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BY-PRODUCTS: IMMIGRATION, RAIDS, AND MEATPACKING  
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

by

Kevin Hanks

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Sociology

Approved:

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Dr. Christy Glass  
Major Professor

---

Dr. John Allen  
Committee Member

---

Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith  
Committee Member

---

Dr. Mark R. McLellan  
Vice President for Research and  
Dean of the School of Graduate  
Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2012

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## ABSTRACT

By-Products: Immigration, Raids, and Meatpacking in Rural Communities

by

Kevin David Hanks, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2012

Major Professor: Dr. Christy Glass  
Department: Sociology

The purpose of this thesis is to show the short- and long-term responses and adaptations of workers and employers in the meatpacking industry to the new immigration enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. Worksite raids have become part of the new immigration enforcement strategy of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (I.C.E.). A review of the literature regarding the meatpacking industry, its history, relocation to and impacts on rural communities, and of immigration policy over the last 70 years is conducted. A case study of the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, Utah that experienced a worksite immigration raid in 2006 and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five current and former plant workers, one former member of plant management, and one local ecclesiastical leader.

The analysis reveals that the raid had strong impacts on the company, plant management, and workers. The company was sold the year after the raid due to financial losses suffered following the raid. Employers struggled to replace over 150 workers that

were taken in the raid and to regain the trust of the remaining workers at the plant. Some workers lost close friends and family members in the raid and experienced instability and fear following the raid. It was found that employers made only one significant change following the raid in their hiring practices. They conducted more in-depth background checks with better follow-up with past employers of new applicants if the information was available. Workers were found to have made few changes after the raid since those not taken in the raid were confirmed as authorized workers and did not need to make many changes. The raid and more in-depth background checks led to more native-born workers being hired following the raid.

This research indicates that the use of worksite raids has strong social and economic impacts on workers, employers, and local communities. More research is needed to better understand how the meatpacking industry and its workers are adapting to the new enforcement strategy and how effective this strategy has been, and will be in the future.

(72 pages)

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Special thanks to my wife, Angela, who always has and always will inspire me. Thank you for your incredible patience in enduring this long and difficult process, which would be meaningless without you by my side. Thank you for the endless confidence, pep talks, editing help, patience, and love. A huge thank you to my parents and siblings for always supporting and encouraging me and being the best family anyone could ever hope to have. I also want to thank Doug, Traci, Stephanie, Ashley, Matt, Zach, and Brian for being there so we could help each other make it through some of the most stressful and difficult times of our lives.

Good luck to everyone else who ever goes through this process. Never give up and always believe in yourself and be grateful for great professors, family, and friends.

Kevin D. Hanks

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## INTRODUCTION

The meatpacking industry has increasingly moved into the rural communities of the western U.S., from the large urban centers of the eastern U.S., since the 1980s (Broadway 2007; Drabenstott, Henry, and Mitchell 1999). With the influx of meatpacking plants, rural communities have faced many changes. Some of these changes have been good for the community, such as receiving an economic boost that was badly needed to provide jobs and an economic revival (Broadway 2000). Other changes have not been as positive, such as the social impacts of an immigrant labor force, the sudden increase in population, and the negative impact on the economy if the plant closes or relocates (Broadway and Stull 2006; Dalla, Cramer, and Stanek 2002; Ruskin and Donham 1997). A pattern that has emerged is that some of these rural communities have become dependent on the meatpacking industry, and they have been compared to the energy boomtowns of the western U.S. of the 1970s (Broadway and Stull 2006). When the communities become too dependent they are at great risk of severe economic impacts if something happens to the meatpacking plant, similar to the “bust” of the energy boomtowns of the 1970s (Broadway and Stull 2006).

The federal government’s increasingly restrictive stance on immigration has led to changes in immigration policy and a new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite raids in industries suspected to employ undocumented immigrants, including the meatpacking industry (I.C.E. 2007a, 2008a). The intention of this new enforcement strategy is to make it more costly and difficult for employers to knowingly hire undocumented workers and to reduce the employment of undocumented workers in the U.S. (I.C.E. 2008a). This is a difficult task when the strong incentives and benefits those

undocumented immigrant workers provide to meatpacking and other industries are considered (Broadway 2000; Grey and Woodrick 2002). As more research is done about this new enforcement strategy it may be found that it unintentionally further entrenches illegal activities such as identity theft and the use of forged documents by unauthorized immigrant workers, rather than encouraging better employment practices. Alternatively, by increasing the costs to those employers that knowingly hire unauthorized workers, the new enforcement strategy may make employers more wary of employing non-native born workers. Thus, the new enforcement strategy could also increase discrimination against immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, in the meatpacking industry.

Within this new trend of stricter enforcement of immigration policies and laws has been an increase in the number of worksite immigration raids and the number of employers and unauthorized workers being arrested by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (I.C.E.), which replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Service (I.N.S.) in 2003 (I.C.E. 2007a, 2008a; Lovato 2008). These worksite immigration raids are part of a new effort to crackdown on the number of illegal immigrants entering the U.S. to work, a trend that has not been decreasing over most of the last two decades despite the policies, strategies, and efforts that have been implemented to reduce or eliminate it (Cornelius 2005). This new effort represents a shift in strategy, which began in 2003 and has been increasingly enforced since 2006, from mostly focusing on stronger enforcement of the borders to going after illegal immigrants and those who employ them through the increased use of worksite immigration raids (I.C.E. 2006a, 2008a). The worksite immigration raids also serve as an attention getting deterrent to illegal immigrants and to those employers who knowingly hire them (I.C.E. 2006a).

This new strategy was highlighted in 2008 with the worksite raid of Agriprocessors Inc., a kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, IA. In this single raid approximately 390 workers, around a third of the plant's workforce, were taken into custody for being in the U.S. illegally and approximately 29 faced criminal charges for committing identity theft to gain employment (Ebaugh and Raasch 2008). This worksite raid led to economic disaster for the community when the plant was forced to close, its workforce depleted and its former CEO under a criminal investigation (Love 2008). With this change in the strategy and methods for controlling illegal immigration through worksite raids and bringing criminal charges against employers and workers, there is a need for new research to be done to study how workers and employers are responding and adapting to this new strategy.

In the past and most likely still today, unauthorized workers have used identity theft and forged documents to help them to get jobs (Crouse 2009; GAO 1999, 2005). The use of forged documents and identity theft make it very difficult for employers to verify an applicant's eligibility to work and allows those employers who are knowingly hiring unauthorized workers to use these as excuses for why they have supposedly "unknowingly" hired unauthorized workers and thereby avoid government penalties or sanctions because it cannot be proven that these employers knew they were hiring unauthorized workers (Crouse 2009; GAO 1999, 2005). Employers have not had to worry about investigations or being prosecuted for hiring illegal immigrants until recently, when immigration enforcement strategies shifted to place more accountability on employers and to follow through with criminal charges and financial penalties (I.C.E. 2006a, 2008a).

In 2008, I.C.E. "...removed 356,739 illegal aliens from the United States—a 23.5 percent increase over the previous year's total" (I.C.E. 2008a). Worksite enforcement arrests have increased from 510 in 2002 to 6,287 in 2008 (I.C.E. 2008a: iii). The state of Utah will likely continue to see more I.C.E. operations as it has a growing Hispanic population that increased "from 85,000 in 1990 to 200,000 in 2000" (Haverluk and Trautman 2008:91). An I.C.E. worksite immigration raid already occurred at the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, UT in December 2006 as part of Operation Wagon Train, in which six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants in six states were raided on the same day (I.C.E. 2007a).

