet it had also been losing population for two decades, in particular losing its younger residents to more urban areas, and the overall population had dropped below fifteen hundred residents. That year, however, was also the year that a defunct beef and poultry meat processing plant was refurbished and reopened in Postville as Agriprocessors, Inc., a kosher meat

processing facility that would eventually become the largest employer in Northeast Iowa. For the next two decades, immigrants began arriving to fill and support the plant's seemingly never ending supply of jobs. By the year 2000, Postville was the fastest growing city in Iowa, and the city's population had increased sixty-four percent to around twenty-three hundred. The growth rate was about ten times that of the rate for the rest of the predominately rural state. Before the raid, unofficial estimates placed the population closer to twenty-six hundred, and it is estimated that about one-quarter of this population was Latino, Spanish-speaking, and predominately from Guatemala and Mexico.

While most of the state was in decline, and small towns all over the Midwest were gradually losing their population and their livelihood, Postville was unusual in its growth and its economic turnaround. There were jobs to be had, housing was in demand, and businesses were growing. The formerly all-white town was faced with new types of diversity, both ethnic and religious, as the kosher facility brought people who were Jewish and then Eastern European, Mexican, and Central American immigrants. In the course of a decade, Postville went from a sleepy Midwestern town where 'diversity' referred to whether someone was of German or Norwegian descent to a hub for immigration, church services in multiple languages, and the 'American Dream.'

The population explosion following the slaughter house re-opening brought with it rapid economic, demographic, and cultural changes. It is these changes that the theme *Home of the World* captures. I will explore the factors related to these changes in later chapters, but the theme is important for framing

the entirety of Postville and essential for understanding the multivocal performance of this context.

### **Slaughterhouse Blues**

At the time of the ICE raid, the meat processing plant in Postville operated six days a week and processed more than one-hundred million dollars' worth of livestock a year. Agriprocessors, Inc., the company that ran the meat processing plant at the time employed around eight hundred people in the town with a population of around twenty-six hundred people. Not surprisingly, the slaughterhouse was the center of many of the competing narratives in Postville. These narratives were simultaneously critical and supportive of the events in Postville. These came from multiple sources, but the narratives all fall under a theme that I call *Slaughterhouse Blues*, inspired by the ethnography of the same name about the meat and poultry industry in the United States by Donald Stull (1995).

Prior to the raid, Agriprocessors had been at the center of discussion over working conditions, wages and the ethics of the meat. Critics of the Agriprocessors plant focused on the welfare of animals and humans. Although the two often overlap, they can be divided for analytical purposes. Regardless, both often result from the speed at which the slaughter and processing of animals is sometimes conducted. The speed at which slaughter occurred at Agriprocessors is no exception.

## The Methods of Killing

The methods of killing within some slaughterhouses have been open to criticism by different animal welfare groups, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) being the largest. To this, Agriprocessors was no exception. Investigations by PETA and other groups provided reports from slaughterhouses in general and Agriprocessors specifically that raised concern. Agriprocessors was the object of undercover videos by PETA in 2004 and again in 2008. In both cases, the videos depicted tactics of killing livestock that were ethically and legally questionable. The first video led to a six month investigation by The Department of Agriculture which reported several violations of animal cruelty laws. After that report, Agriprocessors changed some of its slaughtering practices.

The Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 requires by law that all swine, sheep, cattle, and horses be stunned unconscious with just one application of a stunning device by a trained person before being shackled and hoisted up on the line, however violations of the Act carry no penalties. Eiznitz (1997), chief investigator for the Humane Farming Association (HFA), described how stopping the line to re-knock conscious animals causes "down time" and results in lower profits, and therefore argued that the Humane Slaughter Act is usually bypassed and ignored by USDA supervisors. Furthermore, Eiznitz (1997) reported based on her experience with a different slaughterhouse that animals are routinely skinned while apparently alive, and still blinking, kicking, and shrieking. At Agriprocessors, PETA videos presented images in which animals were being

skinned and gutted while apparently still alive and conscious. In the investigators' reports, further abuses and personal experiences were graphically described in detail in ways that may not have been captured on film.

Part of the concern with the killing methods of Agriprocessors emerged from the multiculturalism that gave rise to the *Home of the World* theme. Agriprocessors was a kosher plant. As a kosher plant, Agriprocessors does not have to follow United States law in the killing of animals. The Humane Slaughter Act of 1958 exempts slaughter in accordance to religious law such as kosher shechita. Shechita is the ritual slaughter of mammals and birds according to Jewish dietary laws or Kashrut. In order for a food to be kosher, it must fit within the laws. Most strict interpretations of kashrut require that the animal be fully sensible when its throat is cut. A sharp blade is used to cut the throat of the animal and sever the trachea, esophagus, carotid arteries, and jugular veins by a licensed and trained schochet or ritual slaughterer. After the single cut, the blood is allowed to drain out of the animal. Kosher slaughter is recognized as humane by congress and so is exempt despite being in direct conflict with the Humane Slaughter Act of 1958. Many of the concerns raised by PETA had to do with improper throat cutting and the first cut not completing the job.

### The Ethics of Killing

While the welfare of animals was one source for the narrative framing the cultural context of Postville, concern with the ethics of killing was another. These can analytically be divided into concern for safety due to the speed of killing and the ethics of killing due to the kosher status of the plant. However, these were not

always separate sources from one another or from concern raised about the welfare of animals.

The speed at which killing occurred was the source for much of the discourse surrounding Postville. Eisnitz (1997) interviewed slaughterhouse workers and found that a common concern had to do with the speed at which they are required to work. I will return to this issue in the next chapter on the history of the meat packing industry. Eisnitz argued that the speed of work not only creates an environment in which cruelty to animals occurs but is also dangerous for the human workers. Eisnitz (1997) argued that cows weighing several thousands of pounds thrashing around in pain are likely to kick out and debilitate anyone working near them. The issue of safety will be returned to in chapter five when I consider the inequality and social category that is created and recreated through the slaughterhouse. The concerns raised by Eisnitz were generalizable to common practice employed by slaughterhouses. Postville was no exception.

The fact that this was a kosher plant created another line of voices that raised criticism on the ethics of what was occurring in Postville. Much came from within the Jewish community. A reporter for the Jewish Daily Forward originally exposed conditions in the plant in 2006, and this raised the issue if the meat could actually be considered kosher (Popper 2006). One of the biggest and most recent critics along this line of criticism was Rabbi Morris Allen of Beth Jacob in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. Mendota Heights is a wealthy suburb on the south side of Minneapolis. With a population of almost twelve thousand, Mendota Heights is much larger than Postville and is roughly a two and a half



hour drive from Postville, depending on the traffic and time of year. Getting stuck behind a tractor or in a blizzard on the two lane highway can make the trip much longer. In any event, Rabbi Allen explained the conundrum that while the processes of killing may be followed properly, the plant practices potentially violated other laws found in the Torah. He expressed concern that "we became more concerned about the lung of a cow than we were in the dignity of the worker processing that cow" (Gassiot and May 2008). He pointed out that also found in the Torah is the verse that says you should not abuse a needy and desperate laborer. In addition to being the spiritual leader of the Beth Jacob Congregation, Rabbi Allen was also the Hekhsher Tzedek project director. The Hekhsher Tzedek project proposed a complementary certification for kosher foods. In addition to the religious requirements to make a food kosher, Hekhsher Tzedek would require that social justice issues be addressed in kosher production. In the marches and rallies that followed the ICE raid of Agriprocessors, different Jewish organizations were always present and often holding signs requesting social justice for the workers. The immigration reform groups that wanted social justice for those arrested in Postville were often joined by Jewish organizations stemming from this concern for social responsibility amidst kosher food production. These groups were then often joined by different Christian groups for social justice.

### **If You Build It, They Will Come**

A series of narratives fall under the *If You Build It, They Will Come* theme and are organized around three different, competing versions. These are: Culture

Clash, Inclusion, and Exclusion. This theme also builds on the two previous themes as they are depending both on the multiculturalism of the *Home of the World* theme and on Agriprocessors, Inc., central to the *Slaughterhouse Blues* theme.

*If You Build It, They Will Come* is inspired by the book *Shoeless Joe* by W.P. Kinsella (1982) and the more popular 1984 theatrical remake *Field of Dreams* (Robinson 1989). In both, the main character bulldozes his corn field to create room for a baseball field. The film is set and filmed in Iowa. Baseball is America's game and symbolic of a romantic pastoralism also stereotypically credited to Iowa. I return to baseball in Chapter 5, but consider that theme for this chapter. The main story of the movie dealt with the saying and belief of "if you build it, they will come." This saying was heard from a mysterious voice throughout the book and film as a reassurance and guidance for the main character. When times were uncertain, the voice could be heard, giving faith in building the baseball field despite the questioning of others. Why is that relevant here? The romantic pastoralism of Iowa depicted in the film—and through the repetition of "if you build it, they will come," that referred to the baseball field, is replaced by the modern globalism of a multi-cultural, international Postville. Instead of a baseball field, the 'it' here is the processing plant supplying jobs for which 'they' will come.

Despite the similar origin of the narrative, different versions of the theme existed in Postville, depending on whose voices it was representing. First, I will discuss the emphasis placed on the clash of different cultures by both those inside

and outside Postville as a result of the 'it' that was built. Next, I will explore perhaps the most contradictory narratives: the narratives stressing inclusion and welcoming to the community and the narratives enforcing exclusion and protection of 'the nation.'

### Culture Clash

One version of the *If You Build It, They Will Come* emphasized the clashes that occurred with the new multiculturalism. Perhaps the initial and most widely read version came with the book *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in the Heartland* (Bloom 2000). One part autobiography and one part investigative reportage, the book was about an urban Jew's adjustment to white, Christian, rural Iowa and how Postville was transformed when Hassidic Jews came to town in the 1980s to open a kosher slaughterhouse. The author, Stephen Bloom, had just accepted a position in the department of journalism at the University of Iowa when he wrote about his and the town's adjustments to the changes faced. The interaction of long time Postville residents with newcomers was the subject of the book about the town. The clash of different cultures and the power struggles between the two groups were the emphasis throughout the book.

In a less widely circulated version of this theme, a film depicting the cultural differences was produced by Iowa Public Television. The film, *Postville: When Cultures Collide* (Moore and Wegner 2000), was often shown in the nearby anthropology classes of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. I showed this film in the Introduction to Anthropology class that I taught at Luther under the premise that the class talk about it and wrestle with the issues with greater complexity.

Two issues that were highlighted in the film were lawn care and gender segregation. One of the cultural conflicts experienced in Postville resulted when many of the newcomers did not care for their lawns to the extent that was “normally” done by Postville natives. The seemingly trivial example resulted from the urban differences from this rural population. Many of the urban migrants did not previously have lawns. The socially learned significance of properly manicuring one’s lawn was not a previous behavior. In another scene that was humorous in its presentation but simultaneously aggregating in its simplicity of analysis, native Postville residents were interviewed at a local coffee shop. The strict gender segregation of the newer ultra-conservative religion was said to be of major concern. The camera then zoomed out. All of the men were sitting at one table; all of the women were sitting at another.

#### Inclusion: Helping Services of Northeast Iowa

In a contrary version of this theme of *If You Build it, They will Come*, Helping Services of Northeast Iowa (HSNI) attempted to welcome the changes and worked to reduce the conflict of the perceived culture clashes. To some extent, the adult soccer league that initially interested me resulted from this narrative. While some expressed concern for the welfare of animals, this narrative version expressed concern with the welfare of humans.

The league resulted from a grant that was awarded by Helping Services for Northeast Iowa in the summer of 2000 to assist the community of Postville in confronting the sudden multiculturalism in the perceived cultural and racial homogeneity of this small town. Helping Services for Northeast Iowa is a private,

non-profit agency serving Northeast Iowa with the overall goal of creating an environment that is a safe, nurturing, and healthy place for children and adults to live. The grant was designed to create and bolster neighborhood attachment with and among the immigrant community in Postville. The grant successfully funded the creation of an adult soccer league that was active for seven seasons.

Initial organizational meetings were held in Spanish, Russian, and English. At the time, most immigrants were from Mexico and Eastern Europe. At the initial meetings, many of the Spanish speakers could not understand the Russian speakers. Most of the Eastern Europeans spoke Russian, and many spoke English as a second language. Several native English speakers could speak Spanish. English was used as a language to transmit information between the two language groups. The information was then disseminated in the native language of individuals. The logistics of the initial meeting had the Eastern Europeans speaking Russian to the bilingual English speakers who translated into Spanish for the rest. The communication process involving a minimum of three individuals was also reversed as necessary. A Spanish speaker would say something, this would be translated into English by different individual, and this would be translated into Russian by a bilingual Eastern European. In addition to the native Spanish speakers and the Russian speakers, some native English speakers that had helped with writing the grant were also in attendance. None of these spoke Russian.

The complex process of translation and communication worked, and several teams of mostly immigrants were formed often based on the players'

countries or regions of origin and age. There was the Guatemalan team, an Eastern European team, and multiple Mexican teams. Although the teams may have had names such as the “Ghosts” or “Postville United,” many would refer to them as the Guatemalans, the Russians, or the Old Mexicans from the Yucatan. While effective in communicating which team the speaker was referring to, the accuracy of the description was not absolute and the name of the team was not limiting to the members. For example, most of the Russians were not Russian. Most were Eastern European and spoke Russian, but were usually Czechoslovakian or Ukrainian. Furthermore, there were a few gringos that played on the league. Postville High School’s PE teacher was one; he proudly told how he was born and raised in Postville.

Teams were formed, and volunteer referees were recruited from Dubuque, Iowa. Dubuque is almost two hours away. The referees would have to make the round trip drive twice a week on Friday and Saturday evenings during the season. Soccer referees, much less volunteer soccer referees, could not be found any closer. Part of the grants for the league went toward paying for the gas of the referees. The hope was that games would bring families of the immigrants and the Anglo community together, but while families and friends of the players would come out, there was never many of the town’s Anglo community present. Part of this may be explained by the fact that many of the games were scheduled on Friday nights, which often happened to be at the time of the Postville Pirates baseball games. While scheduling conflicts can partially explain poor attendance,

perhaps it can also be explained by community interest in sports that are more “American” than soccer.

Helping Services for Northeast Iowa, Inc. developed in response to a need for services directed at youth in crisis. It has emerged into a vital community resource that serves eleven counties in northeast Iowa. A review of the timeline behind the organization that awarded the grant that funded the formation of the soccer league in Postville will get at the motivations contradictory to the ICE raid at Agriprocessors. Interestingly, Postville emerged in another program in the recent post 9/11 atmosphere. This was at the same time and in the same political context that ICE originated.

Helping Services had its birth in 1970 when a group of community activists in the nearby Decorah area established a dedicated phone line to provide twenty-four hour telephone help for young adults. The focus was on substance abuse and suicide, but the line also provided daily telephone checks on homebound elderly and provided pregnancy counseling. In 1973, the un-named agency was incorporated as the *Decorah Information Center*. Services included the twenty-four hour “Trouble Line” that originated with the agency, a teen drop in center that provided face-to-face counseling, and the Summer Institute at Luther College in Decorah. The institute was a drug abuse and social action program that focused on intensive training for educators in substance abuse and prevention. The institute continues today. In 1978, the name was changed to *Helping Services for Northeast Iowa*. The services provided now included services for abused women. More programs were established, and the Trouble

Line was re-named the Help Line. Sub-programs were established to organize the agency's goals. Substance abuse and prevention activities fell under the sub-program named Educational Services and began to receive funding from the state of Iowa.

The agency expanded its services provided and geographic areas covered during the 1980s. However, a series of economic problems resulted in the closing of some offices, programs and shelters. Despite these occasional set-backs, the agency continued to pursue its primary motivations. In 1988, the first non-state grant was secured from the McElroy Trust to fund *Drugs, Alcohol, and Athletics* programming in eight northeast Iowa high schools. Although this did not necessarily represent a shift in grant writing to athletics per se, it did represent the recognition of the connection that people have to sports and the ability of using this for achieving the organization's goals.

In the 1990s, fund raising events were developed to meet the growing economic complexities and to account for the expanding services. In 1991, the Decorah office employed the first of many work study students from Luther College. In 1999, the staff grew to total of twenty-five people. In 2000, a substance abuse prevention grant was awarded that served the community of Postville. A bilingual staff person was hired to provide multicultural outreach and increase educational opportunities to the immigrant population. The connection to sports became focused on Postville and immigration. The grant that allowed for the creation of the adult soccer league followed. The focus on Postville and community inclusion was continued in 2002, when the *Rocking Chair Project* was



funded in response to the September 11th tragedy in New York City. The project asked community members to decorate rocking chairs that were placed around the community in order to celebrate cultural diversity. Thirty-six different nationalities were represented. By 2005, the staff totaled twenty-two full and part time people with ninety percent of the agency's programming dependent upon grant funding.

#### Exclusion: ICE and Homeland Security

Like the HSNI grant that formed the soccer league, ICE seems to have been motivated by and the source of additional *If You Build it, They will Come* narrative structures. "Safe" is in the HSNI slogan and is a foundation of ICE. But unlike the welcoming motivation of the HSNI grant, ICE has a different objective. Like the version of culture clash, ICE was motivated by the enforcing of boundaries and protecting the nation.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative agency in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Formed in 2003 as part of the federal government's response to the 9/11 attacks, ICE's primary mission is to protect national security, public safety and the integrity of the U.S. borders through the criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing border control, customs, trade and immigration. ICE is led by a sub-Cabinet level appointee of the President of the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., ICE is responsible for "identifying, investigating, and dismantling vulnerabilities regarding the nation's border, economic, transportation, and infrastructure security".

On their website, ICE boasts approximately 19,000 employees in over four hundred domestic offices and fifty international offices. With an annual budget of more than \$5 billion, the agency's law enforcement authorities encompass more than four hundred U.S. federal statutes that ICE is responsible for enforcing with a broad range of law enforcement authorities in its commitment to ensuring national security and public safety. Names of the units or programs that fall under the control of the sub-agency of homeland security range from: Border Enforcement Security Task Force, Border Violence Intelligence Cell, Extraterritorial Criminal Travel Strike Force, Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Unit, Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, Joint Terrorism Task Force, Operation Armas Cruzadas, Project Shield America, Secure Communities. All operations are designed to assist in achieving the primary mission of providing national security.

The raid in Postville fell under the blanket of Worksite Enforcement, a program designed to target employers of illegal workers, especially at critical infrastructure worksites. According to ICE, effective worksite enforcement plays an important role in the fight against illegal immigration and in protecting our homeland. Thus, ICE developed a comprehensive worksite enforcement strategy that promotes national security, protects critical infrastructure and ensures fair labor standards.

The Worksite Enforcement Unit's mission encompasses enforcement activities intended to mitigate the risk of terrorist attacks posed by unauthorized workers employed in secure areas of our nation's critical infrastructure. In order to fulfill this mission, ICE special agents apply risk assessment principles to their critical infrastructure and worksite

enforcement cases in order to maximize the impact of our limited resources against the most significant threats and violators (DHS 2010).

Though worksite enforcement, efforts are focused on investigations related to critical infrastructure and national security. These efforts and resources are also extended to other places of employment. ICE reports that illegal workers employed at sensitive sites and critical infrastructure facilities—such as airports, seaports, nuclear plants, chemical plants and defense facilities—pose serious homeland security threats. The slaughterhouse in Postville apparently met this criterion.

ICE reports that through worksite enforcement investigations the agency can send a strong deterrent message to other employers who knowingly employ “illegal aliens” *sic*. These worksite enforcement cases often involve additional violations such as alien smuggling, alien harboring, document fraud, money laundering, fraud or worker exploitation. ICE agents use many tools to conduct these worksite enforcement investigations. In addition to ICE’s Forensic Documents Laboratory and education programs aimed at employers teaching of the dangers of illegal employment, all ICE agents are equipped with pistols, and may also be assigned shotguns, rifles, or machine guns. Furthermore, ICE operates a nation-wide radio communication system that allows authorized users (e.g. agents) to communicate with one another across the nation. The nation-wide radio communication system is the only one of its kind in the federal law enforcement community. Agents in Washington, D.C., can communicate with

Agents in Postville, Iowa, and in Phoenix AZ. The center controlling this communication network is based in Orlando, Florida.

Before the raid at Agriprocessors in Postville, ICE officials were setting up a holding facility in Waterloo, Iowa. Grey, Devlin, and Goldsmith (2009) provided a description of a construction company that was secretly doing work at the National Cattle Congress. Described as “a county fairground on steroids” (Grey, et al. 2009: 53), several pavilions surround the National Cattle Congress in Waterloo. With the exception of one that was converted into a party hall, these big warehouse-like buildings are designed to house livestock. Rumors were said to begin when massive ventilation systems were attached on the outside of the pavilions in the first few days of May 2008. To further speculations, generators and additional trailers were installed on the grounds, and ICE agents were present. An ICE spokesman in the Minneapolis office refused to comment at the time and said he didn't know when, or if, the agency would explain its activities (Grey, et al. 2009). Furthermore, the office of Iowa's U.S. Senator Charles Grassley requested a briefing on the use of the National Cattle Congress grounds. His office was told that ICE officials would neither confirm nor deny anything. Similarly, the office of Bruce Braley, a U.S. Representative from Iowa's First District, was unable to obtain additional information despite inquisitions. Public concern and suspicion was not alleviated.

Some suspected that it was Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) preparing for the next national emergency. For one thing, FEMA and ICE both fall under DHS. This might account for the presence of ICE agents. For

another, it was three years after Hurricane Katrina, and FEMA's poor role within the aftermath was still fresh on many minds. Practice for FEMA would be welcomed. For yet another reason, FEMA announced on April 24<sup>th</sup> that the agency was conducting a national-level training exercise from May 1 through May 8 "to prepare and respond to multiple incidents including both natural disasters and terrorist incidents" (Grey, et al. 2009). Furthermore, FEMA did not specify the location of the exercise scenarios, and the government had leased the National Cattle Congress grounds through May 25. To support this theory, National Cattle Congress officials said they were told the grounds were rented for a training exercise and that the Federal Emergency Management Agency was involved (Grey, et al. 2009).

Other more conspiracy minded theorists held that a detention facility was being built to house those that do not follow the authoritative regime of the U.S. government. [Roguegovernment.com](http://Roguegovernment.com) reported

Plans for government run concentration camps are well documented...they are going to use the excuse of the illegal alien problem to setup the FEMA camp infrastructure which will be used to house the average Americans who protest what this corrupt and out of control government has been doing... There is little doubt that this is part of their agenda to setup a large scale FEMA camp apparatus in order to house large quantities of American citizens. The Nazis used concentration camps to house and eventually exterminate the Jews and it is frightening to see that a similar infrastructure is now being setup in America.

Unfortunately the conspiracy theorist were part right. A holding facility was being built to house those arrested. The "illegal alien problem" *sic* was the focus of ICE arrests (and national protection).

### Inclusion: Local Critics of the Raid

Local responses, although varied, were often critical of the ICE raid and attempted to highlight the human reality of the protection of homeland security. These responses came from a variety of sources including email lists, public showing of documentary films, internet based databases, charity drives, and governmental reactions. These responses are also the subject of much of my ethnographic work.

#### *Elizabeth's Emails*

Elizabeth is a Decorah community member that is active in the community. Following the ICE raid in Postville, she began sending occasional emails with updates on the happenings of Postville. The email updates were full of ways to help, supplies that were needed, volunteer opportunities that were available, way to get involved politically, and advertisements for meetings, forums, and rallies. The occasional email updates turned into a regular monthly email newsletter advertising the happenings around Decorah in addition to the events/needs in Postville. A contra dance at a local school might be advertised with a rally marking the one year anniversary of the ICE raid which might be advertised with a class on interpreting crop circles.

In one email newsletter, Elizabeth told of Gabriela, a female from Postville that was about to be evicted if she did not pay her rent. She was a former employee at Agriprocessors, was arrested, but at home with a GPS (to be discussed in chapter five), and unable to work. Thus, she could not pay her rent.

Liz also continued that for one hundred more dollars, the woman could buy glasses for her child. In the beginning of one email newsletter, she wrote:

The Guatemalan woman Gabriela, about whom I wrote in the last DecorahEvents, has now officially been served notice of impending eviction unless she pays rent by Jan. 1. Can you help me raise \$425 to keep her safe and warm for another month? And, if we can raise another \$100, that's all it will take to buy glasses for the 8-year-old Alison, because of the generosity of Meehan and Schwartz eyecare *sic*. This is only one of many families in need and also this is only a short-term solution. But this is the family to which I (and then you) happened to be introduced, and I don't want them to worry in these coming days about impending eviction. I told them I thought I could raise rent for one month through you, my friends who read about their trip to the emergency room.

She continued by giving her home address, and asked that readers send funds if they could help. One week later, Elizabeth sent an update along with the regular email newsletter. Then, in another email approximately one week after that, she wrote of how she pondered the right way of giving someone money, and described doing so.

I wonder what she would have felt had I told her that 12 hours after people heard of her need, \$300 had been donated – and that 3 days later, \$1200 had come in, and that by today, only 7 days later, \$2500 has been donated... All of this money will be used well and soon, by the family of Gabriela and by others as well.

*abUSed: The Postville Raid*

One of the events that was advertised in Elizabeth's email newsletters was the occasional screenings of a documentary that was being filmed of the ICE raid and its aftermath in Postville. Screenings and discussions were held at various stages in the development of the film and at several locations, forums, and workshops. The film and discussions were held at various colleges and

community colleges, churches, and community centers in Postville, Decorah, and the surrounding area.

The film, 'abUSed: The Postville Raid' is a full-length documentary that tells the story of the ICE raids and was made by the internationally acclaimed Guatemalan filmmaker and director Luis Argueta. Argueta directed of *The Silence of Neto*, a film that was submitted to the foreign films category in the 67th Academy Awards<sup>1</sup>. The filmmaker wove together the personal stories of the individuals, the families, and the town directly affected by the events of May 12, 2008. The film included images from the day of the raid, interviews with detainees and immigration officials, the protests in Postville, the incarceration of the detainees, the visit of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchú, and the presentation of the material witnesses that lived in Decorah. The filmmaker described that the goal of the film was to present the human face of the issue of immigration reform and serves as a cautionary tale against abuses of constitutional human rights. The film took two years to make. During that time, Argueta took twenty-five trips to Iowa, ten trips to Guatemala, and compiled over four hundred hours of testimonies, images, and interviews. However at the time of writing this, he had only finished editing the documentary and still needed to put the final touches on it. These included the essential but expensive elements necessary for a theater ready film such as music, color corrections, titles, subtitles, credits, and licensing. To finish this project, the film needs more financial support. This was reported in Elizabeth's emails.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Silence of Neto* was the first submission from Guatemala to the Academy Awards.



The public was invited to view the film and to discuss the process and the content with Argueta. Financial support was also sought, and grassroots economic support for this film was impressive. Although the film did receive grants from a diverse group of non-profit organizations, the filmmaker reported that the most meaningful funding came from small individual contributions.

Recognition of international connections were mixed with the concern of children in a side-project of Argueta. At the final showing of the documentary, he aired a segment that would not be making the final cut of the film, but he would be making available on his website<sup>2</sup>. He explained that the clip tackled a significant issue but did not fit into the film. In this clip, Argueta documented what he referred to as *de facto deportees*. There are fourteen of these individuals, who are U.S. citizens but living in Calderas, Guatemala. These fourteen children were US citizens born in Postville but their parents were deported. Thus, the children went home with their deported parents. The clip documents the process by which the children had to adjust to the new lifestyle of moving from and living in Postville, Iowa, USA, to Calderas, Guatemala. But more importantly, the clip points out the connection of poverty and chronic malnutrition as it plays out among children in Guatemala.

### *The Postville Project*

In addition to creating the film, Argueta was very active in archiving his audio-visual collection of the interviews recorded in the making of the documentary and in finding a home for these so that they may be publically

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.abusedthepostvilleraid.com/>

accessed. Based partially on his work, the work of Luther College Archives, and the University of Northern Iowa Library, the Project Postville was formed under the assumption that the Postville immigration raid was a significant event that offers important insights to the issue of U.S. national immigration policy.

Supported in part by the State Historical Society of Iowa Historical Resource Development Program, the Postville Project will archive and make accessible an interdisciplinary collection of primary and secondary source material from a wide variety of sources. The Postville Project has the goal of serving as an educational tool with the materials in digital format accessible on their website<sup>3</sup>. The in-depth case study provides material about individuals, institutions, and the community of Postville. Fund raising for the Postville Project was advertised in Elizabeth's electronic newsletter.

### *Project Jubilee*

In another email newsletter, Elizabeth announced Project Jubilee. The project was attempting to raise funds as it tackled the international connections of immigration and Postville. Elizabeth wrote

Below you can read about a way in which you can help the 9 men in Decorah who were victims of the Postville raid, in a LONG-LASTING way. Really! Some local people have devised this plan that could change thier *sic* lives forever! Act soon: If we meet the May 22 deadline for achieving our halfway point, we qualify for a \$2500 challenge grant.

In this project, the Decorah Faith Coalition (DAFC) was raising money for the men that remained after being arrested and before being deported (discussed in the next chapter). The money raised would allow the men to pay off their debts at

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.postvilleproject.org/>

home. First Lutheran Church agreed to help manage the account. The fund drive read

Since October 2008, Decorah has been home to nine men, eight from Guatemala and one from Mexico, who were not deported when they had finished their prison terms. The US federal government has required them to remain in the country to testify in the cases resulting from the May 12 raid....They were eager to get back to their families, but this situation enabled them to continue to work here in an effort to reduce their debt at home... Their debt ranges from about \$1,000 to \$7,000. At home they might make a daily wage of \$4 to \$7, if they can get a job; however, the loan sharks charge anywhere from 10-20% interest monthly, so they basically are working to pay off their interest.

Funds raised were sent to their families to pay off the loan sharks in Guatemala.

The timeframe of their stay in the country was not known at the time, but each began repaying his loan, now at no interest, back to the DAFC while they remain in the US.

#### *Local Governments*

The Postville government was also a critic of the ICE raid and its aftermath. Their voices provided for another source of narratives framing the significance of the occurrences in Postville. The mayor of Postville referred to the aftermath of the ICE raid as turning the town “topsy turvy.” Not along the same narrative structure as ICE and the federal government, the topsy turvy quote was printed in several online media sources to create a narrative in which the small town Postville was presented in contrast to the larger nation. The national news media conglomerate CNN ran a story with the quote in which the mayor also described the aftermath as “some kind of strange nightmare” (Drash 2008). The law firm of Satterlee Stephens Burke & Burke LLP with a specialty in

immigration law posted an online publication using the quote as evidence of the risks of federal practices and policies (Paparelli and Chiappari 2009). Radio Iowa ran a similar story in which the mayor was quoted as explaining how following the ICE raid, his town was left with many empty houses and unpaid bills (Henderson 2010).

In addition to this quote, the mayor presided over a meeting at City Hall of community organizations involved in the aftermath of the raid. Out of this meeting, a steering committee was formed to direct relief efforts, under the name “Postville Response Coalition.” Three days later, the Postville City Council passed Resolution #1039 stating that “the City of Postville has suffered from an economic and humanitarian disaster occurring throughout the summer and fall of 2008.” This implemented a state of emergency in the city. Postville was officially declared a town of humanitarian and economic disaster. Federal and state funds were made available to assist with those affected by the raid. The reality of the official declaration of disaster is unclear. Money only went to those that were U.S. citizens, but the response was taken to assist the local community in reaction to the federal raid.

Postville police were also (at least rumored) to be critical of the ICE raid. The sound of the helicopters signified to many that something was going on in this sleepy town on the morning of the raid. Once the helicopters were heard, ICE vehicles came in from each direction surrounding the town. While ICE agents swarmed the Agriprocessors building, a perimeter was set up in concentric circles with the federal-ness of the individual dictating how close they were to the center

and the Agriprocessors building. Thus, local Postville Police were used to run the outer boundaries. A story that could never be verified was of a Postville police officer during the raid at one of these outer check points. It was said that he told several laborers that were going into work on the morning of the raid that they should go home rather than to work. This was rumored. Although never verified, it was repeated in various post raid presentations on a few occasions by the priests from St. Bridget's Catholic Church.

### **Cultural Context Conclusions**

Through my exploration of narrative themes and the multiple voices within them, this chapter has explored the “interlocking” narratives that “give meaning to the lives” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 73) of those in Postville, as well as provided a context for understanding why Postville actually *matters* in terms of understanding immigration in the United States. A background of these cultural factors is essential for understanding the multiple performances occurring within Postville and ultimately for making ethnographic sense of the ICE raid and its meaning in Postville and beyond. I have explored three narrative themes: 1) Home of the World, 2) Slaughterhouse Blues, and 3) If You Build it, They Will Come. Each has provided a glimpse into the everyday of Postville.

Putting all the narrative themes together, I have laid out Sphere C in the CPAS model. In considering the cultural contexts and the domain of this sphere, several voices (what I have called ‘narratives’) emerge to encircle the event. Before the raid, the narrative themes focused around the *Home of the World* and the *Slaughterhouse Blues*—the multicultural town context in which the processing

plant was a central and key feature in shaping the life of the townspeople. The first narrative theme, *Home of the World*, is one of the most significant for framing Postville as the odd multicultural pastiche I describe in the first paragraph. *Slaughterhouse Blues*, the second narrative theme, captures that there were narratives that emerged around the meat-processing plant—some of which were not even narratives that came from within Postville itself. This narrative theme explores legal issues surrounding the business of animal slaughter, and the uniqueness of Agriprocessors as a Kosher slaughterhouse.

The final narrative theme, *If You Build it, They Will Come*, focuses on the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of Postville—pre- and post-raid—and hence is the theme containing the most ‘voices’ or narratives within it. It is within this narrative theme that one will also find the most *competing* voices, or those narratives that often had goals in conflict with one another. Indeed, once ‘it’ (Agriprocessors) was built, ‘they’ (immigrant labor) came. But the competing interests of the townspeople, that of welcoming and including the newcomers who had helped revitalize their community, was in direct contrast with what the U.S. government’s interests for ‘they’ were. As immigrant labor came, the ICE narrative was one of protection and exclusion. These core, conflicting ideas of inclusion and exclusion is the focus of the post raid narratives in particular. Within these narrative themes are multiple voices, but their focus on inclusion and exclusion becomes obvious. Indeed, these narratives will re-emerge as central for understanding the meanings of both the adult soccer league and ICE raid throughout this dissertation.

#### **4 Sphere I and the Push/Pull of Immigration**

The next domain encircling the performance was labeled by Valentine and Matsumoto as Sphere I: The Performance in Situ, drawn from the same phrase used by Toelken (1979) to describe the setting and ambience of the performance. Sphere I includes the very detailed, rich ethnographic setting; Valentine and Matsumoto include in this the “physical location...and the olfactory, gustatory, tactile, auditory and visual experiences at the cultural performance event (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 74). Describing the ambience of the performance in situ allows the ethnographer to simultaneously do two things: 1) to learn about the relationship of the phenomena in the performance, and 2) to eventually allow readers to experience the richness of the performance through the description of this. Given the unique relationship of the audience, context, and ambience that are all part of the performance, one might think of Sphere I as the means by which the ethnographer can allow a reader to become part of this vicariously. In their own analysis of the San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade, for example, Valentine and Matsumoto’s rich description of the ‘in situ’ performance includes such specifics as the sights (“fog thickens and forms beads of water on eyeglasses...”) and smells (“pungent aroma of almonds and peach pits”) of the performance (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 80).

In my analysis of Postville, the time and location are vitally important to understanding Postville. In this chapter, I speak of the ‘ambience’ in terms of both a ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ level of ambience. Given that I view the day-to-day of Postville as a performance, the performance ‘in situ’ is framed by a larger

socioeconomic context (the macro ambience) and can also be examined at an individual, interactional level (the micro ambience). For the reader to become part of the performance of Postville vicariously, as is the eventual goal of laying out Sphere I, it is essential to understand the ‘macro’ factors that push immigrants to Postville as well as the ‘micro’ factors that keep them there. To do this, I draw on Lee’s theory of migration using ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors that lead to change in residence (Lee 1965: 165).

Through my exploration of these factors I lay out the ‘place’ of this performance in situ, allowing me to meet Valentine and Matsumoto’s goals for including a description of the ambience. I provide both an understanding of the relationship of the phenomena in the performance and also allow the reader to ‘experience’ why immigration to Postville would be desirable. The time and location are vitally important to understanding Postville. Labor migration happening in Postville is not unique to rural towns in the American Midwest but is an outcome of a series of abstract policies and changes unique to the Midwest in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this chapter I will explore the abstract forces that created the macro ambience for the everyday performance of Postville. I will explore the push factors of immigration, most notably the Green Revolution and the passage of Free Trade Agreements (such as NAFTA and CAFTA), and I explore the pull factors of slaughterhouses and their need/dependency on cheap labor. Yet the not-so-unique macro ambience that has shaped Postville is also coupled with what I argue is a micro ambience somewhat unique to Postville. The specific stories



being ‘told’ about immigration in Postville, as laid out in the description of the cultural contexts, mean that Postville’s unique ambience of welcoming and inclusion offers its own pull factor. Postville is a specific context where immigrants were not only *drawn* for labor, but also wanted to *stay* because of community.

### **Macro: Socioeconomic Push and Pull**

The theory of migration proposed by Lee (1965) distinguished between push factors and pull factors that lead to changes in residence. Push factors refer to the motives for migrating from the place of origin, while pull factors refer to the motives for choosing the place of destination. This schema provides a general framework for considering immigration. Although Lee did not specifically conceptualize his schema in terms of countries, it is easy to do, and makes sense when considering immigration in Postville. For example, differentials in wages may result in economically motivated immigration. Push factors would refer to lower wages in one’s home country. A lower standard of living may also be associated with the wage differentials and may serve as another push factor. Pull factors would be the availability of higher paying jobs and the higher standard of living in the host country. Postville presents a good example of exactly this. Ninety percent of the employees at Agriprocessors were thought to be Latino immigrants predominately from Mexico and Guatemala. In Postville, the abstractions of free market capitalism intersect with hard reality of human drama to shape the push and pull of immigration. In addressing the macro-ambience, I will focus in particular on the economic context of the push provided by the

Green Revolution and Free Trade Agreements, and the pull of industrialized slaughterhouses in the Midwest. While these push/pull factors certainly would not be exhaustive, they provide a context for understanding Sphere I, the performance in situ.

### Push: Green Revolution and Free Trade

#### *Green Revolution*

Prior to the green revolution, much of Mexico had a traditional form of agriculture based on polycultural intercropping. According to the Agronomy Stems Guide published by The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service:

Intercropping offers farmers the opportunity to engage nature's principle of diversity on their farms. Spatial arrangements of plants, planting rates, and maturity dates must be considered when planning intercrops. Intercrops can be more productive than growing pure stands. Many different intercrop systems are discussed, including mixed intercropping, strip cropping, and traditional intercropping arrangements. Pest management benefits can also be realized from intercropping due to increased diversity. Harvesting options for intercrops include hand harvest, machine harvest for on-farm feed, and animal harvest of the standing crop (Sullivan 2003).

Based on the principles of intercropping, cooperation maximizes and competition minimizes when two or more crops are growing together. Planting multiple crops within the same space was common in the traditional agricultural system in much of Mexico prior to the Green Revolution. The diversity of crops avoided the susceptibility to diseases of a single crop monoculture. Additionally, diverse crops grown together optimize available resources and yield more than if planted as separate monocultures. However beginning in the 1940s, this was altered by

Green Revolution technology designed to decrease labor necessities and increase industrialized agriculture with the introduction of high-yielding varieties of cereal grains, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, and distribution of hybridized seeds, synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides to farmers. With much of agriculture devoted to corn production, the stage was set for the effects of free trade agreements, in particular for NAFTA.

*Free Trade Agreements: NAFTA and CAFTA*

Free Trade Agreements within and between North American and Central America have created important push factors when it comes to immigration. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) really provided the stage for this and set the tone for the eventual passage of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA, often just called CAFTA). NAFTA was passed in 1994 and signed into law by the governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The passage of NAFTA resulted in disastrous consequences in Mexico. Scholars (e.g. Ojeda and Hennessy 2006; Rivera, et al. 2009) suggest that as a result of NAFTA, industrial wages fell, farmers were removed from lands, small businesses were liquidated, and the overall poverty increased. Rather than improving living standards, Mexicans have actually suffered as a direct consequence of NAFTA. Initially NAFTA was sold to the American public as an international agreement that would simultaneously improve the American and the Mexican economies. Some coverage of NAFTA's impact on the U.S. exists, but even less attention has been paid to its effects on Mexico, and three significant issues have been neglected

(Bybee and Winter 2006). First, NAFTA permitted heavily subsidized U.S. corn and other agri-business products to be dumped into Mexico from the United States to compete with small Mexican farmers. This meant that Mexican farmers could not compete against the artificially lower prices and had the result of moving many Mexican farmers off the lands with little income. Second, NAFTA's service-sector rules allowed big companies like Wal-Mart to enter the Mexican market. These larger global companies are able to sell low-priced goods made by ultra-cheap labor. As a result of their introduction into the Mexican market, locally-based businesses were displaced and unable to compete. An estimated twenty-eight thousand small and medium-sized Mexican businesses have been eliminated (Bybee and Winter 2006). Third, wages along the Mexican border have actually been driven down by about twenty-five percent since NAFTA (Papademetriou, et al. 2003). An over-supply of workers, combined with the governmental policy of crushing union organization, has resulted in sweatshops along the border where wages typically run sixty cents to one dollar an hour. In addition to the low pay of American-owned 'maquiladora' sweatshops, Mexicans must also contend with the resulting pollution, congestion, horrible living conditions, and a lack of resource for confronting the violence against young women working in the factories.

With the passage of CAFTA in 2005 the nations of the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras were added to those officially part of free trade agreements with the United States. To understand the impact of CAFTA as a push factor from these countries it is

important to consider what happened with NAFTA as described above. While during the 1990s the argument for NAFTA was often that it would mean more jobs but *less* immigration, the obvious result was quite different. CAFTA will likely reproduce many of the same effects of NAFTA when it comes to migration, building on already established patterns of migration from these countries.

Indeed, Central American countries historically have also had another push factor that has already forged a path for migration: political contexts in the sending communities. Many Central American countries were devastated by civil wars through the late 1900s. In Postville many of the workers come from Guatemala, which suffered a brutal 36 year civil war and genocide. The continued political and economic impact of this within Guatemala have been documented by anthropologists (e.g. Carmack 1992; Little and Smith 2009), and the role this conflict played in immigration to the United States has been studied in particular by Burns (1993) who ethnographically explored in Florida Guatemalan Mayas fleeing this political and economic violence.

Anthropologists have also been exploring the macro scale impacts of economic ‘pushes’ from Central America (e.g. Goldin 2000). CAFTA builds on these already established push factors that reveal the way that political and economic factors can come together to encourage migration. While these push factors are not exhaustive, they represent some of the most significant economic and political contexts that have shaped the push of immigrant laborers to the United States, and eventually to Postville. In the next section I address the

particular ‘pull’ to the United States that is coupled with the push factors described here.