This thesis seeks to understand how employers and workers have responded and adapted to this new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids and recent changes in immigration policy. Researching this topic will help to develop a better understanding about the impacts that immigration policies and worksite immigration raids have and specifically how employers and workers are responding and adapting to these policies and the methods being used in the new enforcement strategy. Understanding immigration policies and strategies, how effective they are, and how they are enforced is becoming increasingly important for rural communities that have come to depend on immigrant workers and those who employ them. Researching this topic will provide a view of the increased use of worksite immigration raids as part of the new enforcement strategy and specifically how workers and employers have responded to the new policies, strategies and what they have done to conform to or avoid them.

In this thesis I will review the literature of the history of the meatpacking industry, its consolidation and relocation, and its impacts on rural communities. I will

also review the changes in immigration policy over the last 70 years that have led to increases in worksite immigration raids in rural communities. A study will be conducted involving a case study and in-depth, semi-structured interviews of a local ecclesiastical leader and former and current workers, including a former member of plant management, of the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant located in Hyrum, Utah that experienced a worksite immigration raid in December 2006. This analysis will clarify how plant management and workers have adapted and responded to new immigration policies and an enforcement strategy that includes an increase in the use of worksite raids. These interviews help to show how workers and employers have responded to the new enforcement strategy and what changes and adaptations, if any, each group has made in response to the new strategy. The methods of this study will also be explained and clarified.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been much discussion of the history of the U.S. meatpacking industry and its movement from urban centers into rural communities (Broadway 2007; Drabenstott et al. 1999; Kandel and Parrado 2005). This research shows that this movement has been from large urban centers such as Chicago, to the rural Great Plains, the Midwest, the Southeast, and the West (Broadway 2007; Drabenstott et al. 1999). This move to rural areas has changed the distribution of meatpacking jobs, and as of 1999, 52% of all meat industry jobs were located in rural areas (Drabenstott et al. 1999).

This move to rural areas was due in large part to the consolidation of the meatpacking industry by a handful of large companies (Broadway and Stull 2006; MacDonald and Ollinger 2005). This consolidation led to increases in meatpacking plant sizes (MacDonald and Ollinger 2005). It has been found that “In 1972, plants handling less than 250,000 head of cattle per year accounted for over 70% of all cattle slaughter...” compared to “...in 2002, plants handling over 500,000 cattle a year accounted for over 70% of slaughter...” (MacDonald and Ollinger 2005: 1021). Cattle slaughter plants in the U.S. declined from over 600 in 1980 to around 170 in 2001 (Barkema, Drabenstott, and Novack 2001). This consolidation has benefitted rural communities, as they have enjoyed an increased share of meatpacking plants and meat industry jobs (Drabenstott et al. 1999). Studies have found that the meatpacking industry does in fact provide jobs and an economic boost to the community’s economy (Broadway 2000, 2007; Drabenstott et al. 1999). As meatpacking plants have increased in size they have also become more concentrated geographically in the Great Plains, the Midwest, the Southeast, and the West ( Broadway 2007; Drabenstott et al. 1999).

This consolidation and the move to rural areas with new, larger meatpacking plants has also been driven in part by the industry's desire to relocate to right-to-work-states where companies do not have to pay the higher wages that come with strongly unionized plants (Broadway and Stull 2006; Brueggemann and Brown 2003; Stanley 1992). Over time, the wages for meatpacking workers have steadily declined (Broadway and Stull 2006; MacDonald and Ollinger 2005). Deskilling of labor through technology and automation, along with the relocation of the industry to rural areas, led to declines in wages for meatpacking workers (Brueggemann and Brown 2003). The incorporation of automation and technology advancements also led to great declines in the power of unions because strikes were no longer a useful strategy once the companies could hire low wage, low skill workers that could easily be trained to replace them (Brueggemann and Brown 2003).

The search for lower wage workers also led to changes in the recruitment, patterns of migration, and the destination of immigrant Hispanic workers in the U.S. (Gouveia and Saenz 2000; Kandel and Parrado 2005). The shift of meatpacking plants into rural communities has created a new job market for Hispanic immigrants, which has attracted them increasingly to these small, rural communities for work (Donato et al. 2007; Grey and Woodrick 2002; Kandel and Parrado 2005). These immigrants have come to form a large part of the workforce in meatpacking plants and are increasingly targeted for recruitment by meatpacking plants in rural communities (Gouveia and Saenz 2000; Kandel and Parrado 2005).

There has been a move away from the traditional gateway states of Hispanic immigration such as California, New York, and Texas, to rural communities in the

Midwest and South where the meatpacking plants have relocated (Donato et al. 2007; Johnson and Lichter 2008). These changes in Hispanic immigration have had many impacts on rural communities, with research discussing how the negative impacts that meatpacking plants and immigrant workforces can have on the community may outweigh any positive impacts (Broadway 2000; Dalla et al. 2002; Stanley 1992).

The migration of Hispanic immigrants to rural areas has helped to reverse the decades long trend of population declines in rural communities due to out-migration and natural decrease by the increased in-migration of immigrants and high fertility rates among the Hispanic population (Donato et al. 2007; Johnson and Lichter 2008). In-migration has even led to large population increases for some rural communities (Donato et al. 2007). The growth of the Hispanic population has also changed the age and sex characteristics of many communities as the incoming rural Hispanic population tends to be male and young (Kandel and Cromartie 2004).

The meatpacking industry helps to create many jobs in the rural communities where they are located, and an immigrant labor force is needed to help fully staff the meatpacking plants in these communities (Broadway 2007). It has also been found that Mexican immigrants have work experience in various areas of manufacturing other than meatpacking, which may help bring more industrial skills to communities (Baker and Hotek 2003). Immigrants may also help to increase entrepreneurial businesses in a community as immigrants open their own businesses in the community (Broadway 2007).

For many communities these changes of population can come so quickly it can be difficult for residents and community services to adjust once a meatpacking plant is built and a new immigrant population has come to fill its jobs, especially if the community is



not prepared (Broadway 2000; Dalla et al. 2002). Many rural communities see the influx of immigrants as a mixed blessing as they help meet labor demands for the new industry that is benefitting the community economically, but also strain the community's relations, resources, and services (Broadway 2000; Dalla et al. 2002).

At the same time that this new population provides economic benefits, it can also come with social costs that can be very difficult for the local community (Broadway 2000, 2007; Dalla et al. 2002). The rapid growth in the population creates difficulties in dealing with new social problems, such as how to provide enough housing for the new population (Broadway 2000, 2007). While the new population contributes to the economic boom with new jobs, these jobs generally do not pay very well and the communities struggle with the increased strain on the healthcare and social services systems (Broadway 2000, 2007). Studies have been conducted to find whether the increase in the immigrant labor force has led to the wage declines in meatpacking and other manufacturing industries (Stanley 1992). These studies have found that the increase in immigrant workers has not been the sole factor in declining wages in the meatpacking and other manufacturing industries, and it may not even contribute significantly to these wage declines (Card 2001; Stanley 1992). It has been found that industry restructuring, relocation, and declines in union strength have been the largest factors in wage decreases rather than the increased use of immigrant labor (Stanley 1992). The increased use of immigrant labor instead tends to simply make it easier for the meatpacking industry to lower wages, increase production speeds, and continue to weaken unions (Stanley 1992).