#### Pull: Meat Packing Industry and Cheap Labor

The pull to small town, rural Midwest resulted from the intersection of several factors. Broadway (1995) argued that since 1945, a number of structural changes have occurred to create the meat processing industry as it is today. A smaller employment force is needed due to the substitution of machinery for labor. The economy is increasingly characterized by oligopoly as a result of mergers and acquisitions. And capital investment has been redeployed in a search for cheaper production locations. These structural changes were occurring during an economic situation in the United States between 1972 and 1982. Emerging from this prolonged period of ten years were high inflation, increased energy costs, international competition, and slow economic growth. Broadway argued that a new relationship between capital and labor emerged from this context as capital recaptured the initiative over wages and regulations.

These changes began with technological innovations that lead to industry restructuring guided by cost cutting motivations and a resulting rural industry strategy. The process began with the founding of Iowa Beef Packers (IBP) that was originally funded by a U.S. Small business Administration grant in 1960 but by 1980 had become the largest producer of fresh beef products in the United States (Skaggs 1986). Prior to IBP’s first plant in Denison, Iowa, cattle had been shipped by rail from rural production areas to urban processing sites. Prior to IBP’s rural location, most packing houses were located near railroad terminals in

urban areas. The Denison plant, by contrast, was located in a large cattle producing area. This enabled the company to reduce transportation costs and the costs associated with transporting livestock. IBP's cost-cutting innovations forced the urban based packers to try further cost cutting and lead to rural industrialization.

Furthermore, the physical plant was only one story while meat processing plants had not necessarily been previously. This allowed for greater automation and the development of the disassembly line. On the disassembly line, individual workers are responsible for one task in the preparation of a carcass. This innovation reduced the need for highly skilled and highly paid butchers. While most food processing plants are now found as one story structures in rural areas, and the disassembly line is a common methodology, Longworth (2008) argued that transformations in the food processing industry were most noticeable beginning in the 1980s. During this time, pressures on increased income could be seen in changes in wages and weakening of unions. Because of these two factors and an underlying concern of efficiency in a mechanized global world, *mega-farmers* began to emerge. In contrast to romantic images of farmers and pastoral life, Longworth argued that mega-farmers are typical in the era of globalization and industrial farming. Modern industrial methods replace what had historically been small, almost boutique craft farms as deals with giant global corporations became commonplace.

While the industry needed rural areas, rural areas also needed the industry to bring economic benefits. Further pull factors emerged from this need were

based on an *If You Build it, They Will Come* mentality. Although not directly influencing workers, rural areas offered tax reductions and other financial incentives for industries to relocate to their specific town. Additionally, business people of the rural areas welcomed the influx that would also mean increased business. Moreover, if an industry was established, a workforce was needed. Given the changes in the meat processing industry, companies needed a compliant workforce that would endure the low wages and the grueling conditions that the changes created. Since most locals do not want the jobs available at meat processing plants given these parameters, meatpacking plants have developed a tremendous dependence on immigrant workers who are qualified for packing jobs precisely because they are unqualified for other employment. As Grey et al (2009) described:

You don't need to speak English or have an advanced education or special job skills to cut up animals. You only need to be able-bodied and willing to do grueling work for meager wages (13).

In addition to work place conditions, pay was also less than previous compensation. For example, a unionized journeyman butcher could earn twenty-one dollars per hour. In contrast, the national minimum wage of seven dollars and twenty-five cents per hour was paid to the workers at Agriprocessors. Although the working conditions and discrepancy in compensation were not ideal, the job was still often taken given the push factors and conditions. Pull factors were strengthened by the fact that many towns become dependent on the processing facility and the labor it provides, as well as the economic stimulation that comes from it. Postville is an excellent example of this: it was dependent on the



Agriprocessors for its economic survival and the workforce that (prior to the ICE raid) was predominately made up of immigrants.

### **“Micro”: The Ethnographic Experience of Push and Pull**

Here I examine the ‘micro’ experience of the push and pull factors that shape immigration. As Valentine and Matsumoto state, part of the goal of describing Sphere I, the performance in situ, is to truly give the reader a sense of understanding the ‘why’ of cultural experience by allowing them to experience culture vicariously. To get at this ‘in situ’ ambience on the micro level, I explore a specific performance about being an immigrant titled *La Historia de Nuestras Vidas*. This play was written and performed by with the support of the Postville and surrounding communities. The play elaborates the actual push/pull experience and allows the reader to vicariously experience the macro push and pull factors on a micro level.

I then explore the way Postville itself offered a unique pull factor in addition to the slaughterhouse itself. In Lee’s (1965) discussion of migration discussed earlier, pull factors refer to the reasons for migrating to the place of destination. In the macro ambience, it becomes obvious how economic reasons in particular draw immigrants to the United States as the place of destination, i.e. jobs at Agriprocessors. In this way Postville is not unique, but is one of many American towns acting as ‘pulls’—locations with available labor given the many socioeconomic issues described above. However there is also another part of this pull that Postville represents on a smaller scale. While in many ways Postville is

just like hundreds of other towns, I argue Postville is also particularly unique for its ‘script’ of welcoming and inclusion.

Push/Pull Performance: Teatro Indocumentado

Some said that working in the U.S. was easy.  
But not for me!  
At Agriprocessors, we worked long hours:  
Fourteen-hour shifts  
Or fifteen-hour shifts  
Sometimes eighteen-hour shifts!  
And we weren’t always paid fairly for those long hours!  
We worked fast and with little rest.  
We worked with sharp knives and dangerous equipment.  
I was unaccustomed to that kind of work, and it pained me.  
At Agriprocessors we had half an hour to eat.  
But we had to change out of our bloody uniforms, goggles, and masks  
And then had to wait in line for the microwaves-  
Which were always full!  
By then it was time to get back into our uniforms and re-start the line,  
Cutting and fixing,  
Quartering and cleaning,  
Day after day.  
That is how our time passed, until the day they took us away-  
The day our dreams ended-  
The 12<sup>th</sup> of May...  
-*La Historia de Nuestras Vidas*

The quotes above were taken from the play written and performed by *Teatro Indocumentado*. *Teatro Indocumentado* was an acting ensemble of Guatemalan and Mexican men that were affected by the ICE raid in Postville (see figure 4.2). In the play, *La Historia de Nuestras Vidas*, the actors described their work at Agriprocessors and shared their experiences of immigration, arrest, and imprisonment. Through stage imagery and dramatic reenactments, the collaborative performance followed the men from their home country, through their immigration to the United States, to the working conditions they put up with

once they got here. The play chronicled the raid, their imprisonment, and their experiences of moving from prison to prison. This play represents on a human level the macro ambience described earlier, capturing the impact of the economic factors associated with free trade and development of industrialized agriculture.

In the quote from the play, the actors described their work on the disassembly line at Agriprocessors. In addition to the verbal imagery, all actors donned white hard hats. White was for laborers, and yellow was for supervisors. While wearing the hats signifying their lower position, the actors moved through imaginary mindless and repetitive processes of disassembling animals. Each was responsible for one act of unskilled specialization. The disassembly line is the term that refers to this work assembly line technique of processing a slaughtered animal.

While most of the workers arrested were quickly tried, sentenced, and deported, a few remained in the country to testify in the trial of their plant's owners. After serving their initial time in jail, these were relocated to Decorah, Iowa. They had work permits, but many had trouble finding jobs while they were waiting to testify. Two worked in the cafeteria at Luther College, others performed odd jobs around town<sup>4</sup>, and all offered Spanish language lessons for local Decorah residents. Seven of those workers came up with the idea of putting on a play. One of the actors said it was the best way they could imagine to help people understand what they and other immigrants experience. While in limbo awaiting trial and deportation, the men put on this play.

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<sup>4</sup> Shoveling snow was a popular odd job that winter in Northeast Iowa.

*La Historia de Nuestras Vidas* combined the narratives of all seven men and was performed sixteen times at churches and community centers in three states around the Midwest during 2009. The ensemble of actors shared their experiences of immigration, arrest, and imprisonment through the play that allowed the audience to explore the difficult conditions that force people to migrate. The most powerful parts of the play involved their experiences crossing the border, working at Agriprocessors, and experiencing the ICE raid. My experiences of being an audience member to the play were similar to that described by a critic's description of a performance in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The acting wasn't stellar and the writing wasn't award-winning, but the close of the play brought down the house, and everyone got to their feet to applaud the performance (Combs 2009).

The actors were not professional actors, and the performance was intentionally incomplete and presented as a work in-progress. At many points, the actors actually read directly from the script. The actors explained that they were concerned they would not have very long to learn the script, but they wanted to get the play out before they got deported. Props were limited to cinder blocks, flashlights, blue baseball hats, chains, and hard hats. The cinder blocks were rearranged throughout the performance and used to signify walls and borders of fields, cars, and countries. The flash lights were used when the actors described crossing the US-Mexico border and when ICE agents came into Agriprocessors, played by actors donning blue baseball hats. The chains were added later in the production and used when the workers were arrested. All worked at Agriprocessors. Different colored hard hats signified the workers' position.

Actors portrayed supervisors, but in reality, all worked on the disassembly line. This is what was described in the initial quote. This work on the disassembly line is consistent with the ICE raid as I argue in the next chapter.

Taken as a whole, this play is a poignant ethnographic illustration of the micro experience of push and pull factors. In keeping with the goals described by Matsumoto and Valentine for Sphere I, I also use the play to help understand the ambience (the ‘in situ’ of the performance), to better understand the relationship of the various phenomena in the performance, and to reveal its richness and vitality. Through this play we truly get a sense of the ethnographic setting and its meaning in the performance of the day-to-day in Postville.

#### Postville as ‘Pull’ and ‘Tether’: The Script of Inclusion

In Lee’s theory of migration the pull factors refer to the motives for choosing the place of destination. This raises the question: *why* Postville? What are the motives for this specific community that by account of many Americans could even be described as the middle of nowhere? While the previous section examined the macroeconomic pull factors that certainly account for coming to the United States, and even to a town in the Midwest with a meat processing facility, this still does not fully answer the question. To completely understand ‘why Postville,’ I argue that one must consider the ‘script’ of inclusion that was part of the day to day of Postville performance. In Lee’s theory, Postville as an inclusive place itself becomes a pull. The community itself is a motivation for migrating to this particular destination. Yet Postville also represents something Lee did not

quite capture. Postville not only acts as *pull*, drawing immigrants to the destination, but also as a *tether*, keeping immigrants there.

Patterns of migration often demonstrate that laborers move around the destination country with the flow of labor itself. Yet Postville became a place where entire families moved, and where they even voiced that they wanted to stay. What ‘tethered’ them here? Postville, ‘Home of the World,’ performs a welcoming script, a script of inclusion, which helps immigrants feel less marginalized. This ‘tether’ in turn draws in others as social networks of immigration become established between home communities and Postville. A worker may tell a cousin or brother in Guatemala about a location ‘like home’ but with economic stability, and this becomes a pull factor.

This inclusion can be found in the structures and actions of the community of Postville, seen visually and experienced through performances. A number of new apartment buildings and single-family residences were constructed to accommodate the influx of these immigrant workers and their families, a Pentecostal church was being built amongst the commonly found Lutheran and Catholic churches of the area, English as Second Language (ESL) classes were regularly held, and an estimated half of the pupils in Postville's public kindergarten spoke Spanish as a first language. The Catholic Church's most attended church service on Sundays becomes the Spanish-language service.

As described in earlier chapters, the adult soccer league in Postville also played an important role in the performance of inclusion before the raid. It was the brainchild of community members who wanted to create a welcoming

environment in which there would be less marginalization of immigrants. Moreover, it created a physical, visual, performative inclusion as people of Postville of all backgrounds joined together on the field. Players valued the league as a means of allowing them to feel included, and gave them the ability to bridge their ‘home’ identities. Home could be both their home country (represented through team names, for example), and their physical community of residence. Postville as ‘Home of the World’ acts as a tether by providing a sense of community and identity beyond exclusively ‘laborer’ or ‘worker’ in a meat processing facility.

Interestingly, this script of inclusion does not end following the ICE raid. *Teatro Indocumentado* again provides an excellent example of this. The group was formed with the support of artists and organizers in the Decorah community, was directed by a Decorah resident with directing experience, co-directed by a recent graduate of the local college, and facilitated by numerous translators. The play was performed in Spanish, and an English translation of the play was provided in the program that was available at each showing. The play was free at each performance, and donations were accepted to go to the worker-actors, their families, and St. Bridget’s Catholic Church, the church in Postville that provided relief throughout the aftermath of the raid. Ironically, despite the best efforts of the ICE raid, the continued performance of ‘inclusion’ in the Postville community continues to tether many immigrants not already deported there and may possibly pull others there in the future once the dust from the ICE raid has settled.

## **Conclusions: Postville's Performance 'in situ'**

This chapter has examined sphere I of the CPAS model, the performance in situ, through a description of 'macro' and 'micro' ambience. The intent of Valentine and Matsumoto is that considering the performance in situ should bring awareness the 'senses' of the participants in the performance. In this instance, part of understanding this is addressing the questions: Why immigrate at all? Why immigrate to Postville specifically? I have addressed this through exploring the push and pull factors on a larger socioeconomic scale, but also on the intimate, interpersonal level within Postville.

Slaughterhouse work is dangerous, and Postville as described by the laborers there (exemplified through the words of the workers in the play) is no exception, yet immigrant workers continued coming to Postville. Postville in and of itself was a pull factor. Understanding this also means understanding the larger context from which the push/pull factors emerge. On the macro level there are multiple push factors, represented by free trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA that represent international politico-economic structures. Within Guatemala the violent civil war weakened the economy, and free trade agreements build on this by encouraging the movement of laborers out of their home country.

Along with these push factors emerge the structural pull factors within the United States by the meat slaughter and processing industry, where unskilled, undocumented laborers quickly fill jobs at these plants. On the job, these laborers wield sharp knives, slaughtering and carving animals as they roll by on a belt. In



addition to industrializing rural areas in order to make larger profits, plants must also slaughter and process more animals to make increased profits. This driving force behind concern with worker productivity led to the development of the disassembly line and the increasing speeds at which work is done on these lines. Unfortunately the results of this for laborers themselves are often harsh working conditions, including increased injury. The disassembly line is repetitive and dangerous work, and Postville is no exception. The United States department of Labor's division of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reported that workers suffered lost limbs, broken bones, eye injuries and hearing loss while working at Agriprocessors in Postville (Stull and Broadway 1995). An already economically marginalized population was further taken advantage of and their powerlessness was reinforced.

So why even come to Postville at all? To understand just how powerful these push and pull factors are, it is necessary to understand how difficult the work is and see that *people come to do this work anyway*. This chapter has focused on providing a sense of why that is the case. Speaking in general terms, we see the way socioeconomic factors contribute to this, and indeed to the same pattern in immigration throughout the United States. This is the macro ambience of the performance in situ. But specifically within Postville, I argue a unique pull factor.

During the confusion following the ICE raid, I volunteered at St. Bridget's Catholic Church and was charged with helping to find out about families whose location was unknown. Had they been arrested? Had they fled? Were children

separated from their parents? The volunteers wanted everyone to know they were welcome and that they had community resources at their disposal to help them with food and shelter, should they need it. In the process of this work, I encountered a teacher who, when asked about a young girl that was not in class, said that she had taken her somewhere safe and would not reveal to anyone where she was until she knew ICE was not coming for her. The fierce protection of this child was striking to me. It is what I argue makes Postville unique. This represents—like Spanish language church services, the adult soccer league, and the *Teatro Indocumentado*—a script of inclusion that draws immigrants and tethers them to a community that welcomes them to the ‘Home of the World.’

## **5 Sphere PP and Pre- and Post- Raid Performers**

When I first visited Postville in the summer of 2003, I was drawn there by Mexican food. Having just moved to Iowa from Arizona, I was experiencing some withdrawal from good, hot salsa. Enough so that I was willing to drive twenty miles just to find it. Little did I know that the experience would eventually alter my perspective on understanding this community specifically and American policy toward immigration more generally. Knowing of my interest in sport, a friend informed me that there was a soccer league in Postville, so I planned to go to the restaurant and a game on the same night. When I turned into the grassy parking ‘lot’ around the corner from the restaurant for the game, I encountered the primary performers in the ritual display of identity—simultaneous soccer and baseball games. These games, and their implications for understanding how performance reveals import stories about nationalism, gender, and immigration, are partially the focus of this chapter.

Here I consider the primary performers of Postville, sphere PP of the CPAS method. While the last chapter focused on the discursive elements of the performance, this chapter focuses on the socialization of the everyday performance through considering the ‘actors’ of Postville. In the CPAS method, this sphere concentrates on those “directly responsible for the performance...who perform the actions and words that form the symbolically significant texts appropriate to this particular performative–cultural event” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 76). In the case of Postville, my focus is on the ‘significant texts’ in the ‘performative-cultural events’ centering on nationalism. The nation

provides a powerful script for the actions and words of the primary performers of Postville. Yet in this chapter, I will also consider the way that gender becomes intertwined with nationalism to shape these performances.

Here I consider two types of performative cultural events and primary performers within them: pre-raid sports and post-raid arrest and detainment. The primary performers in these instances center on four main groups: 1) high school baseball players, 2) adult soccer league players, 3) male workers detained and arrested in the ICE raid, and 4) female workers detained and released following the ICE raid.

To analyze the pre-raid performances, I provide ethnographic descriptions of two sports that were occurring concurrently in Postville, high school baseball and adult immigrant soccer, in order to give some sense of everyday complexities and contradictions of belonging, place, and identity in Postville. Furthermore, I consider how different social institutions produce different representations of identity through sports by considering both the case study of Postville and a review of the literature on sport.

To analyze the post-raid performances I describe the detaining and processing of the immigrant laborers from Agriprocessors during and after the ICE raid. While the pre-raid performances reveal aspects of the performances of ‘inclusion,’ the post-raid performances center on “symbolically significant texts” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 76) of exclusion. Moreover, in both of these performative events, the texts reveal important nuances about the relationship between gender and the nation.

Throughout my discussion, I interweave the analysis of these performances with anthropological literature focusing on sport, nationalism, and gender. The chapter concludes by analytically tying together the pre- and post-raid primary performers through a discussion of gender in both sports and immigration. Gender was an implicit part of the adult soccer league and an explicit part of the ICE raid. In both cases, it became a lesson as well as a product of identity formation.

### **Sport and Pre-Raid Primary Performers**

Before the raid, I argue that the “actions and words that form the symbolically significant texts” of two different sports centered on two simultaneous, yet potentially contradictory ideals: 1) inclusion and multiculturalism as represented by the adult soccer league and its players and 2) American nationalism and rural pastoralism as represented by the high school baseball team and its players. Yet these performances and their contradictions also capture the interesting ‘home of the world’ that Postville proclaims itself to be. These ‘texts’ performed by both sets of primary performers are imbued with complex ideas about nation, community, and identity. I will also consider one specific element of identity implicitly intertwined with nation that is represented in these pre-raid performances: gender.

### Dueling Sports

To get to the first soccer game I attended, I had to drive twenty minutes from my home, dodging the occasional slow moving farm machinery on the two lane county highway through the fields of America’s heartland. While finding the

small rural town was easy, finding a parking space was not. The open partially grassy area designated as a parking lot was misleadingly full. Cars, vans, and trucks were parked in any area that might be conceived as a parking spot in the grassy field. I soon realized that the crowd was there for a different game.

The soccer field was part of the high school athletic fields. It was tucked behind the school next to a baseball field and doubled as the football practice field. Yet most of the people parked in the lot were not at the soccer game. Instead, the baseball field was where most of the drivers and their passengers were. The high school's Postville Pirates were playing some away team from Cresco or Waverly or Waukon—all nearby Iowa towns of roughly the same size and with a similar feel of Mayberry, USA. I had to walk past the ongoing high school game, the crowd of white spectators, and the English announcer in order to get to the Spanish announcer, the brown faces, and the empty seats of the soccer game at the nearby slightly inferior field. The dueling voices of the announcers and their two languages were immediately obvious. The accordion of the *conjunto* music and Spanish lyrics that played at the soccer games clashed with the rock and roll of John Fogerty. Yet the separate fields, simultaneous games, competing music, and dueling announcers seemed to work. Everyone was playing despite (or possibly because of) the seriousness of their context.

#### *Adult Soccer League*

Although very insightful at understanding the historical context for the everyday performance of Postville, one weakness of the push/pull theory of immigration is that it does not specifically get at Why Postville? What was

unique to Postville that brought immigrants there rather than to other meat processing towns? And, as I described in chapter four, what was the ‘tether’ that kept immigrants there once they arrived? I argue one unique factor to Postville was the adult soccer league and Helping Services of Northeast Iowa (HSNI) as described in chapter three on competing narratives

As I previously described, the adult soccer league in Postville was funded by a grant from HSNI in an effort to bolster community attachment with and among the immigrant influx and to create an inclusive Postville community. Helping Services as a private, non-profit agency strives to support the community and works to help create an environment that is safe, nurturing, and a healthy place for children and adults to live.

In April 2008, I attended the first organizational meeting for the summer season of the year. The meeting was held on a Tuesday evening at the local YMCA. HSNI yearly organized the league as they had from the beginning as described in chapter three. HSNI would make the schedules, find referees, and secure permission from the high school to use the soccer field. However after the league got established, the players took care of the logistics for organizing summer seasons, and HSNI was removed from the equation. By this point of the meeting, the players had taken over the responsibility of organizing the league. Because an adult ballroom dancing class was using the conference room, tables were set up on half of the gym floor on this night. Only once did a basketball from the pick-up game on the other half of the court interrupt the proceedings. The majority of the discussion of the meeting centered around getting individual

passport pictures for substitution cards necessary to play that year. Since many of the players did not have legal documentation allowing them to be in the country, the logistics of getting a passport photo was unknown and of understandable concern.

At the meeting, only team captains were required to attend. It was assumed and understood that many of the players themselves would not be able to be there, since they worked the night shift at the meat processing plant. Despite this appropriate assumption, only one team captain had to get someone to go in his place to the meeting, and about half way through he relieved his son from sitting in for his absence. The meeting itself was almost entirely in Spanish as the demographics of the league had changed over time. In 2008, most immigrants and most soccer players were Mexican and Guatemalan. An Eastern European immigrant population was much smaller than it had been in the early days of Agriprocessors, and hence the “Russian” team had been disbanded after winning the championship game of the very first season. Any remaining Eastern Europeans played on Mexican and Guatemalan teams. With the exception of two people, all present for the organizational meeting that night were native Spanish speakers. Along with the anthropologist in the room (i.e. me), the other exception was the high school Spanish teacher, who was also one of the writers of the grant that initially funded the creation of the league. She was there to introduce me to those that I did not already know and help ease any concern raised by a gringo asking questions.



Despite the disruption of our presence, there was a feeling of excitement at the meeting, and the captains went about doing what needed to be done. The excitement seemed to be related to two things. There was palpable joy that the summer season was going to start soon. There had been a somewhat newly formed indoor soccer league that played in the winter, but since most of the players came from places without snow, everyone was excited to return outdoors to grass and warmer weather. Secondly, the captains were happy that local businesses (including Agriprocessors) had agreed to sponsor the teams as they had done in the past and provide some financial assistance that would help ensure a successful summer soccer season. The first games were scheduled for the first weekend on May. There would be two on Friday night and two on Saturday night. I was planning on being there, and a couple of the team captain that weren't playing were going to meet me.

The excitement felt that night was also present at nearly every soccer game. At the first game I attended, it did not seem to matter whatsoever that the baseball game was also happening at the same time. Players were able to listen to their native language, people danced to music, ate concession stand food, and children ran on and off the field. Symbolically and physically the immigrant was given a place to play and exist within society. Since play is, of course, quite serious, the soccer league helped shape a sense of identity that was not 'only' an immigrant but also a member of the Postville community. The league fostered a sense of being included in the Postville community, providing physical space for the players, and a sense of being part of something publically visible. This type

of inclusion in the community—despite a lack of documentation—is quite different from the type of extreme marginalization Chavez (1992) describes of immigrants in California, who often must live life in the ‘shadows’ of society. The soccer league provided the players a means of living in full view of the Postville community. If, as Valentine and Matsumoto describe, the players “perform the actions and words” that create the texts of meaning, then the soccer players are performing a sense of belonging and inclusion in this town and perhaps symbolically in American society more generally.

### *High School Baseball in Postville*

Another symbolic performance of American identity was being enacted and expressed on a different field next to the first soccer game that I attended. The Postville Pirate’s high school baseball games are like any other high school baseball games that I have experienced. There was nothing usual about the Friday night in 2001. The smoke and smells of hamburgers cooking on the grill at the concession stand filled the air and mixed with the voice that was being projected over the PA system announcing who’s up to bat. “Next up is Jimmie Erickson.” The German and Norwegian last names were one of the few things that distinguished Postville from any other high school games outside of the Midwest. The cornfields in the background were the other. Postville is very rural; the town is surrounded by cornfields and pastures. These cornfields and pastures are the backdrops to the outfield and conjure images of baseball players walking out of the cornfields and onto the baseball field like in the scenes from the film *Field of Dreams*, set and filmed in Iowa and discussed in chapter three. Music filled the

time between innings, and John Fogerty's *Centerfield* was often played before and during games with lyrics echoing:

*Oh, put me in, coach - I'm ready to play today  
Put me in, coach - I'm ready to play today;  
Look at me, I can be centerfield.*

The rock beat of drums and cords of electric guitar mixed with the lyrics to produce an aura of anticipation for the inning to come.

Home games are played at the Postville Pirate's stadium next to the school and football field. The entryway to the field is from the parking lot across the street. The lot is full of cars with the bus or two of the visiting team and their fans that traveled by bus with them. Permanent seating is on the first base and third base sides, and folding outdoor chairs that the fans bring with them fill the area between third base and the outfield. The aluminum stands are usually full of parents of players, students of the high school, and the occasional other community members that just want the entertainment. Only parents and the occasional community member seem to sit in the folding chairs. Often there are a few visitors in the stands on the first base side. There's the talking in-between the action that goes along with baseball, and there is good Midwestern silence when someone is up to bat. There is always a temporary sign hanging that advertises the weekly meetings of the booster club and whatever current fundraiser is underway. The sign always states that everyone is welcome to attend the booster club meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Mott Lobby of the high school. However the sign always politely reminds everyone

that if you cannot attend, the meeting notices are also in the Pirate Post, the high school newspaper that some in the community also receive.

The players of the high school baseball games are also the primary actors of a different type of American identity and help to construct community in a different way. To fully examine and analyze this, I review the anthropological literature on sport, particularly baseball, to place it in cultural context and better understand its particular role as ‘American’ sport. This establishes strong evidence that sports such as soccer and baseball in Postville are more than just games, but also a key element for shaping and performing identity.

#### Sport and National Identity in Anthropological Context

As I described in chapter three, “If you build it, they will come” is a quote from a book and movie about baseball that depicts a specific vision of America involving America’s heartland and rural pastoralism. In both, baseball players emerge out of the cornfield of the protagonist’s farm in order to play the game. The quote was what the protagonist heard that assure him that building a baseball field in his cornfield was a good idea<sup>5</sup>. The uniquely American aspects of the game, and hence its connection to a specific version of the nation, is also described in anthropological literature focusing on baseball.

In 1964, Leslie White suggested in his presidential address to the American Anthropology Association (AAA) that “anthropology could lend a credible model for the study of sport [especially baseball] which he saw as a vital

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<sup>5</sup> Shots involving the house and field were filmed in Dyersville, Iowa. For this, a baseball field was built in a cornfield. The house and field remained after the filming of the movie completed. It is now a tourist attraction, and on the last Friday of every month in the summer, players emerge from the cornfield in order to play a game for the spectators.

expression of the American Cultural system (Sands 1999: 6). Anthropological studies of baseball have resulted but have not solely focused on the “American Cultural system.” Despite the lack of attention from anthropology that sports have received in general, baseball is an exception. Although the focus has been on one sport, a variety of insights has resulted from the diversity of theoretical approaches applied. Thus, the studies of baseball in anthropology can be used to demonstrate the numerous theoretical orientations that have been applied to sports and can be applied in the future. These applications demonstrated that all grand theories have merit, and all have shortcomings.

Studies of baseball began prior to the emergence of TASP. Three years prior to Leslie White’s call, Robin Fox (1961), explored the use of magic by the Pueblo in games of baseball. His study is from the perspective of Structural-Functionalism. From this orientation, sport is treated as a social institution that is understood in terms of its relationship to other components or institutions in societies and cultures. As a part of the whole, “sport may be seen as reinforcing or supporting other dimensions of the system, such as law, politics, or religion” (Blanchard 69). Fox analyzed the ways that the newly introduced sport of baseball provided for the exercise of old forms of witchcraft.

Like Fox previously, George Gmelch approached the issue of magic in baseball, however unlike the structural-functionalist perspective used by Fox to investigate baseball among the Pueblo, Gmelch approached baseball from a functionalist perspective to investigate magic and superstition among professional baseball players in the United States. In 1972, Gmelch produced an “entertaining,

yet insightful” (Sands 1999: 5) study by comparing Malinowski’s functionalist observations of magic and risk in Trobriand society to ritual and superstition in American baseball. Malinowski contended that behaviors with increased risks resulted in greater uses of magic, and as Malinowski’s theory would suggest, Gmelch found that positions of higher uncertainty were correlated with increased superstition of players. From a functionalist perspective, a cultural phenomenon is understood in relationship to its roles in meeting individual human needs. As the two approaches to baseball demonstrate, both orientations stress concern with interdependence based on need, however functionalism is concerned with individual needs and structural-functionalism with societal needs.

The functionalist and structural-functional perspectives provide for static approaches to sports and other cultural phenomenon by focusing on cultural maintenance and continuity. While potential benefits result from these perspectives, potential dangers emerge from the glossing over of the dynamics of cultures and sports. Klein argued,

The idea that sport acts as a prop for the societal status quo—that sport and society enjoy a simplistic functional relationship—is not so much erroneous as incomplete. The function of sport is complex- it simultaneously reflects and obscures social and cultural phenomena (Klein 1995:113 ).

Thus, these perspectives provide an incomplete account of sports in societies.

Other perspectives are needed to complete the dynamic representations and understandings.

From an evolutionary theoretical perspective, sports are examined and explained by their development through an ordered process, with the present

being explained in reference to the past. Compared to the static portrayals of the structural-functional and functional perspectives used by Fox and Gmelch, evolutionary theoretical orientations offer dynamic representations. Although evolutionary models allow change through time, the processes often (implicitly or explicitly) involve hierarchical progress. Additionally, static categories may be used within the processes of evolutionary models. The benefits and limitations of the evolutionary theoretical orientations are demonstrated in studies of baseball by Guttman (1978) and Blanchard (1981).

In his 1978 monograph, Guttman (1978) examined the development from “primitive” sports to modern sport. A breakdown of traditional religious systems and the emergence of a pervasive secularity were significant historic factors that determined this sequence. Guttman placed baseball within his unilineal evolutionary argument and identified several features of the sport that would explain why baseball is considered the national game of the United States. Guttman (1978) contended that the national preference for the sport can be explained by a *quantified pastoralism* resulting from the importance of pastoral impulses in the game (e.g. space, grass, warm weather, bright sun) mixed with extremes of quantification as athletic feats are measured and statistics are readily quoted. Within the evolutionary process, the national preference for baseball was furthered by the ease of access for non-elites due to an increased role of technology in baseball’s promotion (e.g. railroads, telegraph, press, radio).

Another example of evolutionary stage theory was provided by Blanchard (1981; 1995). In his text, Blanchard (1995) used an evolutionary stage theory to

survey sports cross-culturally throughout history. An evolutionary perspective was useful for classifying large amounts of data from a wide range of cultures. Within his constructed typology, the Choctaw were placed in a band society category, but in his ethnography (i.e. Blanchard 1981), Blanchard dealt with contemporary Choctaw softball in the United States that clearly did not fit within the evolutionary stage. Ethnographic descriptions of the contemporary group reminded that cultures are dynamic; the static categorization of Choctaw as a primitive band society is not congruent with his ethnographic research on contemporary Choctaw baseball. While the evolutionary schema did allow Blanchard to work with a large amount of data, the incongruity with his ethnography can be seen as an example of the grand theory's limitation.

Evolutionary perspectives allowed for Guttman and Blanchard to account for the dynamics of culture and the relationships with sports. Despite that both accounted for the processual limitations of the functionalist and structural-functionalist perspectives, both remained incomplete, and both neglected issues of power and meanings.

The Marxist perspective leads to understandings of sports as tools of oppression. Issues of power and capitalism are highlighted as benefits of such an approach. Thomas Carter (2002) argued, "sport always involves issues of power" (405), and this was evident when Klein (1991, 1995 #131) examined the history of baseball in the Dominican Republic as reflected in the sugar cane industry. Issues of hegemony and resistance were of utmost importance as he demonstrated how the sport mirrors the society's conflicting feeling of acceptance and rejection



of American national power. Klein (1995) argued, “what is significant in all of this is that the tension between hegemony and resistance centers upon the sport of baseball” (127) and demonstrated that “in examining baseball’s cultural and ideological role in the Dominican Republic, it is important to consider the relations between the United States and the Dominican Republic...” (111). Throughout the book, Klein included firsthand observations of the team and descriptions of its players while raising theoretical issues of resistance, nationalism, and masculinity. In a separate study, Klein (1997) examined the Tecolotes de los Dos Laredos, a baseball team with homes in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and Laredo, Texas, USA. Similar to his study of baseball in the Dominican Republic, power was a central underlying component as he explored issues of nationalism and transnationalism through the experiences of the baseball team, its players, and its fans.

Bradd Shore (1994; 1996) presented a very different perspective and argued that meanings are embedded within public performances that provide for the internalized templates of shared knowledge. He borrowed from the symbolic and interpretive orientations similar to Geertz’s analysis of the Balinese cock fight (1973) and applied these insights to a cognitive theoretical orientation. Shore (2002) analyzed baseball as “a pageant linked closely with the American world view, emphasizing the structural patterns that shape baseball time, baseball space, and the social relationships choreographed by the rules of the game” (29). Baseball is put into practice through behavior and the interpretation of behavior and appears to function as more a matter of fun rather than practical business.

However, models such as this provide for one resource by which people make meanings in their lives.

The differences stemming from the divergent theoretical underpinnings are obvious, but the similarities of the works by Klein and Shore are potentially more telling. Both provided an example of dominate theoretical perspectives, but both were driven by ethnography, although in different ways and to varying degrees. Klein used an ethnographic case to get at larger issues. He used stories of individuals to raise theoretical concerns and make connections with sport, borderlands, nationalism, and masculinity. In contrast, Shore's research is motivated by the goal of locating "the cognitive life of culture and the cultural life of the mind" (311). He maintained an ethnographic view of the mind and used a series of cultural case studies, baseball being one, to demonstrate the importance of specific cultural models in everyday thinking and that cultural experience is comprehended in several different ways at the same time. Taken together, the authors use a single sport, ethnographically examine it in differing contexts, and explore the issues of meaning and power that contextualize the experiences of those connected to it.

#### Sport and Identity Formation in Pre-Raid Postville

What does this review of literature reveal about soccer and baseball in Postville and about the "significant texts" performed by the actors? First, it is clear that identity and sport are clearly tied together. Whether this identity be one of the high school baseball team's expression of the "American world view" (Shore 2002) or of the transnational identity expressed through the adult soccer

league, similar to that documented by Klein (1997), sport enacts meaning beyond play, and the performers are key in facilitating this. The primary performers in these sports each enact a type of national identity in particular—baseball as American national identity and soccer as a hybrid national identity that often comes with transnational experiences. As performers, they help make tangible the script of national identity to others as well. Yet the review of the literature also demonstrates that this functional perspective is not, as Klein (1995) argued, the complete picture. Indeed, the function of sport is complex. While it may represent these aspects of national identity, it is also about the entanglement of this identity with other aspects of culture and society.

Carter's (2002) assertion that sport involves power is a central lesson for considering Postville. This is poignantly seen in the physical location of the performances of baseball and soccer during my very first visit to Postville, replayed throughout the years of the existence of the soccer league. Even though community members in Postville have gone out of their way to act a script of inclusion, the juxtaposition of these sports reveals some of the nuances of how this script actually plays out in all its complexities. While the soccer games were slightly on the 'margins' of sport in this situation, baseball was literally at the center symbolically representing 'American' identity.

Perhaps in part because of this, the adult soccer league has produced mixed results when creating the community solidarity that it was originally designed to produce. There is no question that the formation of the league helped in the creation of a unified immigrant community where one had not previously

existed in Postville. Moreover, it helped to address any potential feelings of marginalization (and indeed did foster feelings of inclusion among immigrants), by providing physical, ritual, and symbolic space for expression of identity.

To some extent, the league also had the unintended result of erroneously lumping a diverse group into one cultural unit—the “Hispanic Immigrant.” While the league was dependent on some degree of homogeneity (Spanish speaking, for example), the visualization of the “Hispanic Immigrant” through the performance of sport also potently reinforces the divisions of this Midwestern community, particularly when juxtaposed next to powerful scripts of American national identity such as baseball. In the case of soccer in Postville, national imagination is progressive and unifying while at the same time being divisive and reactionary. The boundaries of the “Hispanic Immigrant” were reinforced by the soccer league as a meaningful social category that fits within the preexisting social stratification system of United States society and allows for the effective application of discourses and practices of ICE and Homeland Security.

Ultimately identity is recreated through the primary performers in complex ways that can be contradictory: inclusive yet exclusive, constructing community yet othering. Players do experience the league and their participation in it as being valuable, aiding them in feeling like part of something. Yet the “Hispanic Immigrant” identity is also reinforced by the soccer league as a meaningful social category, one that fits within the preexisting social stratification system of the American society and is reflective of the discourse and practices of ICE and Homeland Security.

## Sport Performance as Gendered Texts

While gender is not explicitly stated, the “Hispanic Immigrant” (and possibly the “American”) is gendered. People adapt to their social environment through categorization and stereotyping (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Much of this involves boundary creations separating some and unifying others. Several social psychologists have argued that this automatic process often involves organization by gender. For example, Ridgeway (1997) argued that humans “automatically and unconsciously gender-categorize any specific other to which we relate” (220). In future social dynamics, meanings are changed as a result of prior categorization. Fiske (1998 ) argued that inclusion and exclusion of groups often results from the automatic processes that generate categorization by gender. As part of this automatic and unconscious classifying, gender has an interesting relationship to sport and that is reflected in the adult soccer league, the “Hispanic Immigrant”, and the ICE raid. Although unmarked, gender plays an import role in identity formation and the domain PP.

Sports are one institution that produces and reproduces social and symbolic boundaries of identities. In Postville, high school baseball and the adult soccer league are two examples of cultural mechanisms for the production and reproduction of these social boundaries. The former assists in the formation of an “American,” and the latter in the “Hispanic Immigrant.” In both cases, boundaries in social relations and identity formation produce and reinforce principles of classification. Gender is one such category and is an implicit aspect of these. Both high school baseball and the adult soccer league are gendered.

The baseball player and the Hispanic Immigrant are implicitly marked as male. This is reflected in the literature on sports and the practices of HSNI and ICE.

The adult soccer league in Postville was designed to bolster community attachment. Gender ideologies were reflected and reinforced in who played and who did not play; this is also true for baseball. In Postville, there were more immigrant men than women. The pattern that seemed to exist fairly consistently was either single men or families would immigrate to Postville. Married men would sometimes travel alone while women would stay home with the families. Ideologically men were laborers, and women were family caretakers even if some women also worked at Agriprocessors. Although it was never an explicit rule, only men played the game. Women who were interested would attend the game along with their families. Rarely would single women attend, but there were very few non-married Hispanic Immigrant women. Men were players, and women were family caretakers.

Although sports often function to unite across social cleavages, sports regularly separate women from men by constructing and reinforcing gender ideologies (Theberge 2000). Gender constructions in sports have provided for fertile grounds for the analyses of feminist theory “to theorize about gender relations within our patriarchal society as they are evidenced by, played out in, and reproduced thorough sport and other body practices” (Birrell 2000:61) While no single perspective exists within the realm of feminist theory, there is general agreement that gender is a social construction and society exists as a patriarchy, and

When one talks about ‘feminist theory and sport’ what is generally meant is not just that one is studying gender in sport but *how* one is studying it: to make a claim that one is doing feminist analysis is to make a commitment to an explicitly theoretical approach to the interpretation of sports as a gendered activity (Birrell 2000:61).

Furthermore, reflection on previous studies may further provide additional insight as “most of what is known about sport is based on studies of white males” (Frey and Eitzen 1991:516, and even as sport scholarship has expanded, women continue to be largely neglected {Dufur, 1999 #156:584).

Feminist perspectives on sports focus not just on women, but on gender ideologies, gender dynamics, and gender relations. Focus on masculinity has been insightful for this.

Just as all research on girls and women in sport is not necessarily feminist, not all feminist work focuses on girls and women. A growing area of interest, fostered by the growth of the men’s studies movement, is on men in sport, on the ways that sport serves to consolidate male privilege. And on the often deleterious impact that masculine ideologies played out in sport have on many boys and men (Birrell 2000:61).

The focus on masculinity and sports has increased with the publication of several edited volumes on the subject (i.e. McKay, et al. 2000; Messner and Sabo 1990; Messner and Sabo 1994). Research suggests that male participation in “men’s sports” rarely challenges masculine hegemony, but rather celebrates a specific hegemonic version of masculinity. However, female involvement in “men’s sports” or “women’s sports” is often subjected to either homophobia or sexualization of women’s bodies (Theberge 2000).

Several studies of sports and gender have focused on the body. Many of these have followed the suggestions of Douglas (1973), who argued

The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other (93).

In one example, Klein (1993) used ethnographic methodology to analyze the bodybuilding culture as situated in the gym. With issues of masculinity at the forefront, Klein first established the bodybuilder subculture, then explored the politics and economics of competitive bodybuilding, and concluded with an analysis and critique of the hyperbolic ideals of *comic-book masculinity*. His critique was directed toward cultural ideologies, not bodybuilding per se, as he explained,

I use bodybuilding as a metaphor and an overly simplistic and defensive answer to the difficult and elusive questions posed by our societal notions of masculinity (8).

Bolin (2003) argued that the merger of feminism with postmodernism has produced provocative new paradigms for approaching the physical self. Drawing from these, Bolin examined women's struggles into the sports arenas of male hegemony and used the ethnographic case study of weightlifting to explore issues of identity, embodiment, and meaning. In addition to these examples, attention to sport and the body has been directed toward notions of disability and sports (e.g. Nixon 2002) and has further Douglas's concerns with the intersections of physical and social bodies.

### **ICE Raid and Post-Raid Primary Performers**

To analyze the post-raid performances, I focus on the detaining and processing of the immigrant laborers from Agriprocessors during and after the



ICE raid. While the pre-raid performers reveal aspects of the performances of ‘inclusion,’ the post-raid performances center on “symbolically significant texts” (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 76) of exclusion. Moreover, in both of these performative events, the texts reveal important nuances about the relationship between gender and nation and the ways gender can be used to support nationalist ‘texts.’