Increases in the immigrant population also create strains on the educational systems in these rural communities (Broadway 2007). The increase in the number and diversity of languages make it difficult for teachers and administrators to teach and communicate in ethnically diverse classrooms and with student's parents, while community members worry about the quality of education declining because of the needs of the new immigrant population (Broadway 2007; Dalla et al. 2002). It has also been found that communities that have meatpacking plants experience increases in crime rates (Broadway 2000, 2007; Fitzgerald, Kalof, and Dietz 2009). Some studies indicate that this increase in crime rates is due to "...an influx of young single males with less than a high school education..." (Broadway 2007:574) and also possibly due to the effect of "the violent workplace of the slaughterhouse" that may lead to increased crime rates outside the workplace (Fitzgerald et al. 2009:158).

Along with the new immigrant population that comes to work in the meatpacking plants in rural communities is a history of immigration policy that has changed greatly over the last 70 years. In 1942, the Bracero Treaty was signed as a response to the labor shortages caused by WWII (Kimer 2005). In this program Mexican laborers were given temporary visas to come into the U.S. on short-term work contracts to labor on ranches and farms (Kimer 2005). The program continued until 1964, at which point 4.6 million laborers had entered the U.S., and many of them stayed illegally after their contracts had ended (Kimer 2005). In 1965, the Bracero Treaty ended when Congress passed the Immigration and Naturalization Act, "...which limits the number of entry visas and changes the criteria of quotas from country of origin to a preference for skilled laborers" (Kimer 2005: 34).

A major change in how illegal immigration was viewed and reacted to came in 1986, when “President Ronald Reagan declares illegal migration to be a threat to national security” (Kimer 2005: 34). In the same year, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which increased funding for the U.S. Border Patrol and included sanctions for employers that hired unauthorized immigrant workers (Kimer 2005). Another controversial part of the IRCA was that it granted amnesty to an estimated 2.3 to over 3 million unauthorized immigrants who were already in the country, most of them being Mexican immigrants (Kimer 2005; Orrenius and Zavodny 2003; Phillips and Massey 1999). President Clinton, in 1996, signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which “increases penalties on unauthorized migrants” and “tightens asylum claims”, thereby ending the possibility of another amnesty being granted (Kimer 2005: 35).

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 the USA PATRIOT ACT was passed on October 26, 2001, which tripled the number of U.S. border patrol officers on the northern border of the U.S. and significantly increased the immigration enforcement budget (Hines 2006; U.S. GPO 2012). This strengthened the view of illegal immigrants as “a threat to national security” that was begun by President Reagan in 1986 (Kimer 2005: 34). The Department of Homeland Security was formed in 2002 in response to the terrorist threat against the U.S. (DHS 2011a). In the following months the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was replaced by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) agency as part of the Department of Homeland Security (Lovato 2008). The creation of I.C.E. as part of the Department of Homeland Security demonstrates the further merging and melding of immigration enforcement and national

security following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Hines 2006). This means the agency seems to perform a dual role, that of enforcing immigration laws, securing borders, and preventing the entry of illegal immigrants (I.C.E. 2010), and this by extension includes helping to maintain national security by “...preventing the entry of people and materials that pose a threat to national security...” (I.C.E. 2010: 2). In 2008, I.C.E. employed a workforce of 17,000 and “...removed 356,739 illegal aliens from the United States—a 23.5 percent increase over the previous year’s total” (I.C.E. 2008a: iii). Through worksite enforcement activities and investigations, I.C.E. made 6,287 arrests, which was a 27% increase in worksite enforcement arrests compared to 2007 (I.C.E. 2008a). Worksite enforcement activities, such as worksite raids, are increasing and more workers and employers are being arrested each year (I.C.E. 2007a, 2008a). This shows the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite raids. This new strategy is likely to impact both workers and employers and lead to strong responses and adaptations from each.

It was expected that employers’ responses to immigration policy and the enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids would be an attitude of dislike of stricter policies and enforcement. I identified two possible strategies employers might pursue in response to a worksite immigration raid. First, the cost incentive to hire undocumented workers may be so great that they continue to hire undocumented workers. However, if employers pursued this strategy they would make greater attempts to protect themselves in the case of future worksite raids and investigations. On the other hand, if employers perceive the costs of the raid as outweighing the benefits of hiring undocumented workers, then employers may begin to

favor native born workers and increase discrimination against immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented.

It was expected that non-native born workers' responses would be of an attitude of being persecuted and criminalized for performing work that no one else wanted for wages no one else would accept. This would lead to adaptations to immigration policies and the use of worksite immigration raids such as committing identity theft or obtaining higher quality forged documents so they would not be suspected of being unauthorized workers, never revealing to employers that they are unauthorized workers, and offering to work for lower wages to get and keep their jobs at the meatpacking plant. The responses of native-born workers was expected to be frustration at the problems and delays caused by the worksite raid and agreement that justice had been done by taking away those who were working in the U.S. illegally. All of these responses and adaptations are expected to be ways that employers and workers have responded and adapted to the worksite immigration raid that was carried out at the plant.

In conducting this research study, answers to many questions concerning the impacts of immigration policies and worksite raids on rural meatpacking employers and workers are being sought after, such as: How have these raids impacted meatpacking employers and both native-born and non-native born workers? How have employers and workers responded and adapted to the threats posed by the worksite immigration raids? How has the meatpacking plant recovered from the worksite immigration raid? How have plant management and workers adapted to new immigration policies and enforcement strategies? These are questions that have received very little study and

attention in the literature and yet are important to rural communities, employers, and workers because the use of worksite immigration raids is continuing to increase.

By studying these questions it will expand our knowledge about how immigration policies and enforcement strategies are affecting employers and workers, and specifically how employers and workers are responding and adapting to these new policies and enforcement strategies. This research will lead to a greater understanding of the impacts of immigration policy, specifically providing answers as to how effective the new immigration policies and the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids are by answering whether the raids meet the goals of the policies or not. This information will lead to more careful consideration in the future of the consequences of such policy before it is enacted. By increasing the awareness of the impacts that worksite immigration raids and policies can have, policymakers can be better prepared and knowledgeable of the consequences that result from these policies and strategies. This will lead to better policies from policymakers and better preparedness on the part of communities, industries, and workers that may be at risk of experiencing worksite immigration raids.

## METHODS

To answer the research questions, a case study of the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, UT following a worksite raid and in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted to learn what the responses and adaptations have been of employers and workers to the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. The interviews were conducted with 1 local ecclesiastical leader and 6 current and former workers, including 1 former member of plant management, at the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, UT that experienced a worksite immigration raid in December 2006 when over 150 workers were arrested by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) agency. This meatpacking plant provides an excellent opportunity to answer these research questions because it is a large plant that has members of plant management and immigrant and native-born workers who would likely remember the worksite raid and have information about the responses and adaptations of workers and employers at the plant over the years following the worksite raid. The study consists of two different parts to gain information to answer these questions. In order to collect my sample, I relied upon participants who currently work, have worked, or knew people who currently work or had worked at the meatpacking plant that might be willing to participate in interviews or that could refer me to other potential interview subjects. I also contacted plant management at the meatpacking plant to see if they would help me to obtain interviews with members of plant management and workers at the plant.

The first part of the study consisted of seeking interviews with members of plant management at the meatpacking plant. By conducting these interviews first, it would

help determine what to ask the workers in later interviews. This is because through interviewing members of plant management first, a better understanding of the hiring process before the worksite raid and changes to that process since the worksite raid occurred, could be better understood and could be used to focus the interviews with workers in this and other applicable topics and themes. Some of the information expected to emerge from interviews with members of plant management were the responses and adaptations to the worksite immigration raid, the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite raids, and current immigration policies. It was also expected that information about any adaptations in screening practices, hiring practices, and recruitment of workers would be revealed along with information about the ethnic composition of the plant's workforce before and after the worksite raid with reasons for any changes.

Each interview was approximately 30 minutes to one hour so as not to take up too much of the participants' time and was conducted at a place and time determined by the participant so that they were comfortable during the interview. At no point in seeking referrals or during any interviews were any contacts or participants asked about their legal status. This was done because it was not central to the interview process or to this research project. This was also done to protect participants and minimize their risks in participating in interviews and to ensure that they felt as comfortable as possible in the interviews without any feelings of vulnerability. To get in contact with these individuals I began by contacting an acquaintance of mine who had indicated that he had a friend who he thought might be a member of plant management. Through that contact, who ended up being a worker and not a member of plant management, I sought referrals and



recommendations for workers and members of plant management to interview and was able to find 1 former member of management who was willing to be interviewed. I also contacted plant management at the Hyrum, UT plant to see if they would be willing to help me secure interviews with members of plant management and workers at the plant. This was unsuccessful as they were not willing or able to help me because corporate approval would be needed and this was extremely unlikely and I received no assistance in securing interviews from the meatpacking plant or the company.

The second part of the study was to interview current and former workers of the meatpacking plant. Interviewing former and current workers gives a view of how hiring, screening, and recruitment were conducted before the worksite immigration raid and also after the raid. It also provides details of how workers responded and adapted to the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite raids and how they continue to do so now. To interview current and former workers I contacted another acquaintance who is very involved in community development efforts within the Hispanic and immigrant community in the area where the plant is located. By contacting workers through this person I sought to establish a better relationship of trust since this person would be able to introduce me and assure the workers that they could trust me. Through these initial contacts I asked for referrals and any other acquaintances that might be willing to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted at whatever time and place was convenient and comfortable for the participants and the interviews were done in their native language to ensure the accurate expression and understanding of their responses and to make the interview process as comfortable for them as possible.

These interviews provide information on how employers and workers have adapted and responded following the worksite raid and also how they have adapted and responded to recent immigration policies and enforcement strategies. The interviews were conducted in an in-depth, semi-structured format that allowed for consistency between the interviews and also allowed for further in-depth questions for clarification and probing. The interviews were recorded and then analyzed to help organize them according to concepts and themes that were common across the interviews. I also looked for differences among the interviews to find any differences in the responses and adaptations that were described by participants. All of the interviews were conducted in person and recorded except one interview with a former native-born worker that was conducted via email. The sample consisted of seven participants; five current and former workers, one former member of management, and one local ecclesiastical leader. The participants were between 25-50 years old and had worked at the plant between three months to more than 10 years with two of the participants currently employed at the plant. Of the participants five were Caucasian and two were Hispanic with one being non-native born. The former member of management and three of the five current and former workers were employed at the plant when the worksite raid occurred and the other current and former workers began work at the plant after the worksite occurred.

My research questions required in-depth, semi-structured interviews to learn how employers and workers have adapted and responded to the worksite raid and new immigration policies. This leads to a sample that is small and not random, but the purpose of the study is to learn about the responses and adaptations that employers and workers have observed and made. Therefore being able to generalize the results to larger

populations is less important than the depth of knowledge that could be obtained through a case study and the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews. However, I sought to interview workers and members of plant management that came from different levels of position, responsibility, nativity, and years of experience to obtain as complete a view as possible of the responses and adaptations following the worksite immigration raid at the meatpacking plant, and also to the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids.

### *Concepts*

A worksite immigration raid will be defined as an immigration enforcement activity that occurs at a workplace and is performed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) agency. An important concept within the research questions is that of responses and adaptations made by employers and workers at the meatpacking plant. Responses will refer to opinions, attitudes, and levels of compliance regarding worksite immigration raids and immigration policies. Adaptations will refer to any changes and actions that have been made to comply with, or avoid compliance with, immigration policy and the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. These concepts will allow the project to study the responses and adaptations of employers and workers regarding immigration policy and the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. It will allow for a view a of how employers and workers have adapted to be in compliance with immigration policies or how they have adapted with methods to avoid compliance and find ways around immigration laws, policies, and worksite enforcement strategies.

*Strengths and Weaknesses*

As with most qualitative studies a limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability. This is due to the fact that I obtained a small sample that was not randomly selected from a large population. This extends to the problem of the external validity of the project. I will not be able to make generalizable statements since the sample is non-random. It was also very difficult to find those workers that were the most affected by the worksite raid, those being the unauthorized immigrant workers, since they were likely arrested and taken away, left the area to avoid being arrested, or who may have returned to their native countries to be with family members who were arrested and deported in the worksite raid.

Even through the use of a network of contacts of friends and family members of current and former workers and the former member of management, it was extremely difficult to find subjects willing to participate in interviews. All of the participants I interviewed were willing to speak to their friends and family members that worked, or had worked, at the plant, but in most cases they were not able to persuade them to participate in interviews. This was especially true when trying to secure interviews with immigrant workers at the plant. They were extremely wary of being interviewed or even speaking about the worksite raid or the company, even when asked to do so by close friends.

Securing interviews with any members of plant management was also extremely difficult, especially when trying to find members of plant management who were working at Swift & Co. when the worksite raid occurred. This was partially due to the change in plant ownership that occurred in the year following the raid, when the JBS S.A.

meatpacking company purchased Swift & Co. (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). This new company made many changes within plant management and laid off many of those who were in plant management positions when the worksite raid occurred. The corporate offices of JBS S.A. likely have a very strict policy that does not permit any employee to be interviewed or to speak about the company without their permission.

When I contacted the Hyrum, UT meatpacking plant about this study by email, since my phone calls were not returned, to find out if they would be willing to help me secure interviews with workers and members of plant management it was explained to me by a member of plant management that "...corporate will not allow the plants to do something like this..." This made it extremely difficult to secure interviews and was a demonstration of the control that the company's corporate body exerts over its employees. For this reason, those in plant management positions would likely not be willing to risk their jobs by being interviewed. This was not a surprising finding since the meatpacking industry has a long history of not allowing workers or those in plant management positions to speak about the company or the meatpacking processes without the company's permission. With the company receiving a great deal of negative publicity following the raid it was to be expected that they would not want anyone speaking about it. These difficulties in securing interviews made it very difficult to follow the order of first interviewing current and former members of plant management and then secondly, interviewing current and former workers. This led to interviewing anyone, current or former worker or member of plant management, who agreed to participate regardless of

the order due to the extreme difficulty in securing interviews as I sought to simply to find as many willing participants as possible.

A strength of this project is that the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews allows for valid information to be received from the interview subjects. Since the interviews were semi-structured it allowed for further questioning and probing to obtain clear and accurate views of what the participants were indicating in the information they were giving during the interviews. This helps the project to have a strong validity and ability to measure exactly what is being sought after.