According to Valentine and Matsumoto (2001) performers are distinguished by a “physical separation from the audience and a heightened sense of purpose and are the persons who carry out the linguistic and nonverbal actions demanded by the text and situation” (76). The physical separation they describe is one reason that the ICE raid is such a powerful performance of national identity. While certainly the games of baseball and soccer played in Postville also have physical separation and merit consideration of their players as primary performers, the separation during the ICE raid has a double meaning—not only does it serve the purpose of defining the primary performers (in this case those who are detained), but the separation also has symbolic value for othering those who were arrested. The physical separation that occurs is indeed not just what defines some of the primary performers here, it is part of the performance itself, as the detainees are hauled from Agriprocessors and placed into a separate space. The separation serves of carrying out the “actions demanded by the text...” of exclusion.

## Immigrant Detainees and Texts of Exclusion

The focus on creating separation and othering within the ICE raid are visually and symbolically powerful means of othering the three hundred eighty-nine workers from Agriprocessors who were arrested on May 12, 2008. In this particular performance, the actors included both these workers—nearly all Spanish speakers from either Mexico or Guatemala—and the ICE agents and participants—nine hundred government workers who were all native English speakers. Unlike the adult soccer league where the participants are able to (at least to some degree) choose their performance, during the ICE raid one set of actors limited and determined the roles that the other set would play. This lack of control in the performance, yet the ways in which immigrants are ‘made’ primary performers, is expressed in *La Historia de Nuestras Vidas*:

I had just arrived to my department and began putting on my uniform. Just as I finished, someone nearby started yelling: ‘La Migra! La Migra!’ It frightened me when I heard all of the people yelling: ‘La Migra! La Migra! Hide ! Hide!’ Everyone was running. *I ran-* to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor- where I hid with four of my co-workers, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor- where I hid between boxes. *I hid.* I waited there for two hours, Listening to the police and immigration officers pass by. Scared that they would find me. *They found me.*

Another woman discussed her experience as a detainee at a Community Immigration Forum held in the auditorium of the local community college, saying, “I don’t know why this happened. They told us to buy these papers with numbers. They told us those were made up numbers.” These quotes reflect that the primary performers were very limited in their choices, yet their actions are still part of the performance. In this case, this performance is shaped by the U.S.

government with the text of exclusion—practiced in particular through a performance of separation. As described earlier in this chapter, one of the most powerful ways this was performed was through literally separating those who were arrested visually—through five point shackles and by detaining them in an area designed for cattle.

At the same hour of the raid, twenty-six federally certified interpreters from all over the country converged on Waterloo, Iowa. The interpreters had been contacted a month in advance, but had no idea of their mission as the U.S. District Court could not compromise the impending raid by explaining their need. Camayd-Freixas was one such interpreter. He wrote a first-hand account of the events following the raid and described his arrival:

I was instructed by phone to meet at 7am in the hotel lobby and carpool to the National Cattle Congress (NCC) where we would begin our work. We arrived at the heavily guarded compound, went through security, and gathered inside the retro ‘Electric Park Ballroom’ where a makeshift court had been set up (Camayd-Freixas 2008: 1).

In his description of the closed proceedings, one instance in particular captured the essence of the performance designed to create separation through the five point shackles. These shackles themselves physically created separation, and they also led to instances that visually ‘confirmed’ the sense of otherness within the performance:

Several men and women were weeping...one of them was sobbing and would repeatedly struggle to bring a sleeve to her nose, but her wrists were shackled around her waist and simply could not reach; so she just dripped until she was taken away with the rest of them (Camayd-Freixas 2008: 4).

The texts enacted by these primary performers demonstrate something powerfully different than what occurred in Postville prior to the raid, where the adult soccer league represented an attempt to be welcoming. These examples demonstrate that after the ICE raid, the goal of the performances—‘directed’ by the structure of the government initiated event—was markedly different. The intent of the community of Postville was directly contradicted by the raid and the performances of exclusion that followed.

### Gender and Primary Performers

These texts, however, are not exclusively telling stories about exclusion. In this section, I focus on the workers detained and the ways in which their actions (though not necessarily ones they chose) gendered them, and in the process gendered the ‘Hispanic Immigrant’ and, perhaps, immigration itself. To do this, I examine the treatment of male workers detained and arrested in the ICE raid and the female workers detained and released following the ICE raid. I explain the roles both sets of this primary performers played but focus in particular on the gendered performances of those arrested.

Since their performances were not in instances of their choosing, it is important to note that the gendered aspects of these performances are not necessarily a reflection of ‘texts’ that are symbolically significant to these workers themselves (though they may be) but that they are gendered texts reflective of significant American ideals carried out through government actors. As described in the adult soccer league as well, gender is always present, even if unmarked. Men played the game in Postville; women did not. While this does

enact a script of gender, this gendered script is a better reflection of the beliefs and ideals of those actually playing the game. Since the immigrant ‘actors’ have little control over this post-raid, it is hard to say to what extent it is a reflection of their important beliefs and values. However the way gender gets structured into immigration policy post-raid clearly demonstrates that it is important for ‘Americans’ and perhaps even in enforcing an American identity.

While women did not play soccer in Postville, they did work at Agriprocessors and were arrested. However, they were treated differently than men based on these gender ideologies that were reflected and reinforced in the process. As I described before, arrest warrants were issued for six hundred ninety-seven people at the plant when approximately nine hundred ICE agents, armed with assault weapons and accompanied by helicopters and police dogs, raided Agriprocessors. Of those taken into custody, the majority were Guatemalan or Mexican. Three hundred and fourteen were men, and seventy-six were women. All were workers. No company officers at Agriprocessors were arrested at the time. Even though men and women were both arrested during the raid and became unwitting actors in the performance of separation, after the arrests men and women would enact different types of performances of separation. The different treatments, however, are both exclusionary, leading me to distinguish ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ texts of exclusion to refer to these two different gendered performances both designed to create separation.

*Feminine Texts of Exclusion*

While arrested with the same warrants for committing a felony crime, forty-eight of those detained were released on probation because they had “dependent minors” and were given a GPS<sup>6</sup> ankle bracelet to track their location. This option for release was offered only to women, however. The ‘anklet’ had to be worn by the women. The GPS ankle bracelets had to be worn by the women at all times, had to be plugged in at night, and allowed the authorities to monitor their whereabouts at all times.

The government made assumptions about who cares for children—i.e. women—and these assumptions were translated into the gendered treatment of those arrested. While the treatment differed based on gender, this was still a performance of exclusion even though women were offered probation. An interesting element of this distinction is that this is clearly based on cultural perceptions of gender not on sex alone. There were other women arrested who were charged and were not given probation. These women, however, denied having dependent minors, later describing their fear that their children might be sought out and deported if they were identified. They had no idea that this acknowledgment would possibly have meant that they could have avoided time in prison. It was not being female that determined whether probation was given or not but the presence of ‘feminine’ behavior that did.

Women who had initially been arrested were visually marked and ‘separated’ with a ‘scarlet letter’ of the GPS anklet. The women were not allowed

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<sup>6</sup> Global Positioning Satellite

to leave the community, yet they were also not allowed to work legally in the United States. While they remained in Postville, their presence became a daily reminder of the exclusion attempted by the ICE raid. They were unable to participate in the US economy. Ironically this had in some ways the opposite effect that ICE intended. Since the women were unable to work, yet had dependents to support, the community of Postville rallied to support them. This is just another example of the competing and disparate ideas about immigration in the ‘inclusion’ of the community of Postville set against the ‘exclusion’ of the American government.

### *Masculine Texts of Exclusion*

The men arrested—and the women who denied having children—were also primary performers in texts of exclusion. Following the ICE raid on May 12, 2008, the workers were taken to the National Cattle congress, a cattle fairground that had been transformed into a ‘detention center.’ This performance created a powerful separation between the workers—the ‘immigrants’—and the rest of American society. Yet this separation was not enough; every part of these events contributed to the ‘othering’ and exclusion of the workers. One of the most powerful performances was described by Spanish language interpreter Erik Camayd-Freixas (2008),

Driven single-file in groups of 10, shackled at the wrists, waist and ankles, chains dragging as they shuffled through, the slaughterhouse workers were brought in for arraignment, sat and listened through headsets to the interpreted initial appearance, before marching out again to be bused to different county jails, only to make room for the next row of 10. They appeared to be uniformly no more than 5 ft. tall, mostly illiterate Guatemalan peasants with Mayan last names, some being relatives

(various Tajtaj, Xicay, Sajché...), some in tears; others with faces of worry, fear, and embarrassment. They all spoke Spanish, a few rather laboriously... They stood out in stark racial contrast with the rest of us as they started their slow penguin march across the makeshift court (2).

This process of exclusion continued as the government had established a judicial assembly line through which the meat packers were being processed in groups of 17 or 18. This processing was part of the process of othering, of dehumanizing, and of removing any of the individuality held by the workers. As Camayd-Freixas (2008) noted of his experience,

there was little to remind us that they were actually individuals, except that occasionally, as through to break the monotony, one would dare to speak for the others and beg to be deported quickly so that they could feed their families back home” (4).

The workers were given two possibilities. The first option was that they could plead guilty to the charge of “knowingly using a false Social Security number,” and the government would withdraw the more serious charge of “aggravated identity theft.” They would then serve five months in jail, and then be deported without a hearing and placed on supervised release for three years. The second ‘choice’ was that they could plead not guilty and wait in jail six to eight months for a trial without right of bail since the workers are immigration detainees. Even if the case went to trial and eventually a worker was found not guilty, they would still be deported and most likely end up waiting longer in jail than if they had just pled guilty to begin with. They would also risk losing at trial and receiving a two year minimum sentence followed by deportation. These “options” clearly structured the ‘script’ of exclusion. A worker spent time in prison even if they would make the choice to go to trial. But given the limited nature of these



“options” and the way they were set up, the script meant that the workers would most likely chose to be convicted as a criminal.

Interestingly, it is unlikely that most of the workers were actually guilty according to the letter of the law. A necessary element of the lesser charge was that it was done “knowingly” with “intent.” Yet most of the workers did not actually know what a Social Security number actually was. Regardless of true legal guilt, this became the lesser of two evils. This was captured well by Camayd-Freixas (2008) as he describes one interaction between a lawyer and one of the workers.

This worker simply had the papers filled out for him at the plant, since he could not read or write Spanish, let alone English. But the lawyer still had to advise him that pleading guilty was in his best interest... To him we were part of the system keeping him from being deported back to his country, where his children, wife, mother, and sister depended on him. He was their sole support and did not know how they were going to make it with him in jail for 6 months. None of the “options” really mattered to him... He stared for a while at the signature page pretending to read it, although I knew he was actually praying for guidance and protection. Before he signed with a scribble, he said: “God knows you are just doing your job to support your families, and that job is to keep me from supporting mine (6).

The options given to the workers were a clear reflection of the new face of immigration policy, one that demonstrates the way in which these workers became primary performers. Rather than just deporting the workers, it was a central piece of the performance that the primary performers serve time as criminals—to criminalize immigration.

Every one of the individuals charged took the plea agreement. After serving five months in prison they were eventually deported back to Guatemala or

Mexico. The performance of exclusion here is so obvious that it probably goes without saying, since the primary performers are put in prison and literally kicked out of the country. The script: you are immigrants, you are criminals, you are not welcome.

### *The Masculine Immigrant*

Because of the enormous scale of this ICE raid and the large number of criminal convictions that resulted from it, the raid has raised significant debate about immigration. However, Pickard (2009) argued that

One element missing from this discussion is an analysis that takes into account the way that the conflict of immigration itself—as well as its aftermath—has been gendered (1).

A consideration of gender in the ICE raid helps illuminate two points of analysis about immigration simultaneously: 1) American immigration policy is gendered and 2) the ‘logic’ of American immigration policy is dependent on this gendering.

In the first point, immigration policy, as seen through the lens of the ICE raid in Postville, reflects and reinforces traditionally conceived gender roles by treating women as mothers and men as laborers. The gendered aftermath of the ICE raid is clear. Forty-eight women were shackled with probation and GPS bracelets to care for dependent minors. Three hundred fourteen men were sentenced to five months in prison. In the aftermath of the raid, gender was clearly an organizing principle. Women’s primary role as *mothers* rather than laborers was emphasized, and men’s roles as *laborers* rather than fathers was emphasized.

The second point of analysis, while more difficult to pull apart from the events of Postville is a powerful implication of how gender is used to tell stories that legitimate immigration policy. The masculine texts of exclusion in the ICE raid were based on the assumption that men's primary role was an economic one, not one based on family obligations. Men were not asked if they were caregivers to children and hence not even given an option for probation, and women who were asked but said that they did not, were treated in the same way as were men. The notion of the 'masculine' immigrant—a person defined exclusively by their labor—is also more generally the notion of the 'Hispanic Immigrant.' Indeed, the masculine immigrant is in some ways necessary for immigration policy to continue these texts. Immigration policy is dependent on 'masculinizing' immigration.

A consideration of the 'feminine' of immigration—that immigrants have families and that there are children dependent on their parents to care for them—would significantly change the way immigration—and hence immigration policy—is conceptualized and structured. If on the other hand, immigration can be criminalized and the immigrants themselves seen as unwanted and undesirable 'others,' the actions of the performance of the ICE raid 'make sense' in the cultural context. While both the feminine and masculine texts of exclusion in the aftermath of Postville serve the purpose of 'othering,' only the story of the masculine immigrant supports immigration policy as it currently exists in the United States. That this is so can also be seen in the way ICE promoted the 'success' of the Postville raid; it was deemed so successful that it was followed up

with another, larger raid in Laurel, MS, of a manufacturing facility. Seeing the immigrant exclusively as a masculine gendered laborer shapes the actions taken by the government to perform ‘exclusion’ for the American public. Unfortunately immigrants are caught in this as primary performers with very little control over their own ‘scripts,’ or indeed their lives.

### **Conclusions: (Re) Imagining the Nation**

Valentine and Matsumoto position the primary performers—the ‘actors’ within a performance—as those responsible for conveying “the actions and words that form the symbolically significant texts” in a cultural event (Valentine and Matsumoto 2001: 76). The primary performers both before and after the raid are responsible for texts imbued with meanings of identity about both the nation and gender, and reveal a story about the interconnections between these.

Prior to the raid, sport was a key cultural performance in Postville reflective of scripts of inclusion. The immigrant players in the adult soccer league, demonstrate the symbolic value of having something to which they can belong, demonstrating the ‘imagined’ community in two different ways. First, it is important to have community and ‘nation’ they connect to through sport—others ‘like them’ who understand the difficulties of leaving one nation to reside in another. In this case, sport provides a specific type of ‘transnational’ identity: a connection to home, yet the feeling of not actually being there. Second, in the context of Postville specifically, where the community worked to organize the adult soccer league, the sport demonstrates a sense of belonging to this ‘home of the world’ to an *American* community. Taken together, the primary performers

convey significant texts about a new type of national identity, a transnational nationalism that creates a 'home'—albeit a very different one—in two places.

During my dissertation proposal defense I had rightly been warned that asking a question such as “Why do you play soccer?” might lead to a seemingly simple answer, such as the one I received from Jose: “It’s fun.” He went on to elaborate that “I work hard most days of the week, and its fun to play when I’m not working.” This quote begins to unravel the complexity of sport; something ‘fun’ has serious meaning. The adult soccer league not only provided a sense of national ‘place,’ but also gave the players a sense of identity outside that of exclusively a laborer, as Jose hints at. A segment from the play *La Historia de Nuestras Vidas* reinforces this. One actor read from the script, “When I was little, I didn’t think about work. I played behind my dad in the field. When I was little, I dreamt of being a soccer player.” Soccer provides a sense of place, of ‘home’ in a transnational context. In his seminal work, Biling (1995) insightfully argued that nationalism has to be reproduced daily if it is to persist, and it is this reproduction that I think the soccer league promotes. In short, the soccer league provides the process and the vehicle by which the athletes and fans continue to imagine themselves as a community. The soccer league provides the continual reminding necessary for social imagination of and for an immigrant community.

In stark contrast the ICE raid specifically, and immigration policy more generally, defined immigrants exclusively as workers and the ‘texts’ conveyed are those of exclusion from American society. To understand the role of the primary performers in conveying these significant texts I focused on those arrested in the

raid whose actions as primary performers conveyed texts reflective of symbolically significant beliefs regarding immigration in the United States. In the process of othering the primary performers, ICE ‘processed’ the immigrants much in the same way that the immigrants themselves ‘processed’ meat at Agriprocessors. The immigrants were treated like cattle—symbolically tied up in five-point shackles and herded to the cattle congress in a symbolic performance of power. This performance, like adult soccer, is part of a process of national imagination. However in this instance it becomes a means of reinforcing a notion of American-ness that creates a ‘them’ from which ‘we’ can define others like ‘us.’ The ICE raid and the use of the immigrants as primary performers is about American nation building through exclusion of so called non-Americans.

In some ways, this exclusion is precisely the reason why the opposite script—that of inclusion in Postville—is so powerful. That immigrants are marginalized and given very little control over their own lives, makes opportunities for inclusion, such as the adult soccer league, all the more valuable. Communities like Postville whose scripts do not align with that of the American government become desirable places to be, indeed providing a ‘home’ (as the welcome to Postville sign denotes) for those who find themselves excluded as Americans in other ways. In both instances, performance is essential to ‘imagine’ one’s national identity, but that identity is markedly different. Perhaps it is not surprising that a nation, through its government, works to perform exclusion of non-national members. But that makes it even more surprising that communities

are working to *re-imagine* that national identity by including the very people their government is trying to exclude.

The primary performers demonstrate not only the reproduction of nationhood through these performances but also the gendered dimension of nationalist projects. Gender becomes an aspect of identity intersecting with and helping to construct nationalism. When considering the soccer league, it is necessary to recognize that although sports often function to unite nations across social cleavages, sports regularly separate women from men by constructing and reinforcing gender ideologies. This is also true to some degree in Postville: in the adult soccer league only men played the game. Yet this is strikingly apparent specifically in the treatment of ‘workers’ vs. ‘mothers’ in the post-raid processing of those arrested at Agriprocessors. There is no doubt that both men and women eventually become primary performers in scripts of exclusion. Women who admit to having dependents are “shackled” with GPS bracelets and everyone else is “sentenced” to prison and deportation (Pickard 2009). Both of these are exclusionary performances. Immigration policy itself, however, is dependent on the masculine gendering of the primary performers—‘othering’ by defining an immigrant exclusively as a laborer and a criminal and excluding by literally removing immigrants from the country. The gendering of immigration provides the logic for the symbolic texts about immigration. The gendered formation and implication of the adult soccer league, as well as the gendered policies of immigration that played out in the ICE raid, signify the gendered imagination and social experiences and expectations that are involved in construction of the nation.

## 6 Sphere A and Hybrid Identities

Because I, a *mestiza*,  
Continually walk out of one culture and into another,  
Because I am in all cultures at the same time,  
*Alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,*  
*Me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio,*  
*Estoy norteado por toos las voces que me hablan*  
*simultaneamente.*  
in *La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New*  
*Consciousness* (Anzaldúa 1999)

This chapter is an exploration of what happens when identity becomes complex in a global context, when people are “in all cultures at the same time” and in the process threaten the clear classification of national identity. In particular, I focus on the ‘imagination’ of national identity by addressing Sphere A in the CPAS method, the audience. Drawing on Toelken (1979), Valentine and Matsumoto (2001) described the audience using a three part typology: 1) the “central audience” made up of those directly present at performances, 2) “bystander audience,” consisting of those present but not actually a part of the culture (they place the ethnographer-as-audience here), and 3) the “cultural audience,” made up of those the participants think of as “metaphorically looking over their shoulders...and judging the appropriateness of their behavior” (75). This chapter is concerned with sphere A, the audience, and will attempt to capture the details of the audiences as relevant to the story of Postville, with a particular focus on the “cultural audience” looking over the shoulders of ICE, of the raid, and of immigration policy more generally. To do this, I utilize the concept of hybrid identities, describing how the notion of hybridity is relevant for Postville and suggest how the soccer league and the ICE raid relate to this concept.



Globalization and the structural forces of the world system created the beginnings of identities that were not easily defined. The weakening of cultural boundaries created a context of competing narratives, explored in chapter three. The ‘home of the world’ was multicultural due to the presence of Agriprocessors that drew immigrant laborers, but the community also fostered this multicultural identity. To make sense of this, I use the concept of ‘hybridity’ to describe this muddying of identity—a sense of being in between or not easily categorized by virtue of being multiple things at once. Immigrants in Postville are not totally part of their home country, yet not fully American; they still identify as Guatemalan or Mexican yet also identify as part of the community of Postville.

To provide a context for fully understanding how I use hybridity, I begin this chapter by looking at the history of Postville and the role of Agriprocessors. These illustrate the foundation laid that created the potential for hybrid identities in the changing face of this rural Midwestern town. Postville’s scripts of inclusion fostered hybridity. Returning to Valentine and Matsumoto, the focus of this discussion of Postville would likely be the ‘central’ audience—the community of Postville made up of all its residents. This audience played a key role in shaping the inclusive context, setting the stage for the complexity of identity that comes with being ‘a little bit of this, and a little bit of that’ and not fully here nor there.

In contrast to the context created by the community of Postville where hybridity was allowable and possibly even welcomed, the ICE raid at Agriprocessors was an effort to *prevent* hybrid identities from forming and

enforcing classification of a complex of social identities. This enforced classification of ‘American’ is shaped in large part by the perceived cultural audience—“Americans” who want clear delineation of their own national identity. This audience plays a key role in the government’s motivation for the raid in Postville and (in times of growing debate about immigration) in immigration policy more generally.