### *Ethics*

Great attention was paid to ethical concerns in the collection of data and the analysis of this study. Subjects participating in the study needed to be protected since they were discussing topics that related to their place of work and information related to their own, or others, legal status, though this was not a central concern of the interviews and no inquiry was made about any participant's legal status. A central concern for participants was to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, and to reduce any risks to participants that may result in the information they gave during the interviews to be released or linked to them specifically. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the names of participants were replaced with numbers and the list of this information was destroyed as soon as possible. Careful consideration was given to any information given by participants that was used in the final written project to ensure that no information could be used to identify an individual and to maintain their confidentiality. Any information that could threaten participants' confidentiality and anonymity was left out of

any quotations and was replaced ellipses (...) to indicate that comprising words and/or information was left out. Ellipses were also used to indicate that unnecessary information was left out of a quote so that only relevant information is displayed.

## RESULTS

A great deal of information was gained from the interviews conducted in this study. A review of the worksite immigration raids conducted at the Swift & Co. meatpacking plants, and specifically of the worksite raid of the plant in Hyrum, UT will be given and will be followed first by the immediate, short-term impacts that the worksite raid had on the employers and workers at the plant. Secondly, it will focus on the medium and long-term impacts of the worksite raid. The responses and adaptations of workers and employers in the short-term and also the medium and long-term following the worksite raid will be shown and examined.

### *Raid Overview*

The I.C.E. worksite immigration raid came to the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, UT December 12, 2006 and was part of Operation Wagon Train, in which I.C.E. conducted worksite immigration raids at six Swift & Co. plants in six different states on the same day (DHS 2006; I.C.E. 2007a, 2007b, 2008b, 2008c; Sanchez, House, and Moulton 2006). The I.C.E. investigation into Swift & Co. began in February 2006 in response to information from the local police and I.C.E.'s Criminal Alien Program (CAP) in Marshalltown, IA (DHS 2006; I.C.E. 2006b). In CAP, "...I.C.E. agents process aliens who are being held in state or federal jails for removal following completion of their sentences" (DHS 2006: 3). While conducting CAP interviews, I.C.E. agents noticed a pattern that many of those being interviewed had worked at Swift & Co. "...and who admitted that they had assumed identities in order to circumvent employment eligibility screening" (I.C.E. 2006b: 1). In the months that followed I.C.E. found evidence that



hundreds of illegal immigrants at Swift & Co. had stolen identities, using social security numbers and birth dates stolen from U.S. citizens to get jobs (DHS 2006; I.C.E. 2006b). I.C.E. also found that 30% of the I-9 employment eligibility forms at the raided plants were suspected to be fraudulent (DHS 2006; I.C.E. 2007b).

In all, I.C.E. made 1,297 arrests for immigration violations, with 274 also charged criminally, mostly for committing identity theft and the use of fraudulent documents (I.C.E. 2007a, 2007b, 2008b, 2008c). The I.C.E. agents arrested around 150 workers from the Hyrum, UT plant that day (Bulkeley 2006; Roe 2006; Sanchez 2007). It was reported that around 124 of the workers that were arrested in the Hyrum, UT worksite raid faced charges of identity theft (Sanchez 2007). It is also likely that there were many other immigrants who fled and did not come back to work at the plant and many residents in the town that left because of the fear of more immigration raids or investigations. I.C.E. conducted a follow-up operation on July 10, 2007 and arrested 20 more Swift & Co. employees including current and former workers suspected of committing identity theft, a United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union official for harboring illegal aliens, and a human resources employee also for harboring illegal aliens (I.C.E. 2007b, 2008b, 2008c).

Swift & Co. was able to keep the plant operating after the worksite raid, but with many difficulties as they strove to find and train replacements for their workforce losses (Sanchez 2007). The turnover rate was high for the newly hired workers at the plant (Sanchez 2007). According to one worker who was interviewed, and also the local media, it is a tough job where few people can make it past the first week or the first few months (Sanchez 2007).

The social impacts were widely felt and very publicized in the weeks following the raid in the local media. There were many families that were separated following the worksite raid (Bulkeley 2006). It was difficult for those left behind to figure out what to do and how to survive financially (Bulkeley 2006; Sanchez 2007; Sanchez and Burr 2006). Many of the children left behind were a strain on the relatives that suddenly found themselves responsible for taking care of the children of their relatives who were arrested in the worksite raid (Bulkeley 2006).

There also arose a division among community members regarding whether to be for or against immigration (Moulton 2008). One thing that was believed to have been made clear was that the immigrant workers taken away in the worksite raid likely were not taking jobs that Americans wanted as was shown in the great difficulty that Swift & Co. had in filling the positions that were left open after the worksite raid (Moulton 2008).

There were also many economic impacts felt in the community following the raid. Some local business owners also felt the loss of sales because many of those still working at the plant after the worksite raid were spending less so that they could send more money home to their families and relatives that were arrested and deported in the raid (Sanchez and Harvey 2008). Local and state business owners argued that they are in a difficult position because the immigrants provide a labor force that is needed to keep their businesses running and to keep the economy strong (Harvey 2008; Sanchez and Harvey 2008).

*Short-Term Impacts*

The immediate impacts of the worksite raids were many and were strongly felt by both the company and the workers and employers at the Hyrum, UT plant that experienced one of the worksite raids. Swift & Co. faced especially difficult financial problems as it had lost nearly 1,300 workers in the I.C.E. operation that raided six of its plants in six states (DHS 2006; I.C.E. 2007a, 2007b, 2008b, 2008c; Sanchez 2007; Sanchez and Burr 2006; Sanchez et al. 2006). When the Hyrum, UT meatpacking plant was opened again following the worksite raid, plant management faced the difficult prospect of hiring over 150 workers to replace those who were lost in the raid. According to Swift & Co., and also a couple of the workers and the former member of management that were interviewed, it took around five to six months for the plant to get back to the full number of workers it had before the worksite raid (Associated Press 2007). This was made more difficult because, according to two of the participants who were interviewed, most of the workers taken in the worksite raid came from the production floor where the most physical, labor-intensive work is done and turnover is typically the highest. It was also noted by a former worker and the former member of plant management that because the economy was doing well and the local unemployment rate was so low when the worksite raid occurred at the plant, that this also made it difficult to find new workers to replace those that were taken in the raid.

That the production floor lost the most workers in the raid did not appear to be a result of discrimination or segregation by ethnicity or legal status according to some of the workers who were interviewed. In conducting interviews with current and former workers, all those who spoke about it were all very positive about the work environment

and emphasized a workplace not driven by discrimination or segregation, that if it happened and someone was discriminated against it was an isolated incident and that very few native-born workers felt that way about non native-born workers. Two of the native-born workers mentioned that they did not feel like there was contentious segregation or feelings among the different ethnicities or any unfair division among the workers, but they viewed any of this that may have happened or any divisions as far workers as of similar ethnicities mostly associating only with one another as a result of language barriers or cultural differences. One native-born worker who worked at the plant for over 10 years described some immigrants' feelings about the production work and the criticism sometimes made that immigrants are stealing jobs when he said:

[Y]ou hear the adage for illegal ones well you know if you want this job come and get them, come and interview for them. But they won't because of the type of jobs that they are, so they provide a service to us and our country.

The same worker that worked for over 10 years at the plant noted, "...that kind of production work, not everybody wants to do that. And usually the American white people don't want to do it." He also mentioned that these production positions also require skilled workers to cut the meat correctly. This indicates that just because the workers did not perceive the production floor to be segregated, it does not mean that ethnicity and nativity did not play a role in who the company was hiring for these positions before the worksite raid. It's important to note that I was only able to obtain one short interview with a non native-born immigrant worker. The lack of interviews with non native-born immigrant workers makes it very difficult to get an accurate view of the segregation and discrimination that may have been taking place. Plant managements' possible belief that

native-born workers did not want these types of jobs and that immigrant workers were better suited for these positions because of their work ethic, skills, and willingness to do physically intensive work indicates that plant managements' attitudes about ethnicity may have shaped hiring practices before the worksite raid. This is likely supported by other research, and is specifically supported by research done in a meatpacking plant in Iowa (Fink 1998). This may also provide insight into why it was so difficult for the plant to fill these positions after the worksite raid. They would likely have had to change who they were recruiting and hiring since the immigrant population was likely wary of working at the plant following the worksite raid.

The meatpacking industry has a long history of recruiting and exploiting immigrant workers and their ethnic diversity and divisions because as long as there are ethnic divisions the workers would lack the social capital that would allow them to form united, effective protest against the company (Fink 1998:194-195, 136). As has been done in other industries such as railroads and mining, exploiting ethnic diversity and divisions disempowers the workers and gives control to the company (Fink 1998:134-136, 194-195). The immigrants are also less likely to complain about the work because they see it as a better opportunity than what they had in their home countries (Fink 1998:145). The industry also recruits immigrants because the move to rural communities provides a very small local labor force to draw from, especially when there is such a high turnover rate (Fink 1998:135). Meatpacking companies also tend to keep ethnicities together in certain parts of the plants, reinforcing ethnic division through ethnic segregation (Fink 1998:129-130). This likely led the Swift & Co. plant to change the hiring process following the worksite raid and to adjust to hiring more native-born

workers than they had previously, which likely impacted both plant management and workers. It also needs to be taken into account that I was only able to get one short interview with a non-native immigrant worker from the plant. The perspective in the interviews is mostly from the view of the native-born workers, who may have not noticed any segregation at all or if there was segregation they may not have viewed this as wrong or out of place.

The workers who remained after the worksite raid had the extra burden of training the newly hired workers, which is difficult considering that there is a high turnover rate and that it takes time to train new workers (Geraci 2007; Sanchez 2007). In several interviews, participants commented that many of the workers who were hired after the raid were white, native-born workers who had no experience in the meatpacking industry and were not accustomed to such physically intensive work. This was said to be frustrating to the workers that were training them. The former management member observed:

...I know a lot more Caucasians were hired, which was frustrating from the standpoint that their work ethic was not nearly that of, this was primarily a Hispanic workforce, a Latino workforce...I know that our existing workforce struggled with the new workforce coming in that had very poor work ethics and so there was a little bit of internal struggle with that.

A native-born worker that worked at the plant for over 10 years remembers that after the worksite raid the company "...didn't get as many workers showing up for interviewing over the next several weeks because some of them of course were not legal and knew that they didn't have proper documentation." There were also workers that were not at the plant when the worksite raid occurred and some of these workers never

came back to work after hearing about the worksite raid. This was true of the evening clean up positions at the plant according to the former management member who said “On our cleanup crew there were quite a few who didn’t, that didn’t just show back up.” This highlights a difference in the perspective that native-born and immigrant workers had of the worksite raid and its aftermath. The local ecclesiastical leader that was interviewed spoke about the fear and uncertainty that many immigrants felt following the worksite raid and some even being scared to leave their homes the day after the raid. The immigrant worker perspective was from a feeling of loss and uncertainty because family members and friends may have been taken away in the worksite raid (Bulkeley 2006; Sanchez and Burr 2006; Sanchez et al. 2006).

In contrast to this was the perspective of native-born workers at the plant. The native-born workers interviewed expressed that there were mixed feelings following the worksite raid. While it is likely that none of their family members were taken away or deported in the worksite raid, the native-born workers that were interviewed spoke about losing friends who were immigrant workers and who they had known for years. In part, they felt bad for the loss of their friends and also felt deeply for the families that were broken up in the raid. At the same time there was a feeling that those who were caught in the raid got what they deserved by working illegally in the U.S. Native-born workers were not necessarily bothered that many immigrant workers were in the country and working illegally, but rather they were upset that those workers had stolen other peoples’ identities to do so. One native-born worker who has worked at the plant for less than 5 years explained that:

The legal part doesn't really bother a lot of people that much, but if you are illegal, in a lot of people's minds, if you are illegal and you want to get legal you need to do it the right way. You can't try and make the better life for you by stealing other people's identities.

Employers also faced the damage that had been done the public perception of the company. The worksite raid was hard on the local community and especially on the families of those who were taken away in the worksite raid (Bulkeley 2006; Sanchez and Burr 2006). The company faced criticism of its assertion that the company did not knowingly hire illegal workers (Harvey 2008). The raid led to a division in the local community of being for or against immigration and stirred racial tensions (Moulton 2008; Sanchez and Harvey 2008).

Workers experienced significant impacts and problems as a result of the raid. The level of trust between management and workers was shaken following the raid. Many of those interviewed indicated that some workers felt that the company was responsible for the worksite raid and had helped to plan it. The former management member noticed that:

Soon, as I recall it seemed like some questioned whether or not the company was in cahoots with immigration and I, it wasn't too hard to help them see that we weren't, that yeah we cooperated but we weren't trying to turn anybody in.

The immigrant workers likely felt targeted and were nervous about their jobs and the company's relationship with and intentions for immigrant workers. These feelings of mistrust and uncertainty help to demonstrate how immigrant workers and native-born workers experienced the worksite raid differently and how in some ways each group was impacted differently.



This mistrust did not last for an extended period of time however, and it was regained and strengthened in the weeks and months following the raid. According to two of the workers that were interviewed, one of the most important factors in this process of reestablishing trust occurred in the weeks immediately following the worksite raid when many of those in plant management came down to work on the production floor beside the workers to help keep production moving and fill in until more workers could be hired. This was mentioned in two of the interviews as being very important to workers and as one of the key reasons that trust in management was regained after the raid. One worker who worked at the plant for over 10 years remembered:

I think management actually got out there and worked hands on a little bit more with the workers and probably communicated with them a little bit better during that rough time. Just because they had to, to a certain degree and I think the workers felt they were becoming part of something during that time.

Many of the workers interviewed also felt that the company was not responsible for the worksite raid since no one in the company was arrested or taken away by I.C.E.. This helped workers to feel that the company and plant management were not doing anything wrong in their hiring practices and were not at fault for the worksite raid that was carried out. A native-born worker who has worked at the plant for over 10 years noted:

...I think everybody came to an understanding that that was something the government did, management, management would never want something like that to happen. I mean they cared for those workers, you know, they were good workers and they just need to get them back the next day....

Many of the impacts of the worksite raid on the workers were felt personally in the loss of family members and friends who were taken away in the worksite raid. A native-born worker that worked at the plant for over 10 years felt that:

A lot of good people got taken and families torn apart...and so, and so I feel bad for the families, I feel bad for the children, the displaced wives and husbands and children...I think it was very hard on some of those families anyway because they lost the breadwinner in the family, that breadwinner got sent back to where they came from.

As a result there were workers who quit and returned to their native countries to be with those family members who were deported. The former member of management recalled this when he said, "We did have some employees who left us to be with their spouses who were being deported or had been deported."

Some of the workers that were taken away were surprising to those who worked at the plant. The former member of management especially remembers:

But I remember one individual who I'd known for a few years and as he was handcuffed and he's looking at me and all he, all he can do is mouth the words I'm sorry. And that meant a lot to me because he knew the predicament he put us in and so there were a few surprises, well, they were all surprises, but people that you'd known for quite a few years all of the sudden you find out that's not who they really are.