### **Postville: Foundation for Hybridity**

History demonstrates the emergence of Postville as a potential site for hybrid identities, illustrates the changing face of the Postville socialscape, and reflects the rise in multiculturalism in the rural Iowa town. The role of Agriprocessors is central to this process that followed a general pattern of the town of Postville being founded, being rather homogenous for 150 years, the slaughterhouse being reopened bringing with it a largely Jewish contingency, and the job creations bringing immigrants before and migrants after the ICE raid.

The story of the founding of Postville begins in 1840 when Joel Post, a millwright from Conewango, New York, obtained permission from General George M. Brooke, commanding officer at Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, to occupy the government log shanty, or "half-way" house that was built as a stopping place for troops between Fort Crawford and Fort Atkinson, Iowa. It was located on a site about a mile northeast of the present town of Postville. Mr. Post and his wife moved in June 1843 to the present site of Postville. A half-way house was setup in the new location, and it did double duty as a tavern. The population of the vicinity slowly began to grow, and in 1848,

Postville's first school was started. Twenty-one students attended, and classes were held in one of the rooms of the half-way house. That same year, the first religious services were held at the half-way house. The sudden rise in the town's prosperity came with the rail road in 1864. The population rapidly grew, and the economy developed. The first place of business was a large grain elevator near the railroad tracks. The population jumped from about fifty in 1860 to eight hundred and thirty-two in 1880. During this time period of growth, citizens of the community organized a local government and filed a charter of incorporation with the State in 1873.

The population of Postville was predominantly German and Norwegian from that time until the late 1980s. During the late 1980s, globalization and hybridity reached Postville. The structural changes of migration and the push and pull forces of immigration changed the previously homogenous population.

The factors leading to the social transformations of Postville began in 1973, when the owners of the meat-packing plant in town closed. Because of many of the factors described in chapter 4, the slaughter business was changing quickly, and the owners of the Postville plant couldn't afford to pay union wages anymore. Similar patterns were experienced across the country as older and smaller plants shut down when they could no longer compete with the newer and larger ones. However the former Hygrade packing plant would become the Agriprocessors building, and the potential of hybrid identities emerged.

In 1987, a group of Hasidic Jews of the Lubavitch movement from New York purchased the non-Kosher slaughterhouse, refurbished it according to

Hasidic law, and named the facility Agriprocessors. The building reopened as a slaughterhouse and meatpacking plant based on the business plan of an Orthodox businessman from Brooklyn, Aaron Rubashkin. The plan was to re-open as a kosher plant, produce meat cheaply, and sell it for top dollar.

At the time of the ICE raid, Agriprocessors was the largest kosher meat processing plant in the United States and the only one authorized by Israel's Orthodox rabbinate to export beef to Israel. At its peak, Agriprocessors provided sixty percent of the country's kosher beef and employed over eight hundred people, killing more than five hundred head of cattle each day in kosher production. The sales, according to numbers given to *Cattle Buyers Weekly*, rose from eighty million dollars in 1997 to one hundred and eight million dollars in 2002 and may have reached two hundred and fifty million dollars or more.

Agriprocessors had two distribution sites, one in Brooklyn, New York, and one in Miami, Florida, both managed by members of the Rubashkin family. To further the global web, it also operated slaughter-facilities in South America<sup>7</sup>.

In the twenty years it operated in Postville, Agriprocessors had a major impact on the town, creating new jobs, attracting immigrants from many different countries, and bringing an influx of ultra-orthodox Jews to a part of the United States where Jews had been practically unknown. When Rubashkin purchased the plant, a group of a few hundred Hasidim joined him to help manage and operate

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<sup>7</sup> The Rubashkin family opened another processing plant for bison, cattle and lamb called Local Pride Plant in conjunction with the Oglala Lakota native-American tribe of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Gordon, Nebraska in 2006 employing some 100 locals. The presence of the plant near an Indian reservation provided considerable tax breaks. The Governor presented a \$505,000 gratuity check to the Rubashkins on behalf of the city, as part of an incentive package that brought the factory to the town.

the facility. Current estimates of Postville's Hasidic population in the American Jewish Year Book range from one hundred fifty to more than three hundred. In his book previously presented, Bloom described the arrival of the Hasidim and the mixed relationship with the residents of Postville. A Jewish school was established (that had a baseball team), a Jewish restaurant and deli were opened on Main Street, and it was not uncommon to see individuals dressed in the traditional black Hasidic dress unlike the overalls of Postville's previous natives.

### *Hasidic Judaism*

Hasidic Judaism is a branch of Orthodox Judaism. The largest Jewish religious sects are Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism and Reform Judaism. A major source of difference between these groups is their approach to Jewish law. Conservative Judaism is more liberal in its interpretation of the law's requirements than Orthodox Judaism. Reform Judaism is generally the most liberal of the three. Orthodox Judaism is the most fundamental of the three. Hasidic Judaism is a more fundamental sub-sect of the most fundamental sect.

Hasidic Judaism was founded when European Jews focused inward on traditional teaching and began to study the Talmud or Oral Torah. In the Jewish tradition, it is held that God gave Moses the written Torah and an oral Torah at Mount Sinai. The verbal teachings from God were transmitted orally through the generations until it was written; this is the Talmud. Numerous Hasidic sects were established across Europe and eventually became the way of life for many Jews in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century.

Waves of Jewish immigration in the 1880s carried it to the United States. The movement itself claims to be nothing new but a *refreshment* of original Judaism. Nevertheless, early on there was a serious schism between Hasidic and non-Hasidic Jews. Some of the reasons for the rejection of Hasidic Judaism were the overwhelming exuberance of Hasidic worship, its untraditional ascriptions of infallibility and alleged miracle-working to their leaders, and the concern that it might become a messianic sect. The migration to Postville began in 1987 as followers of the kashrut came to town.

The Jewish dietary laws are known as kashrut. Food prepared in accordance with them is termed kosher. These religious laws were the foundation of Agriprocessors and the hybrid possibilities. Many of the laws apply to animal-based foods. For example, in order to be considered kosher, mammals must have split hooves and chew their cud. For seafood to be kosher, the animal must have fins and scales. Concerning birds, a list of non-kosher species is given in the Torah. Other types of animals, such as amphibians, reptiles, and most insects, are prohibited altogether. In addition to the requirement that the species be considered kosher, meat and poultry (but not fish) must come from a healthy animal slaughtered in a ritual process described in chapter three. Without the proper slaughtering practices even an otherwise kosher animal will be rendered not kosher. The slaughtering process is intended to be quick and relatively painless to the animal. Furthermore, Jewish law forbids the consumption of meat and dairy products together. Additionally, the use of dishes, serving utensils, and ovens may make food non-kosher that would otherwise be considered kosher. For

example, utensils that have been used to prepare non-kosher food or dishes that have held meat and are now used for dairy products may render the food non-kosher. Agriprocessors was designed to meet these requirements but needed workers at the plant since most of the Hasidic migrants were not meat processing line workers. While they may have been managers or rabbis of the slaughter in the plant, for the most part, they did not work on the disassembly line.

### *Immigration*

The founding and functioning of Postville saw several waves of migration and immigration. Religious differences and the social construction of race played itself out in Postville. After displacing the native inhabitants of the area<sup>8</sup>, came the German and Norwegian settlers to this rural farm area. This group was almost entirely Christian and white. Then with the reopening of Agriprocessors came the kosher Hasidic Jews. Workers were needed for the plant, the locals were not interested for the most part given many of the pull factors discussed in chapter four, and different waves of immigrants arrived given many of the push factors discussed in chapter four. The first immigrants to arrive to work at the plant were Eastern European. The theory that was described to me as to why this group significantly lowered in density was because of their ease at fitting within the dominant mainstream of the United States. This group was predominately white and Christian- despite the Jewish connections to Eastern Europe. At roughly the same time, single men primarily from Mexico came. The primary motivation that

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<sup>8</sup> The original inhabitants of the area can be seen in the names of counties, streets, and the like. I lived in Winneshiek county on Winneshiek Avenue- both named after Chief Winneshiek of the Winnebago. Postville is located in the adjacent Allamakee County.

I was told was to return to Mexico after a few years of working in the United States. The restaurant mentioned in the first chapter opened, and the adult soccer league began after this wave. The first season saw the Eastern European team in the championship game against one of the Mexican teams. The eastern European team disbanded as Guatemalan teams were added along with the next wave of immigration. In this next wave, Guatemalan families came to Postville with the expressed intent of staying longer as the journey was longer and there were two borders to cross.

Influx from immigration may have stopped after the ICE raid, but internal migration into Postville began as the town and plant remained dependent on cheap, unskilled labor. While it is not clear the extent to which Agriprocessors actively recruited immigrant labor, Agriprocessors did actively recruited migrants with an emphasis on the proper and legal documentation of the workers. Third party firms supplied workers for the plant and vulnerable populations arrived in Postville to fill the jobs at Agriprocessors. Counter to expectations following the raid, diversity seemed to increase in Postville (Waddington 2008b). Somalis from the refugee population in Minneapolis were bused in to fill the jobs (Leys 2008). An old mattress factory was converted into a mosque for the new Muslims arrivals. Individuals were also recruited from homeless shelters in Texas (Waddington 2008a). Additionally, individuals were recruited from Palau, a small island country in the south Pacific. In response to this, the Minister of State from the Republic of Palau visited Postville and Agriprocessors to investigate the potential working conditions of his countrymen (Waddington 2008c). Based on



his approval, sixteen residents of Palau were flown in on one way tickets that were purchased by Agriprocessors. Due to the recent history and relationship that Palau shares with the United States, the proper legal documentation was easy to get for the workers that only needed non-immigrant visas and were not required to leave by any deadline.

Despite the new migrant influx, the new sources of labor did not save Agriprocessors from filing for bankruptcy on November 5, 2008. The Palauans had just arrived but no longer had a place to work. Without a place to work, they did not have income. No other jobs were available in the small town. While many of the migrants from within the United States could return to other cities and often home using preexisting social networks, the Palauans could not. Since Agriprocessors had only purchased them one way plane tickets with the explicit promise to buy the return tickets at a later date, the Palauans were stranded. Since they had no income, necessary bills could not be paid. Heating bills were one such unpaid necessity for living in Postville. Winters in Northeast Iowa are brutally cold, and although it was only late October, temperatures were already well below freezing at night. The snow had already started to fall. So in an emergency reaction the nearby town that I was living in took in the Palauan migrants. The local roller skating ring was converted into a shelter, and successful fund raising in Decorah allowed for the purchase of return airline tickets for any Palauan than wanted to go home. In December, eleven bordered planes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport and returned home.

In July 2009, the Agriprocessors plant was bought at auction by SHF Industries and resumed production under the new name *Agri Star*. Canada based SHF Industries spent nearly seven-and-a-half million dollars modernizing the facility. Agri Star C.E.O. says he meets regularly with the mayor and other city officials to build “trust” with the residents of Postville (Henderson 2010). *Agri Star* also makes kosher meat, so the CEO of the company said that it made sense to keep production in Postville rather than build a new plant elsewhere. People who have expertise in kosher processing have made Postville their home. In June 2010, Sholom Rubashkin, the owner of Agriprocessors, was sentenced to twenty-seven years in prison on federal financial fraud charges.

### **The Concept of Hybridity**

The stage of Postville was one rife with complex identities not clearly bounded—hybrids. The notion of hybrids rests on the concepts of boundaries. Anzaldúa’s pioneering theoretical work on the concept of *fronteras*/borders used the concept of the *mestiza* to get at this boundary crosser (Anzaldúa 1999). Speaking of her own identity in-between worlds, she argued that as “a *Mestiza* I have no country...yet all countries are mine (101). The notion of the *mestiza* or the hybrid is a valuable one particularly for considering identity in a global context, and specifically in the transnational, multicultural context of Postville. Within the discipline of anthropology there has also been consideration of this valuable concept. In order to better understand hybridity and boundary construction, Lamont and Molnár (2002) differentiated between symbolic boundary construction and social boundary construction. Symbolic boundaries

refer to the conceptualization and distinctions made by social actors to categorize. Symbolic boundaries separate people into groups and generate feelings of difference and similarity. While symbolic boundaries may be thought of as the agreed upon definitions of reality, social boundaries are the manifestations of social difference formed by these within reality. Both are equally real. Once groups are created, the process of othering occurs. In Postville at the time of the raid, the two were simultaneous, however the level at which boundaries were formed differed. Symbolic boundary construction was not occurring on a face to face level, yet the social enforcement of boundaries was.

Some anthropologists have called attention to the dissolution of rigid cultural boundaries between groups perceived as separate. Postville created a space in which there was a blurring of boundaries and the potential for increased blurring. Clifford (1988) wrote that "pure products" had "gone crazy". Hannerz (1987) described that the "world" was "in creolization". Hybrids are the results of the mixing of previous categorical boundaries. This growth of hybridity is presented by Kraidy (2005) as the cultural 'logic' of globalization which:

...entails that traces of other cultures exist in every culture, thus offering foreign media and marketers transcultural wedges for forging affective links between their commodities and local communities (148).

In order to apply these conceptualizations to anthropological notions, Nederveen Pieterse (2004) borrowed the philosophical concept of rhizome to apprehend multiplicities and asserted hybridity as the rhizome of culture. As a model for culture, the rhizome resists the organizational structure which charts causality along chronological lines and looks for the origin and towards the

conclusion of things. The rhizome presents history and culture as a map of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis, for a rhizome has no beginning or end; "a rhizome is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Nederveen Pieterse argued that globalization as hybridization opposes views which see the process as homogenizing, modernizing, and westernizing. In contrast to views that present inevitable outcomes, globalization as hybridization emphasizes new possibilities, potential connections, and blurred categorizations.

In the case of Postville, a series of historical events emerging out of globalization led to the potential for hybridity. Rather than an inevitable outcome, history created influences on a map of possibilities like the rhizome metaphor. The soccer league and the ICE raid were two attractions on the historical map. The soccer league was one attempt at confronting the potential hybridization; the ICE raid was another. In contrast, the soccer league was created in an effort to blur traditional boundaries between us and them, but the ICE raid was an exercise in policing and reinforcing the traditional classification.

The permeability of traditional boundaries of categorization is dangerous. The potential for hybridity in the context of Postville challenged the traditional boundaries of national belonging. ICE responded in a process similar to how Latour (1993) described. He argued that the primary characteristic of a modern society that separates it from a premodern society is the divide between the natural world and the social world. In premodern societies, this existed as a seamless continuum between the two. In a modern society, there is a constant

process of separating the two; a process he referred to as purification. However, this process simultaneously and contradictorily creates hybridization.

...the more we forbid ourselves to conceive of hybrids, the more possible their interbreeding becomes- such is the paradox of the moderns, with the exceptional situation in which we find ourselves today... (12).

Latour suggested that hybrids are the inevitable products of two practices of modernization in this way. Latour argued that “the second has made the first possible” (12).

The distinction that Latour was drawing between premodern and modern societies was about identities. The difference was between *Us* and *Them*. In contemporary and past USA, races are kept distinct; such is the basis for whiteness and everything that goes along with it. Illegal immigration is much the same. The term is a legal concept and a cultural notion that avails a distinction between *Us* and *Them*. The concept and boundaries of *Them* is what makes *Us* something separate.

The soccer league was an effort to create hybrid identities and blur the prior lines between *Us* and *Them*. The ICE raid was an exercise at preventing them from forming and reinforcing the separation. Using the words of Latour, the ICE raid was an act of *purification* and attempt to bring the illegal *shadowed lives* of illegally documented Immigrants in American Society into the light of the legal system, borrowing from the words of Chavez (1992). The federal government in the form of ICE and the raid was acting in an effort in an effort to pull those in a liminal space into traditional categories. However in the process, new connections, interactions, and hybridizations are possible. But, the enforced

classification in a situation of possible hybridization allowed for othering to occur. Once this othering occurred, a villain complex emerged that allowed for the ICE raid.

### *Othering*

The dramatic violence of the ICE raid was a powerful tool for eliciting audience involvement in national imagining and a process of *othering*. Frake recognized that killing is “a convincing way of classifying someone as the other” (42), and although the violence of the ICE raid is dramatized and therefore unlike the literal violence of the Abu Sayyaf which Frake analyzed, the consequences may be no less real (although certainly less permanent). Frake’s concern is most relevant for Postville because he was interested in the meanings of violence and identity construction rather than the immediate and physical outcomes of violent actions. In instances involving violent displays, Frake (1998) argued

Interpreting what happened requires agents and victims. It requires identity ascription. Repeated cycles of contested interpretation and reinterpretation foster identity proliferation. Each attribution is made in an arena of competing political agendas under an ever-present cloud of threatening violence (50).

Often this cycle is clear and explicit; other times it is less obvious. In either case, violence is used to classify based on ideas of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ in a process of *othering*, which implicitly recognizes sameness of the self. The dramatized violence of the ICE raid classifies identities, socially maps ‘selves’ and ‘others’, and constructs symbolic boundaries separating and aggregating groups. Through the dramatic violence, identities are classified, the nation is socially mapped, and social boundaries are (re)constructed. When ICE used helicopters, machine guns,

and attack dogs to arrest the workers at the Agriprocessors plant, violence was used to classify based on ideas of the 'self' and 'other' in a manner similar to the idea of other presenting by Frake. Classification of 'others' implicitly recognizes 'sameness' of the self. This is often the sameness of the nation, and a unifying national consciousness of an imagined community.

### *Villain Complex*

My previous research experience involved work with professional wrestling in Mexico, or *lucha libre*. I was (and am) interested in the role of sports in the experiences of national imagination. I was initially interested in the adult soccer league in Postville. I wanted to explore the ways that the soccer league allowed for immigrants to experience nationalisms while in the Midwestern United States. While the differences between the two are initially very obvious, I was somewhat surprised to find the similarities.

The raid was a national performance based on anti-immigration fear and an attempted simplistic construction of villains in a manner similar to *lucha libre*. However unlike performances of *lucha libre*, the local audience didn't go along with the performers of the raid. I discussed some local critics in chapter three. While there were undoubtedly additional critics, I never heard local supports of the raid. While the consequences are more immediate in the case of immigration enforcement, the construction of a villain, from the perspective of those that planned the raid, seems just as simplistic as in *lucha libre*. However, this construction of a villain relies on the audience's belief in the performance. While audiences of *lucha libre* performances almost always go along with the script and

the construction of villains, the construction of villains didn't work in the ICE performance in Postville. The local audiences did not go along with the performance.

In the case of *lucha libre*, the boundaries separating good guys from bad guys are clearly marked prior to each match, but the categories are never confining of behavior. *Luchadores* often challenge the boundaries with their behaviors; good guys may exhibit bad guy behavior and vice versa. Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the social relations of the "shaman complex" assists in better understanding the ambiguity created in these situations and offers insight into the raid in Postville. In order to explain the successes and failures of shamanistic healing rituals, Lévi-Strauss (1983) argued that the protagonist shaman in one of his accounts, "did not become a great shaman because he cured his patients; he cured his patients because he had become a great shaman" (180). The notion of complex stresses that something is divisible into different categories, and each category has a specific function in the structure of the whole. Thus, in the shaman complex, shamanic success is determined by social relations and expectations rather than outcomes of behavior. Applying this reasoning to the ambiguous behavior of *luchadores* suggests that bad guys are not bad because they break the rules, rather bad guys break the rules because they are bad. Thus, audience mediation treats the potentially same behavior by bad guys and good guys differently based on expectations of character types. Bad guy rule breakage is "bad," "unfair," and "wrong", while good guy rule breakage is "justifiable". The social relations of the performance define the "villain complex" and provide for



moments of certainty within a fluid structure of ambiguity. However this was not the case with much of the local audience surrounding Postville. Community members of Postville and Decorah were not in agreement with the framing of immigrant bad guys as presented in the raid. While the raid seemed to expect the locals to play the part of an immigration fearing audience the local communities did not go along with the raid, the arrests, the shackles, and the legal proceedings.

### **Conclusions: Cultural Audience and American Identity Re-Imagined**

Mary seemed very proud of her photograph. She had it framed and would show it to anyone that was interested. The picture was of her and the other forty-seven women released on probation and fitted with GPS ankle bracelets. It was taken before the group got on a bus for one of their weekly rides to Cedar Rapids where their identity was verified and it was confirmed their GPS had not been removed. While volunteers would often drive the women in cars, this particular picture was taken before boarding a bus rented using donations. Mary was not actually so proud of the picture or the bus as she was of the joke that went with it: “*Éste es el paseo más costoso del autobús de la historia del mundo.*” “This is the most expensive bus ride ever.” At a time where jokes were hard to come by, hers was especially telling. With the raid costing an average of over seventeen thousand dollars per individual, plus the cost of renting the bus and buying the gas, the ride was an expensive national performance of classification. Who, however, is this performance actually *for*?

Since Postville is clearly an example of an actual ‘American’ community that is welcoming, the exclusionary performance of the ICE raid was not

conducted for them. Instead, it was conducted for the *cultural audience*, those perceived as wanting no gray area, as wanting ‘their American identity’ back. The existence of hybridity forces Americans to *question* their national identity, rather than clearly identify it. To be “in all cultures at the same time” means being ambiguous rather than clear, or one that defies categorization rather than fits neatly within a category. Anzaldúa (1999) spoke of how significant this can be by explaining the power of the *mestiza*,

I challenge the collective...because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting, and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings (102).

By virtue of their inclusion in the Postville community and active participation in this inclusion (such as through the adult soccer league) immigrants in Postville represent something that cannot be clearly defined. Like the concept of the *mestiza*, these transnational citizens represent a ‘continual walk out of one culture and into another,’ yet are part of both at the same time. The community of Postville as audience fostered this transnational-ness, or the multicultural, hybrid identity. It is in these identities, and indeed perhaps in Postville, that according to Anzaldúa (1999) the future—and the potential for change—lies:

Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves and the ways we behave—la *mestiza* creates a new consciousness (100).