An unexpected positive impact of the worksite raid on workers was the opportunity for advancement and movement to better or preferred positions in the wake of so many workers being taken in the worksite raid. A native-born worker who has worked at the plant for less than five years explained how he benefitted from the open positions following the worksite raid when he said:

[A]nd my position where I'm at now actually benefitted from the raid because they needed openings because the guy that was in my position was actually illegal and got taken away and so I actually benefitted from it...so it actually helped me out, but now it's really hard to get onto....

This same worker indicated that these opportunities for advancement and movement were experienced by both native-born and immigrant workers alike. After the loss of so much of the plant's workforce, many positions were likely open that before were likely held by experienced workers who held seniority over other workers. The native-born worker also mentioned that it provided opportunities for workers to move into more desirable positions and also to move to the shift that they preferred, this usually being the day shift, which is normally very difficult to get onto because it is highly sought after.

The short-term impacts of the worksite immigration raids affected the company and the worksite raid at the Hyrum, UT plant affected both workers and employers. Swift & Co. experienced severe financial losses due to the loss of so many workers and lost production and sales. It was very difficult for the Hyrum, UT plant to replace the workers that were lost at the worksite at the plant. This difficulty may have been due in part to ethnic and nativity segregation that may have existed on the production lines where the most workers were lost. Employers likely preferred immigrant workers for these physically demanding positions, however, it is likely that because of the fear that immigrants likely felt after the worksite raid the company had to hire more native-born workers who were likely less experienced with production work and whom according to the local media would frequently quit after the first few day of being hired (Sanchez 2007). It was also noted by two of the participants that were interviewed that because the economy was doing well and local unemployment rates were so low at the time of the worksite raid that this also made it difficult to replace the workers lost in the raid. The worksite raid also impacted the company's public image with doubts expressed that a

large company like Swift & Co. would not have known that they were hiring illegal immigrants (Harvey 2008). The company and workers both had to deal with the level of mistrust that followed the worksite raid and strained their relationship for a time.

According to some of those interviewed, some workers felt that the company was responsible for the worksite raid and that they had been set up. It was also explained in some of the interviews however, that the mistrust was quickly resolved, as some members of the plant management came down and worked alongside workers on the production lines and as workers came to believe that the company was not at fault since no one in plant management had been arrested and the company was never punished.

The workers also experienced many immediate impacts as they were faced with both social and financial difficulties. The strongest impact on the immigrant workers was the loss of family members and close friends. As was mentioned earlier, the former member of management that was interviewed explained that some workers returned to their native countries to be with their family members who were taken in the worksite raid and had been deported. Many native-born workers likely faced very mixed feelings as they dealt with the aftermath of the raid. Some, like the former management member, likely had lost close friends who they had known for years and who turned out not to be who they said they were, which was likely difficult for some of the native-born workers. The native-born workers that were interviewed also expressed however, that they supported the raid and the upholding of the law since those workers taken in the worksite raid were working in the U.S. illegally and had stolen others' identities to do so. However, one impact that was positive for both native-born and immigrant workers alike that was mentioned in an interview with a native-born worker who has worked at the

plant for less than five years was the opportunity for advancement and movement to better or preferred positions that became open following the loss of workers in the worksite raid. The loss of workers likely benefitted those workers who were not taken away in the worksite raid because they were likely able to get more desirable positions, on the shift that they preferred, that before the worksite raid had been held by workers who likely had greater seniority and experience.

#### *Medium and Long-Term Impacts*

The medium and long-term responses and adaptations of plant management included an emphasis on hiring workers to replace those that were lost in the worksite raid and more thorough background checks that included following up with applicants' past employers if possible. That there were so few adaptations and changes in the hiring process at the plant was somewhat counter-intuitive since it had been expected that more extensive changes would have been needed at the plant to ensure that they would avoid worksite immigration raids and investigations in the future.

The former member of management explained that the hiring process at the plant did not need many changes and that the only change was conducting background checks that were a little more thorough and that included following up with applicants' past employers when the information was given to them. Although this may have seemed to be a minor change to the former member of management, this may actually be a very significant change and suggests that previous to the worksite raid the company may not have been as strict about background checks and following up on applicants' past employment histories. This may have been a deterrent strategy to discourage

undocumented workers from applying for jobs after the worksite raid. This may help explain why after the worksite raid more native-born workers were applying and being hired at the plant than before the raid.

According to the former member of management who worked at the plant for over 5 years and who was very familiar with the hiring practices of the plant at the time of the worksite raid, they found there was not much more that they could have been doing than what they were already doing before the worksite raid happened. The former member of management also noted that the company was following all the government regulations and requirements and "...that's why nobody was arrested from the company side because we didn't know they were forged documents or identity theft because the documents they gave us were real documents." He mentioned that the company was already using the Basic Pilot program to ensure they were hiring authorized workers. The former member of management also mentioned, when speaking of the company's compliance before the worksite raid:

That just added to our frustration from a management side. We were doing everything you wanted us to do before and I think we even asked them (I.C.E.) as a company "well, what would you tell us to change?" and there was nothing for us to change.

The former member of management also spoke about his frustration about businesses not being given the tools they need to comply with government regulations and requirements when he said, "[F]or me it all comes back to leveling the playing field and making sure that the companies have the tools to comply." A former worker who worked at the plant for over 10 years also said:

And so we'll have to deal with what we have and try to do the best job we can and so that company out there, I think they try to do the best job they

can with the tools they were given because if you don't follow the government laws you're slapped with fines and the companies don't want to be fined a million dollars for not following the government rule. So you follow the government rule even though it's not the best that you can do but it's the only thing you have to go by.

It is likely that most employers feel this same way and are frustrated that they are not provided the tools to be able to fully comply with the government's regulations and requirements and that they may experience a worksite raid or other immigration investigations even though they are complying with the regulations and requirements and using the tools provided by the government.

Another result of the worksite raids in the medium and long-term was that Swift & Co. suffered financially. Due to the financial losses following the worksite raids, the company was sold to JBS S.A. in May 2007 (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). With the purchase, JBS S.A. became the largest beef processor in the world (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). Swift & Co. had been struggling to make a profit since late 2003 when cases of mad-cow disease led to a collapse in U.S. beef exports (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007). On top of the losses that Swift & Co. had been suffering since 2003, the worksite raids cost the company an estimated \$50 million in lost sales and higher costs due to the efforts needed to return the raided plants to full production (Associated Press 2007; Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). In January 2007 Swift & Co. hired JPMorgan to help assess the company's "strategic and financial alternatives" after the company had received unsolicited offers from other companies (Barreto 2007). JBS S.A. is a Brazilian company that has been growing quickly and began expanding internationally in 2005 and

has been purchasing other meatpacking companies as part of its growth (Barreto 2007).

JBS S.A. went public on Brazil's Sao Paulo Stock Exchange in 2007 (Barreto 2007).

There were many offers to buy Swift & Co. because since the consolidation of the U.S. meatpacking industry, which was previously discussed, there have been few meatpacking plants for sale (Shore 2007). By purchasing Swift & Co., JBS S.A. gained access to the U.S. market and also to new markets such as Asia and Australia (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). This was very beneficial to JBS S.A. because many countries had banned beef exports from Brazil in the last decade due to outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007). In two of the interviews with former workers it was mentioned that the company being sold impacted those who were in plant management positions. The participant who was formerly a member of plant management at the Hyrum plant described how the company being raided and later sold had a big impact on those in plant management because "It made the company more accessible for somebody to buy it, and it was through that purchase that the new owners let a lot of former managers go..."