Tying this together with Anderson's concept of an imagined community, immigrants represent a new consciousness that enables the re-imagination of American national identity. A hybrid allows ambiguity, and ambiguity fosters change.

Yet ambiguity is not culturally desirable. The ICE raid might be perceived by the cultural audience as a 'crackdown' on illegal immigration; one might say our country does not allow illegal immigration so 'we' need to police it to stop it. But this is a circular argument that does not actually address the root of the issue. It is not a simple equation of 'policy exists therefore it is logical to enforce policy.' Instead, the case of Postville reveals *why* the policy exists in the firstplace. The ICE raid is *not* a crackdown on illegal behavior. The raid is a crackdown on cultural ambiguity. It represents a performative struggle to reclaim the national imagination of what is American. The ICE raid occurred precisely because of the potential for change that the ambiguity of hybridity allows. The raid is a reassurance of American national identity performed for the cultural audience. Ultimately the raid becomes a way of crushing the potential of hybridity and reassuring the ease of identity categorization. In the process, the government is itself actually constructing the very 'American' they would likely claim to be representing and shaping the American imagination.

## **7 Sphere P, Analysis, and Conclusions: The Postville Case Study**

The events of the ICE raid of May 12, 2008, changed both the lives of the citizens of Postville, Iowa, and the political landscape for understanding immigration in the United States. I have explored why the ICE raid in Postville occurred and addressed what this raid means for understanding immigration itself through an exploration of nationalism, sport, and performance. Through an exploration of the co-existence of the soccer league (representing the ‘local’ interests surrounding immigration) and the ICE raid (representing the ‘national’ interests), this dissertation has provided unique insight into globalization, transnationalism and transnational identity formation. Because of the uniqueness of this ‘multi-sited’ case study, I have also made original contributions to the study of sport and nationalism and the discipline of anthropology more generally.

Examining the competing interests of the soccer league (welcoming immigrants) and the raid (rejecting the ‘other’), I argued that the everyday performance of Postville is itself a ‘complex’ of nationalism, meaning that it is divisible into different categories, and each category has a specific function in the structure of the whole. The everyday functioning of Postville was (and is) a process and a performance of nationalism situated in a particular local and global history shaped by the experiences of Postville citizens, the international economic and political forces that lead to immigration, the historic forces that lead to the creation of a Kosher meat processing plant in the small town, the reinforcement of inequality within social strata, and the nature of the work at the center of the discussion. The CPAS method has provided a framework for analyzing the

complex of nationalism represented in Postville, with the ICE raid and soccer league playing key roles in understanding this complex.

In my final analysis, I explain the ways in which this case study offers valuable insights into understanding immigration and makes original contributions to the discipline of anthropology. This is organized around three interrelated themes: Postville as Performance, Inclusion and Exclusion, and Structural Violence. These themes bring together each of the pieces from the CPAS method I used to structure the chapters of the dissertation and offers answers to the questions I posed in chapter one. I conclude with a discussion of what this case study means for the role of an ‘engaged’ anthropologist faced with a context in which social structures of inequality connect with the reality of one’s own community.

### **Postville as Performance: CPAS and the ICE Raid Fusion Point**

This section considers the performance of Postville as a whole, and uses the fusion point of the ICE raid as the “dynamic moment” through which to delve deeper into the meaning of the performance of Postville. Coming back to the performance allows the ethnographer to account for all the prior pieces of analysis, to make sense of the cultural whole. The fusion point is one specific event that is representative of the performance, Valentine and Matsumoto (2001) talk about these moments as those when “the physically present audience, the performative-semiotic text, and the performers are so connected that a seamless moment of union, blending, and merging exists that can be called fusion—that point of total presence” (77).

The ICE raid of Agriprocessors occurred at a fusion point in the everyday performance of Postville, representing the intersection of local, national, and global dynamics. These reflect and constitute a historical moment in a manner similar to the analysis Sahlins (1981) did in his study of Captain Cook's arrival in Hawaii. He argued that events provoke structural transformations and analyzed the "structure of the conjuncture," a synthesis between structure and event. For example, Sahlins argued that in Hawaii the relationship between chiefs and commoners, and between men and women, became redefined by their relationship with Europeans. The historical moment, Sahlins would argue, is essential for the understanding of the social context.

The historical moment in the complex of nationalism I explore in Postville, the ICE raid fusion point, melds together the CPAS spheres of the performer, the performance, and the audience. As such, the fusion point is placed in the center of the CPAS diagram. This fusion point is surrounded by the contextualizing spheres, which I have explained in previous chapters. The CPAS model is incredibly valuable for taking complex concepts that would otherwise be difficult to analyze and allowing clear visualization of the role of multiple social and cultural forces in shaping them. Ultimately what this means is that I am able to articulate a clear analysis of the *why* of the ICE raid—what complex factors that shaped it, their meanings, and—ultimately—the role of sport and nationalism in understanding these. Moreover, looking at the ICE raid as fusion point allows me to use it as a poignant illustration of the meaning of immigration in the United States.

Given my particular interest in understanding the role of sport in Postville, the CPAS model has been especially useful. The formation of the adult soccer league emerged from a series of factors resulting from the interconnections of globalization (e.g. international economics, histories, and national policies). NAFTA and meat processing policies in the United States and in the Midwest are examples of these factors that also contributed to the disintegration of the league. Most immediately and obviously, the league was disbanded in response to the ICE raid of the local employer. However, more critically approaching this, the disbanding of the league resulted from the interconnections of globalization and the agendas of a nation-state that did not coincide with those of a community. In what follows, I draw out some of the key analysis and arguments raised by the total 'performance' of Postville to understand why the raid occurred and to use the ICE raid as fusion point to get at the greater implications of this particular event.

### Nationalism and Community

Two key ideas regarding nation and community emerge from the analysis of the ICE raid as a fusion point and the context in which the raid occurred. First, the collective solidarity of communities requires the symbolic and social construction of boundaries. These boundaries simultaneously separate perceived differences and perceived similarities; inclusion and exclusion are two necessary components for creating boundaries. The performance of Postville is rife with instances of inclusion and exclusion, initiated by different agencies toward different nationalistic ends. The most obvious is the process of exclusion that

occurred through the raid itself and the subsequent deportation of those arrested that followed or of the ‘marking’ of other that occurred by placing GPS monitoring bracelets on women who were returned to Postville to care for children.

Second, a nation is a form of community. Within the context of globalization, national spirit or devotion to the nation (i.e. nationalism) is often used for the construction of communities and as a primary framework for collective solidarity (Scholte 2000). Nations can exist as forms of community precisely because they are social and ideological entities—not only legal or political ones. Nations emerge from social imaginations and the enforcement of the physical borders; both the imagination and the borders are constructed by historic, cognitive, and symbolic experiences. The notion of enforcement described first here plays a key role in maintenance of borders of nation/community. But what happens when these borders themselves are conceptualized as social and ideological entities? Do we begin to see the emergence of ‘border nationalism’ even thousands of miles away from actual political borders? In some ways this is precisely what happened in Postville. The immigrant laborers in Postville did not identify as American, per se, but community was created in such a way that the immigrant laborers were also no longer exclusively their ‘home’ nationality. That is they may identify as Guatemalan, but by becoming part of the Postville community, they were not only Guatemalan but also something else. This ‘something else’ is a bordered national identity that was often facilitation through very intentional processes of inclusion



on the part of those in Postville—for example, the creation of the soccer league or regularly holding Spanish-language church services. The intent of these is community creation, and because of the unique context of the ideological existence of the border smack in the middle of the American heartland, they also contribute to this somewhat unique notion of a border nationalism.

The concept of nation significantly shapes identity, but the way in which it does this is complex and multilayered. Because national identity is social and cultural and these are themselves multifaceted, national identity can also be multifaceted. Before the raid, this was the case in Postville. The raid however, worked to remove any ‘border’ between identities through the enforcement of national identity.

#### Sport, Identity Formation, and Immigration

Sport facilitates the complexity of multifaceted national identity—indeed it becomes a way to ritually enact the ‘border nationalism’ itself. In Postville, sport was essential both for maintaining a primary national identity connection (as Guatemalan, or as Mexican, for example) but it was also necessary for developing a more border nationalism in this transnational (and often liminal) context. Because of this, sport allows the existence of communities on multiple levels: a ‘home’ identity and transnational identity.

The first way in which sport does this is by allowing people to connect to others ‘like them.’ The soccer league became a concrete connection to home and to the other people in the community from their home. Games were announced in Spanish, and names of teams demonstrated this notion of belonging—for example

there was one team named the *Guatemaltecos* (the Guatemalans) and another made up of the youngest generation of Mexican immigrants called *The Jovens* (the young ones). These names, teams, and the league connect to home and to the other players that also identify that home as important to them.

These names give ‘home’ a recognizable and visual, as well as symbolically powerful, presence. Yet at the same time, interestingly, these simultaneously symbolically demonstrated that this ‘home’ national identity was more complex than it seemed; it was multifaceted. While the team name was the *Guatemaltecos*, not everyone who actually played on the team was indeed Guatemalan. One player was Mexican, some were Russian, and one was a Postville native who identified as having German descent. This transnationality was made particularly visible as one team was actually named *The Internationals*.

In this way, sport functioned in and of itself to shape multifaceted national identities and helped to enforce this multifaceted nature through visual and ritual means. Whereas the ICE raid was designed to enforce American national identity, the Postville soccer league was forging a new hybrid identity, a transnational identity. Experiences are significant in the construction of national identity, and the soccer league became a significant cultural resources through which “social life is reflected upon and rendered poetic...the place where experience occurs, historically, cognitively, and symbolically aligned into creative expressions of culture” (Flores 1995:6).

Since the soccer league was disbanded after the ICE raid occurred, and since the league was one visual means for creating and preserving this hybrid

identity, loss of the league in some ways also can mean loss of identity. While those detained in the raid continued to be Guatemalan or Mexican in terms of their national identity, the disbandment of the league coupled with their arrest and sentencing meant they also lost the ‘border’ or ‘international’ (borrowing from the league name) element of their transnational identity. The soccer league provided a context for the negotiation of transnational identity. The loss of the league also meant losing that context at the same time as being ritually—hence both symbolically and socially (in this case politically) labeled as other—as illegal, as criminal, and ultimately, as clearly non-American.

This dissertation demonstrates that sports connect, cross-cut, and intersect the processes that unite the globe, and are intimately tied to processes of nationalism and identity formation. In the case of Postville, soccer allowed for particular kinds of interactions across ethnic and national divides that the ICE raid contradicted.

#### Performance and “American Others”

The totality of the performance of Postville, as exhibited through the CPAS method, is invaluable for understanding nationalism, identity, and immigration—both at the level of sport and at the level of social policy. The previous section demonstrates the way that the sport became a performance that enabled inclusion for immigrants in Postville. On the contrary, the raid was one part of the ritual performance of *exclusion* of national identity. There was very little threat posed by the workers in a meat-packing plant, yet the ICE raid involved an incredible nine hundred agents—almost half of the population of the

entire town—and an enormous amount of firepower. The power of this is a cultural performance. The noise of the helicopters, five-point shackling the detainees, and shipping them to another location immediately for processing were all part of this performance, essentially a performance of exclusion and othering. Here performance ties clearly to nationalism as well, as exclusion becomes one of the key ways by which who *does* and *does not* ‘belong’ is demonstrated. One of the most powerful examples of the performance of this othering was the visual display of the detainees after their arrest and transport away from Postville when they were taken in their five-point shackles and placed in a building normally used to hold cattle.

The danger or threat posed that warranted this performance of exclusion was not one of terrorism, or even of violence at all, but one of the danger of an unclassifiable identity. The immigrants in Postville that were working at an American company—indeed immigrants all over the United States living and working as ‘Americans’—pose a threat to the understanding of what makes someone American. The performance becomes essential to remove this threat. Indeed, that the raid was deemed a success and that another, even larger, raid was carried out in Laurel, Mississippi, following the ICE raid in Postville demonstrates the symbolic power of removing the threat that a hybrid or transnational identity poses to a cultural understanding of American-ness. While Geertz (1973) emphasized that performances are a means of “saying something of something,” (which is clearly the case here) I emphasize that “the someone” who is saying “something” is also significant. This becomes apparent through the

soccer league (where the someone is not the U.S. government) and the ICE raid (where the someone is). The nation is speaking of itself and is making interesting (and often conflicting) comments on issues of class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Through the game and dramatic display of protection, identities are classified, the nation is socially mapped, and symbolic social boundaries are constructed. ‘Aliens’ are domesticated like cattle, the self and ‘others’ are labeled, and the nation is imagined. While official nationalism may provide some of the structures that inform the games and the raid, the performances offer non-elite re-workings of the national project and even allow the creation of multifaceted and multiple national identities.

The national structure is continuously reproduced and recreated through social actions and imaginations. In this dissertation, I turned the table on the top-down transmission of elite nationalism and examined those portrayed (e.g. Anderson 1991) as “passive beneficiaries” (Kemper 1999:29). While top-down transmission of national identity may be attempted through enforcement performances such as the raid, the citizens of Postville were not passive beneficiaries either before or after the raid. I considered nationalism as an interactional process within the cultural performances of everyday life, recognize the linkage of mediums and consumers, and incorporate non-intellectuals into a non-literate experience of secondary nationalism. The citizens of Postville and even the surrounding community have been actively engaged with (and indeed sometimes even enforced through performance) a different form of nationalism and hybrid national identities.

### Significance of Performance for Understanding Immigration

Taking the ICE raid as performance is valuable for understanding the sense of national identity revealed through immigration policy and practice. Ironically, immigration policy demonstrates precisely the opposite of what the policy attempts. The immigration policy shows that there is a ‘top-down’ nationalism, indeed, but it also demonstrates that national identities are actually fluid. This can be seen precisely because they ‘require’ enforcement. That national identity can be so fluid is antithetical to much theory of nationalism. My research here shows the value of using sport and performance to bring out this aspect of nationalism. In the process, it also reveals important ideas for understanding immigration in the United States.

The desire displayed through immigration policy in the U.S. to criminalize and deport immigrants is a performance about nationalism. It tells us there is something unspoken about what being American actually is. The need and desire to police immigrants into ‘others’ and symbolically see them as such is necessary to define ‘us’ (i.e. what is American); it is a nationalist act for defining American-ness. Indeed in this way, the ICE raid and immigration policy in the United States is not just an enforcement of American national identity but a means of actually defining it. At the same policy labels ‘illegals,’ it labels Americans. Immigration policy makes Americans more American defining and then excluding the other. A significant way this works on the symbolic and imagined level of national community is by attaching morality to American identity. It is assumed that it is not ‘moral’ to be illegal, particularly when the immigration policy finds a way to

actually criminalize those who are illegal. Immigration policy both defines American identity and gives it lasting symbolic power through the attachment of morality to it and immorality to the illegal ‘other.’

The symbolic value of that translates into a problematic reality demonstrated in Postville and in American immigration policy more generally. Those said to be using false identification at Agriprocessors in Postville were arrested; those who provided said false identification, or knowingly hired those with such identification were neither arrested nor prosecuted. Moreover the symbolic power of moral American identity also meant that the government decided not to prosecute Agriprocessors for what have come to be well documented labor abuses such as violations of child labor laws, paying below minimum wage, and not paying for overtime. The imagined moral American community makes it easier not to prosecute ‘us’ (Americans) and essential to prosecute ‘them.’

### **Inclusion and Exclusion: The Threat of Hybridity**

Looking at who we ban from entry, or for whom we create obstacles to integration into society and to membership in the community of citizens, also reveals how we imagine ourselves as a nation” (Chavez 2008:9).

An important lesson from the adult soccer league and the ICE raid centers around what ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ of these performances reveals about immigration policy and about how Americans understand immigration, identity, and the nation. Anthropologist Leo Chavez (2008) tackled some of the ideas of inclusion and exclusion through his discussion of the “Latino Threat Narrative,” seen in the American media. This narrative, he argues, tells the story that “Latinos are

unwilling or incapable of integrating, of becoming part of the national community” and are “bent on...destroying the American way of life” (Chavez 2008:2). His examination in particular of a rally by the Minutemen in Arizona and the media coverage of their portrayal of immigration supports this.

While Chavez is concerned with the way the media works to exclude immigrants through the Latino Threat Narrative, he also believes immigrants themselves, as well as their supporters, work for inclusion. He uses the example of a series of immigrant marches that took place in March 2006 and argues that the media coverage of these “forced immigrants, especially the undocumented, into the imagined community of the nation in a brash new way” (Chavez 2008: 174). He draws on a columnist’s observation of the way this political activism represented the emergence of a “transnational” citizenship. This transnational citizenship reflects a re-imagination of the nation that was occurring in Postville prior to the raid, particularly in the performance of the adult soccer league.

The community of Postville’s welcoming message paints a picture of inclusion. I argue this inclusion even acts as a tether, not only drawing immigrants to Postville, but actually keeping them there. One striking instance of this power can be found in the story I was told repeatedly about Roberto, a soccer player in the adult soccer league. He moved to Texas before the soccer season had ended. When he found out that his team had made it into the league finals, Roberto returned to Postville to play in the game (which, incidentally, they lost). It was said that when he returned to Texas following the game, Roberto, who was undocumented, was pulled over for speeding and deported. While I could never



receive confirmation of this, the power of the story lies in the symbolic 'groupness' it expresses. Not only was Roberto willing to come back to be part of something in the community despite the dangers if he was caught, community members found that valuable enough to re-tell the story as a representation of themselves to the anthropologist.

Chavez also points to the 'moral' power of movements for inclusion. Postville, like the immigrant activists he discusses, seeks to re-define the morality of immigration itself. In doing so, these actions construct immigrants as moral, which is very different from the construction of immigration as immoral and illegal by its opponents. Chavez (2008) captures this moral battleground, saying,

For opponents of immigration, the violation of the nation's immigration laws undercut any claims for citizenship or even providing a path to citizenship. The immigrant marchers, however, by claiming, "We are not criminals," were asserting their claims to citizenship on other grounds (175).

However inclusion and exclusion become a moral battleground. As economic contributions of immigrants become recognized (redefining their morality), immigration policy responds by constructing the morality surrounding immigration to make the policy seem logical.

The response: immigration policy seeks to criminalize immigration by *constructing* 'immoral' criminals (called by ICE "criminal aliens") out of 'moral' workers. This answers the claim of "We are not criminals," with "Now you are." It is likely not a coincidence that following these very visible marches where people were making moral cultural claims for integration that immigration policy shifted toward criminalizing immigrants. Almost immediately following the

marches held in March 2006, the ICE Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report, for example, heralded a “New Era in immigration enforcement” (DHS 2007) and included statistics detailing that *criminal* arrests by ICE increased thirty-five times since 2002, from 25 to 863. Immigration policy became about creating a new logic for thinking of the immigrant as a criminal and hence a new logic for the exclusion of the immigrant from the nation.

To *de-imagine* immigrants out of the nation, it becomes necessary to other them again, and Postville became a pilot study to be replicated by ICE in future action. This represents an immigration policy that constructs immoral criminal aliens by taking workers at Agriprocessors and fast-tracking them to convicted criminals. Camayd-Friexas points out that even with this increase in 2007 “only 17% of detainees were criminally arrested, whereas in Postville it was 100% —a “success” made possible by...rendering workers indistinguishable on paper from real “criminal aliens” (Camayd-Freixas 2008:13).

### The Hybrid Threat

In Chavez’s threat narrative, the Latino immigrant is unwilling to integrate or become part of their community. I argue that this is not exactly true in the case of Postville or in recent American immigration policy that the ICE raid represents. In these instances, the ‘threat’ is not that immigrants were ‘unwilling or incapable of integrating’; it is precisely *that* they were doing so. The threat is that immigrants have already been integrating and becoming part of their communities, and Postville is a symbolically powerful example needing a symbolically powerful response. The response to this inclusion (exemplified by

Postville) is exclusion (exemplified by the ICE raid), which helps to ‘other’ those becoming just ‘like us.’

The hybridization of immigrants that I describe in chapter six shares some similarities with Chavez’s “Latino Threat,” but it is also different. Hybridity poses a threat by immigrants’ in-between status and their ability to challenge Americans to re-imagine “American.” Like Chavez, I believe that the “targeting of immigrants allows citizens to reaffirm their own subject status vis a vis the immigrant Other” (Chavez 2008: 17). But the motivation for this lies in the threat of hybridity—the immigrant Others must be constructed so that the immigrant ‘Us’ does not become a reality. The ICE raid becomes insurance for maintaining an Other, criminalizing and eventually deporting immigrants. The ‘threat of hybridity’ is a not a story that immigrants *cannot* integrate or become part of the community; it is a story that they *should not do so*.

### Gender and Othering

Government policies about immigration construct the imagined national community through inclusion and exclusion. An essential piece of the success of the process of exclusion is gender. I argued that the ICE raid reflects a gendering of immigration policy that relies on a notion of a masculine ‘Hispanic immigrant.’ Anthropologists have paid attention to the way that immigration is gendered; indeed Chavez’s work has especially talked about the threat posed by immigrant women’s reproduction—blindly producing ‘new’ Americans that will use welfare and suck American’s resources. He describes one female organizer of Proposition 187 in California who characterized Latina immigrants in a way that effectively

captures this perceived threat of women's reproduction: "They come here, they have their babies, and after that they become citizens and all those children use social services" (Chavez 2008: 174).

However anthropologists have not considered that immigration *policy* is also gendered, as Pickard (2009) noted. It is indeed important that immigrants are gendered—those seen as exclusively laborers are gendered as masculine, those seen as caretakers or mothers are gendered feminine. At issue, however, is not only this gendering. At issue is the dependence on this gendering for the logic of the 'New Era' of immigration policy. Immigration policy based on the criminalization of immigration is *dependent* on this gendering. This criminalization, now the lynchpin of immigration policy, depends on imagining the 'Hispanic Immigrant' as a masculine laborer—not as a father, a mother, or caretaker with a family. It is for this reason that workplace raids are also an essential piece of the 'New Era' of criminalizing immigration.

Unlike the non-contributing Latino Threat of Chavez's discussion, the new era of immigrant Other *does* contribute to society; 'they' are seen as making economic contributions and doing work Americans will not do. For this reason their otherness must be created in different ways—through their criminalization in particular, and by performing this criminalization through spectacles such as the ICE raid. One key piece of this is rendering the Other through de-moralizing from what might otherwise be seen as hard workers into criminals. But another key piece in othering is gendering immigrants as *masculine* workers, ensuring no

moral ambiguity by leaving no room to consider immigrants as either hard working *or* as nurturing caretakers.

### Who ‘We’ Ban and the National Imagination

Returning to Chavez’s quote from the beginning of this section, it is essential to look at who is “ban[ned] from entry” or who is blocked from “integration into society and to membership in the community.” But in addition to *who* we ban and for whom we create obstacles, the ICE raid is a lesson that we also have to pay attention to *how* we ban and *the means by which* we create obstacles into community. Immigration policy is one key tool by which this occurs in the United States. Moreover, an examination of Postville reveals we need to examine *why* we do this. Hybridity forces a questioning of nation and could allow for the re-imagining of both self and other. The threat it poses is to an easily categorized ‘Americanness.’ Addressing this threat ensures the current national imagination of moral Americans.

### **Structural Violence: Food Production, Immigration and Social Structure**

Food touches everything. Food is the foundation of every economy. It is a central pawn in political strategies of states and households. Food marks social differences, boundaries, bonds, and contradictions. Eating is an endlessly evolving enactment of gender, family, and community relationships (Counihan 1999: 1).

Anthropologist Paul Farmer has drawn the concept of structural violence into the popular imagination through his use of the concept to understand global health inequities from an anthropological perspective. The concept examines the ways in which violence is exerted systematically by the structures of society. This violence happens indirectly, and ultimately is about “the social machinery of

oppression” (Farmer 2004: 307). Anthropologist Linda Green (2004) argues this is indeed its efficacy; it is able to “render visible” structural oppression (319).

Ultimately, structural violence is about social power and its potential to harm.

It is impossible to divorce the discussion of immigration and immigration policy from a consideration of power. These pushes and pulls of globalization represent economic and political structures that reflect power writ on an international scale. As a means of ‘rendering visible’ the social machinery that shape this power, I consider the way in which immigration and immigration policy, as seen through the lens of Postville, are themselves forms of structural violence. This occurs in primarily two ways: 1) through the dehumanization of immigrants structured into American immigration policy and 2) via the structures that shape immigration and its power dynamics, particularly the production and consumption of food in American society.

#### Immigration Policy as Structural Violence

First I consider immigration policy itself. In my description of the performance of the ICE raid and the scripts of exclusion that it executes, I reveal the way immigration policy has shifted to focus on the criminalization of immigrants. Building on Farmer’s use of structural violence, Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes (2004) argue, “‘violence’...goes beyond physicality to include assaults on self-respect and personhood” (318). One element of the way Postville represents a form of structural violence are the assaults on personhood, individuality, and moral character that occur through immigration policy centered on criminalized immigrants. Indeed the physical treatment and likely unethical

legal behavior associated with the ICE raid have been called by many a clear violation of human rights, a “spectacle of the world’s most powerful government crushing the lives of the most humble and destitute” (Camayd-Freixas 2008). Yet the structures of violence extend beyond immigrant bodies themselves, affecting their children, their sending communities, and the new communities that they call home. Immigration policy as it played out in Postville ripped families apart and destroyed the economic fabric of the town.

Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes (2004) go on to say that structural violence is often “defined as moral in the service of conventional norms and material interests” (318). Immigration policy is often conceptualized as a literal policing of American borders and a moral policing against illegal activity. Indeed, in the post 9/11 era, the moral arguments associated with immigration policy may be even more salient; it becomes a so-called powerful means of preventing terrorism. To see the way in which this policing is defined as moral, one need only to revisit the ICE 2007FY Report. The Report clearly de-moralizes immigrants and normalizes and moralizes ICE (or immigration ‘control’ efforts more generally) through its description of ‘criminal aliens’ who are said to “have been involved in dangerous criminal activity such as murder, predatory sexual offenses, narcotics trafficking, alien smuggling and a host of other crimes” (2007:6). As described in the previous section, immigration policy today in the United States, represented in part by ICE, work to create a moral logic for ‘enforcement’ activities. This is precisely the type “moral[ity] in the service of conventional norms” that the authors refer to in their discussion of structural violence.

## “Feeding Globalization”: Economic Structures of Violence

Structural violence does not end with immigration policy. Indeed, the structural violence that is part and parcel of immigration policy is merely a reflection of international economic structures. I extend my analysis of structural violence beyond immigration policy itself to argue that immigration policy is one piece of the larger economic and political policies that have shaped immigration. Certainly this is not a new idea; academics have long considered the ways that immigration is shaped by structures. What I would like to add to this is a consideration of the structures that shape immigration *themselves* as a form of structural violence.

To do this, I return to a consideration of the pushes and pulls of immigration and the underlying reasons for their existence. Part of the value of using the concept of structural violence is the way it allows analysis of seemingly unconnected systems to one another and then the connection of those systems to power. Drawing on recent research coming from the anthropology of food in particular, my research in Postville demonstrates that it is important to pay attention to the connections between immigration and the foodways within American culture. While it has not been ignored that immigrants often come to the United States to do labor associated with the production of food (particularly to migrant farm laborers), anthropological literature has not considered the way that the structures of these food systems themselves are at the root of the problem, and are forms of structural violence. Considering immigration within the framework of the violence structures of the production and consumption of food



becomes an important means of seeing the underlying roots of the reason for the ICE raid.

### *Food Culture*

An examination of *what* is actually being produced that draws immigrants to the United States might not seem important at first glance. Yet it is precisely because it seems unimportant that it goes unexamined, which is perhaps the reason it is most important to look at. In his well-known ethnography of sugar, *Sweetness and Power*, Sidney Mintz (1985) expresses this, saying,

What could be less ‘anthropological’ than ...a food that graces every modern table? And yet the anthropology of just such homely, everyday substances may help us to clarify both how the world changes from what it was to what it may become, and how it manages at the same time to stay in certain regards very much the same (xxvii).

Drawing on Mintz ideas, examining food helps us to see connections between globalization and immigration, and between both of these and the structures of power within societies. Anthropological interest in the study of food and its relationship to culture has been growing in recent years (e.g. Counihan 1999; Mintz 1985; Mintz and Du Bois 2002). Phillips (2006) calls anthropologists to stay attuned to the role of food to understand the ways the local and global “nourish each other” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1999:260), and to consider analytically how people are being mobilized through food-related practices. In examining the relationship between food and culture, most anthropologists have focused on the movement of food itself—food on the move rather than people on the move in the production of food. However very little has been written on food

production in industrialized countries or on immigrant labor as part of processing the food Americans consume.

When drawing on the case study of Postville, we can see that food production is a key mobilization of immigrants. Slaughterhouses are production pulls—they draw immigrant laborers to assist in the production of food consumed by Americans. In this way food production ‘nourishes’ the pushes and pulls of immigration, and both food production and immigration are saturated in power. In his discussion of structural violence, Kirmayer (2004) argues “structural violence is a powerful metaphor that leads us to look for the brutality in taken-for-granted arrangements” (321). The production of food is, most certainly, taken for granted.

The consumption of meat in particular, the food produced in slaughterhouses generally and in Agriprocessors specifically, has symbolic value as American food. Many of the foods considered most ‘American’ revolve around meat consumption—hot dogs, hamburgers, and American fast food are just some examples of this. Given this, and given what happened in the ICE raid at a slaughterhouse, the interrogation of meat itself—its production and consumption in American culture—could reveal important ideas about immigration for processing of animals as being connected to power. The American production and consumption of meat is one of these ‘taken-for-granted’ arrangements assumed as a norm in American culture and left un-interrogated. Postville provides an excellent example of the structural violence contained

within the labor itself, and within the policies of immigration that led to the ICE raid.

In *Meat as a Natural Symbol* Fiddes(1991) draws on the seminal work of Mary Douglas on symbolism to understand the cultural logic behind consuming meat. Meat eating, argues Fiddes, is part of what Bourdieu calls our ‘habitus’—it is a principle unquestioned by most people. Fiddes provides an example that helps reveal this.

It would be easy to find any number of people who would agree that vegetarianism is generally ideological, if not overtly political. It would be harder to persuade most of those same people that meat eating is likewise. Nonetheless, any study of food habits must recognize that food selection is imbued with social rules and meaning, and it is clear from the extent of its association with cultural rituals, both religious and secular, that meat is a medium particularly rich in social meaning (Fiddes 1991:5).

Meat consumption is naturalized, goes ‘unseen’ and unquestioned on a cultural level. Inquiry into it is essential for understanding culture. Meat consumption is unquestioned in culture, and likewise the analysis of the role of food in immigration has been somewhat invisible. Attention to this area provides a lens for studying immigration that has not usually been explored by anthropologists. Indeed food, in this instance meat consumption, does not just “feed globalization” as Phillips (2006:38) argues, but specifically feeds immigration and immigration policy.

### *The Violence of the Slaughterhouse*

Understanding the violence of the slaughterhouse—both literal and figurative—is important for considering the way structural violence is reproduced in both small- and large-scale ways through the structures of food production.

Animals are processed for consumption as food products in slaughterhouses. In the United States, around nine billion animals are estimated to be slaughtered every year. The slaughtering occurs in 5700 slaughterhouses and processing plants across the country. An estimated 527,000 workers are employed in the processing (Schlosser 2002). Agriprocessors in Postville fits into this larger context. A 'typical' slaughter follows a standard process, and is one example of the literal violence workers are exposed to as part of the process of food production. First, animals for slaughter are received by truck or rail from a ranch, farm, or feedlot. They are herded into holding pens until they are rendered unconscious. This may be accomplished by applying an electric shock to the back of the head, firing a bolt pistol to the front of the head, or through the release of inert gas. After they are unconscious, animals are hung upside down by both of their hind legs on the processing line. The carotid artery and jugular vein are severed with a knife; blood drains, causing death through exsanguination. Due to Kosher processing laws, the step of rendering animals unconscious was absent, so workers at Agriprocessors would regularly be subjected to killing fully conscious animals.

In addition to the violence that workers participate in perpetuating for Americans to eat meat, working in a slaughterhouse is a notoriously dangerous occupation and a cause of bodily violence for workers. The injury rate among meatpackers is the highest of any occupation in the United States. Working in a slaughterhouse is three times more dangerous than working in an average American factory (Schlosser 2002). To further this, slaughterhouse work has one

of the highest employee turnovers of any industry. As a result, workers are generally unskilled and unfamiliar with their duties of this difficult and dangerous job. To add to this, most slaughterhouse workers are without health insurance often because of their short time with the company if health insurance is offered. Furthermore, all health and safety procedures are usually in English although English may not be the workers first language.

Dillard (forthcoming) investigated the psychological trauma on slaughterhouse workers and suggested that workers become numb to suffering. Dillard suggests that since most people have a common aversion to killing animals, slaughterhouse employment causes a majority of the employees to violate their natural preference against killing, having an adverse psychological impact on workers. Dillard's paper includes the mention of an interesting coping mechanism called "doubling" that results in the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self and dissociation from a morally dubious employment. In her report, a former hog slaughterhouse worker stated:

The worst thing, worse than the physical danger, is the emotional toll. If you work in the stick pit for any period of time, you develop an attitude that lets you kill things but doesn't let you care. You may look a hog in the eye that's walking around down in the blood pit with you and think, God, that really isn't a bad-looking animal. You may want to pet it. Pigs down on the kill floor have come up and nuzzled me like a puppy. Two minutes later I had to kill them—beat them to death with a pipe. I can't care (Dillard forthcoming).

An undercover investigator from PETA who worked described this numbing affect on the disassembly line at Agriprocessors. He described “The suffering and cruelty I witnessed didn’t phase (sic) anyone on that killing floor” (PETA 2004).

In addition to the concerns of safety and psychological trauma, Fitzgerald and Kalof (Fitzgerald and Kalof 2009) provided qualitative research that documented numerous negative effects of slaughterhouses on workers and communities. Five hundred and eighty one rural counties not adjacent to metropolitan areas were analyzed, in order to remove the potentially confounding effects of urbanization and spillover from metropolitan areas to rural counties. The findings indicated that the presence of slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, arrests for rape, and arrests for other sex offenses in comparison with other industries. The counties with slaughterhouses had

higher arrest levels for sex offenses and more frequent reports of murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. This study also found that, compared with other industries, the slaughterhouse industry has a more significant effect on community crime rates (Fitzgerald and Kalof 2009).

Ultimately the structures of violence that shape immigration on the global scale spill into the lives of the workers in this industry and are reproduced in community violence.

### *Structural Violence and Daily Life*

Interrogating structural violence—the subtleties and complexities of power relations and the microeconomics of difference—historically and locally gives attention to the multiple ways in which this violence is reworked through the routines of daily life as well as enacted through social relations and social institutions (Green 2004: 320).

A modern invention, the slaughterhouse was a political response to "dirty" butchering practices and changing norms of social hygiene fueled by unquestioned consumer demand for meat. The social implications of slaughterhouses contribute to a structure of violence that is consistent with the treatment of the arrested workers of Agriprocessors. In addition to the physical hardships of the slaughterhouse work itself, the slaughterhouse creates a social class (almost a caste of untouchables handling meat), enforces the existence of this group by inflicting psychological trauma and disorders on slaughterhouse workers, and reinforces a social ideology of violence of which the group is a part. Essentially the production of meat creates a liminal class of immigrants by the very nature of the structures that create it. These structures are then reinforced by the immigration policy that criminalizes these very workers. Symbolically and ideologically, structures of violence are part of the unequal global economy of food production that brings immigrants to the United States, are reproduced in the violence of the labor itself, and codified in the dehumanizing othering of immigration policy toward these workers.

I encountered a salient example of the way structural violence works as I was conducting research on Postville and the ICE raid. A screening of a documentary on the raid was being shown at a local college, and food was served following the film. Those present had a choice to make sandwiches with either processed beef or pork, most likely products made in a meat processing facility similar to Agriprocessors. However no connection was made between the production of this meat and the ICE raid. Yet food production is related to

immigration and ultimately to immigration policy. That these systems are invisible is part and parcel of structural violence—they go unquestioned and are enacted by the structures of the society. To return to Green’s quote, interrogating structural violence is one way to make visible the way that ‘violence is reworked through the routines of daily life’—and perhaps routines as simple as eating a sandwich qualify.

A consideration of structural violence helps render power visible in Postville and within immigration in the United States. Moreover, the case study of Postville makes an important contribution to the literature on structural violence by using it to understand immigration. Violence is structured into Postville both before and after the raid. What draws immigrants to Postville to do violent, dangerous work stems from the economic structures related to the production and consumption of food in the United States. As if that were not enough, the structures of violence are perpetuated with the treatment of these immigrant laborers once they come to the United States to do the work of producing the food Americans eat, demonstrating Counihan’s (2007) point that food “touches everything...marks social differences, boundaries, bonds, and contradictions” (1). An obvious contradiction becomes visible when we look at immigration policy itself. Immigration policy others and dehumanizes immigrants for doing work that consumers themselves structure; the culturally unquestioned consumption of meat was the reason that the immigrants were working in Agriprocessors slaughterhouse and the reason they were arrested, found guilty, and deported. The ICE raid itself and the treatment of the immigrant



laborers as criminals, processed through criminal court as they processed meat in the slaughterhouse, provides a salient example of ‘social machinery of oppression’ made visible through a consideration of structural violence.

### **Engaged Anthropology and Immigration**

This dissertation has explored the way in which Postville provides a lens through which to understand immigration and its meanings in American culture. Through this exploration, immigration policy can be seen as a performance of national identity designed to shape the national imagination. Yet this exploration also reveals the inhumanity associated with this process. Because of that, this work offers one final insight into the debate in the discipline about what the role of anthropologists should be with regards to social change. My own position with regards to Postville is shaped, as the CPAS model itself demonstrates when talking about sphere E, as someone who is part of the performance as ethnographer and a community member.

In their description of the sphere of the ethnographer, Valentine and Matsumoto draw on anthropologists Athanases and Heath (1995), who note, “A researcher who lacks sensitivity to demands in the lives of informants, or who holds fast to the comfortable distance of authority rather than becoming a learner in the culture, severely limits the nature of the data and undermines the research” (267). After spending time in Postville, it is impossible to ignore the havoc wreaked on the community and the way in which immigration policy in the form of the raid destroyed livelihoods and ripped apart families. This coupled with the inhuman ‘othering’ of the immigrants during and after the raid ensure that I

cannot ignore the ‘demands in the lives of’ those in Postville. This has led me to think about the raid itself, and immigration policy more generally, using this concept of structural violence. In Farmer’s use of the term he points to the way that structures—historically influenced social and economic conditions and institutions—can act to harm people. Bourgois and Scheper-Hughes argue that an anthropologist has an obligation to remove their “white gloves” and “get to work” by making contributions in the best way they possibly can to end this harm, by “rendering visible these erased and unexpected linkages between violence, suffering and power” (2004:318).

This type of anthropology has been called ‘engaged,’ a word used by Roy Rappaport in his 1993 Distinguished Lecture to the American Anthropological Association in which he urged anthropologists to use their discipline to engage with the world around them, and intervene in public policy and decision making (Rapapport 1993). I hope the performance of Postville demonstrates the need of the ethnographer to make power visible by examining unquestioned logic and making connections that might otherwise not be made, such as between the consumption of meat and the placing of immigrants in five-point shackles. In her discussion of food and globalization, Phillips argues it is our responsibility as anthropologists to challenge “the ways in which the food world is currently structured and reproduced” (2006:48). I have worked to make these structures more visible. The implications of immigration are far-reaching, and it is essential for anthropologists—using research grounded in the voices of communities that often make visible the multiplicity of national identities—to address this. Using

the anthropological lenses of nationalism, sport, and performance, this dissertation makes an important contribution to understanding the complexity of immigration in the modern, global era.

The events of Postville resulted in many ways because of capitalist concerns of creating greater profits. There is clearly a lack of connection made of larger macroeconomic processes—such as I discussed regarding NAFTA and the need in the United States for cheap, unskilled labor that facilitates immigration of laborers such as those at Agriprocessors. Anthropological analysis of the events of Postville help reveal the way in which immigration policy itself is designed in the interest of American capitalism—structures that benefit profit-makers and disenfranchise laborers. Hence this also shows one way in which my analysis returns anthropology to its modern roots—this analysis of Postville require that the discipline speak out against what occurred. Nationalism and capitalist concerns become more significant than issues of humanism and human rights. The faceless abstractions of a world capitalist system played out in such a way that individuals and communities were negatively affected. The rich detail that comes with ethnographic investigation demonstrates clearly that while the United States appeared to be ‘speaking’ in the interests of Americans, American voices were not actually heard or at least those of residents of Postville were not. The federal/national concerns were very different than the community/national concerns of those in Postville.

It is in this that ethnography offers another lesson. Part of an engaged anthropology relies on making the ‘linkages between violence, suffering and

power' visible. But alone this can lead to an overwhelming sense of 'doom and gloom' that comes with the consideration of social justice. The case study of Postville offers another opportunity—hope. Postville citizens again demonstrate that they are not necessarily willing to accept the 'story' of nationalism played out through immigration policy.

Likely against the intent of the immigration policy as enacted through the raid, it has had another far-reaching consequence. Because of the shared devastation of the residents of Postville, the raid drew communities together around issues. Whereas there had been little to no discussion on these issues before, the citizens of Postville and the Postville government actually came together to acknowledge that the raid was detrimental to the community. In doing so, they also were forced to acknowledge the positive of having immigrants—documented or undocumented—in their community in the first place. What this essentially does is flip the moral tale of the good American told through the performance of the ICE raid. Rather than, as the raid did, making immigrants into criminal others, the attitudes of the community in Postville flips the morality and make the nation bad. The symbolic other becomes the American government. Since creating a symbolic other also creates a symbolic self, the raid created a self that actually includes immigrants. This means that while American-ness is not rejected, per se, American-ness is called into question to some extent, demonstrating the multifaceted complexity of national identity and of immigration policy in shaping national identity in intentional and unintended ways.

The adult soccer league serves as a window into society in which organizers attempted to build an inclusive community on a local level but national politics enforced a community of exclusion. Although at first seemingly contradictory, this friction resulted from the consistencies of villain construction and the ideologies and structures of violence of which the soccer players, immigrants, and townsfolk were a part. In the first quote I included in this dissertation, Camayd-Friexas expresses the journey he took from being an interpreter in the Cattle Congress to an observer of a broken community rebuilding their spirit, saying that Postville will “open your eyes and shake your deepest human and patriotic convictions. It is at once an epic story of survival, hope, and humble aspirations, of triumph, defeat, and rebirth.” Perhaps it is through this rebirth that we will see yet another re-imagining of the nation.

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APPENDIX A  
HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Hjortleifur Jcrason  
MC

*fer* From: Mark Rooks, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 05/13/2010

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 05/13/2010

IRB Protocol #: 1004005101

Study Title: Community, Nationalism, and Soccer in America's Heartland: Globe Trotter and Postville, IA

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