I also found that workers had made few adaptations following the worksite raid. This was somewhat expected since those still at the plant had likely been cleared as native-born or documented immigrants. Two of the native-born participants interviewed explained that soon after the worksite raid trust in management returned and that an important part in that trust being regained was when many of those in plant management positions came down and worked with the workers on the production lines to help out until more workers could be hired. In time, more workers were also hired, although it was mentioned in the local media and in interviews with one of the native-born workers



and the former member of plant management that more native-born workers were being hired than was done previous to the worksite raid at the plant (Sanchez 2007). The more thorough background checks and better follow up with past employers that were mentioned in the interview with the former member of management may have been a deterrent for prospective immigrant workers after the worksite raid. A participant who worked at the plant for over 10 years said “I think what happened is they didn’t get as many workers showing up for interviewing over the next several weeks because some of them of course were not legal and knew that they didn’t have proper documentation.” That immigrant workers may not have been as likely to apply for jobs at the plant likely made replacing those workers lost in the worksite raid a more medium and long-term problem since immigrants had been a major part of the plant’s labor force and labor supply. By using more thorough background checks and having better follow up with applicants’ past employers it likely reduced the labor supply of, and served as a deterrent to, immigrant workers.

Another possible response has been that immigrant workers are likely to be more careful than before the worksite raid about who they speak to and their willingness to speak about their work and the company. It was extremely difficult to find immigrant workers who were willing to be interviewed. This may reflect that they may still fear drawing attention to themselves after the worksite raid and/or their job security if the company found out that they had spoken about the worksite raid and the company. One native-born worker who has worked at the plant for less than five years described this sentiment and how carefully the company strives to control what employees say about the company and the work that goes on in the plant. He described how strict this policy is in

the interview when he said, “Yeah you can’t have cell phones in there, they won’t let you take pictures of how everything’s done. They just, they don’t want PETA all over, all over ya and stuff so I mean it’s very, very strict in how they do stuff there.” The same worker further described the strictness of this policy by saying “But management has a big thing like it’s actually a policy saying, okay, we can’t be interviewed by anybody and stuff like that.”

Even though it has been over four years since the worksite raid occurred, workers are still reluctant to speak about it or about the company, and the company most likely prefers it that way because this was a very negative public event for the company, and one that the company likely wants forgotten. It was to be expected then that when it came to being interviewed about the worksite raid and the company, nearly all of the workers and plant management members contacted seemed very wary and apprehensive of being interviewed and did not wish to participate in interviews. This is likely because if the company found out they would all likely face the same consequences, the potential loss of their jobs. Speaking about the worksite raid may not have been specifically discussed or added to any official policies but it most likely resulted in the company wanting to be even more careful and forceful in controlling what workers and members of plant management say about the company and the meatpacking plant.

There were many medium and long-term impacts of the worksite raids on the company and also on the workers and members of plant management at the Hyrum, UT plant that experienced one of these worksite raids. The new emphasis at the plant on conducting more thorough background checks and better follow up with applicant’s former employers, if the information was available, may have led to many changes in the

medium and long-term. It was difficult to replace the workers lost in the worksite raid, and this change in the hiring process may have made this even more difficult as it could have acted as a deterrent to some potential applicants. According to some of those interviewed, trust was shaken between workers and plant management was regained in the weeks and months following the worksite raid. Immigrants were likely more fearful of applying for jobs so the plant had to hire more native-born workers who are less likely to apply for this type of work and also are likely to have less experience in production work and would likely require significant training, which takes time.

The company had already been suffering financial losses since 2003, and it suffered heavy financial losses following the worksite raids due to lost sales and the higher costs it took to get its meatpacking plants back to full production after the worksite raids (Associated Press 2007; Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). These losses hurt the company financially and led to it being sold to JBS S.A. in the year following the worksite raids (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). The new company seems to have maintained the strict policy against workers and members of plant management speaking about the company or the plant, and perhaps has made this policy more strict in the years following the worksite raids. Workers and those in plant management at the Hyrum, UT plant were very wary and hesitant of speaking about the company and the worksite raid even four years after the raid occurred.

## DISCUSSION

The major purpose of this study is to learn and gain a better knowledge of the impacts that recent immigration policy and a new enforcement strategy, the increased use of worksite immigration raids, have had on meatpacking companies, plants, workers, and members of plant management and especially on how each has responded and adapted to this new enforcement strategy following a worksite immigration raid. It was found that the worksite raids had strong impacts on Swift & Co., its Hyrum, UT meatpacking plant that was raided, and the workers and members of plant management at the Hyrum plant.

The worksite raids impacted Swift & Co. and members of plant management at the Hyrum, UT plant in several ways. The greatest impact was the loss of approximately 150 workers at the Hyrum plant and the subsequent loss of sales and production caused by reduced line speeds due to the time it took to hire and train new workers to replace those lost in the worksite raid. Most of the workers taken away in the worksite raid were production line workers, thereby causing line speeds to decrease significantly while new workers were hired and trained. According to Swift & Co., and a couple of the workers and the former member of management interviewed, it took around five to six months for the plant to get back to the number of workers it had before the worksite raid (Associated Press 2007). It likely took some time after the lost workers were replaced for the plant to return to the same level of efficiency and line speeds that the plant had before the worksite raid occurred. Due to these difficulties the company suffered large financial losses due to lost production and sales (Associated Press 2007; Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). Following these heavy financial losses, Swift & Co. was

sold to the JBS S.A. meatpacking company the year following the worksite raid (Barreto 2007; Goldstein and Pearson 2007; Shore 2007). Plant management also lost the trust of many of the workers at the plant after the worksite raid. This loss of trust however, was temporary and according to some of those interviewed, was regained in the weeks and months following the worksite raid as members of plant management came and worked on the production lines to help out and as workers came to understand and believe that the company was not responsible for the worksite raid occurring.

The most surprising finding about the impacts of the worksite raid on the meatpacking plant was that no major changes were made to the plant's hiring practices according to the former member of management. The former member of management also maintains that before the worksite raid the company was already following all government regulations and requirements regarding hiring practices and that they were participating in the government's Basic Pilot employment eligibility program, which was renamed E-Verify in 2007 (USCIS 2011), to ensure that all of their employees were authorized to work and had proper documentation. The former member of management and another participant who worked at the plant for over 10 years spoke of the frustration they felt that the government does not provide adequate tools to employers to verify their workers' employment eligibility. According to the former member of management there was no way for the company to know that many of the workers were unauthorized workers because they had committed identity theft and had given the company real, authentic documents. It seems that the Basic Pilot program could not help employers know if applicants were committing identity theft, it only let them know if the applicant was eligible for employment or not.

This is supported by remarks made by Michael Chertoff, who was the Secretary of Homeland Security from 2005-2009 (DHS 2006, 2011b). In 2006, while holding a press conference about Operation Wagon Train, he explained that Basic Pilot simply let employers know that applicants' names matched the Social Security numbers provided by the applicants and that the Social Security numbers were legitimate, it could not alert the employer that identity theft was being committed (DHS 2006). He went on to explain:

The law currently does not allow the Social Security Administration to refer to us instances where the same Social Security number is used on multiple occasions in multiple work places as a basis for obtaining jobs. (DHS 2006)

Only Congress could change the law to allow the Social Security Administration to alert employers or government agencies to possible instances of identity theft being used to obtain jobs (DHS 2006). So as Secretary Chertoff commented, Basic Pilot only helps employers prevent "...one kind of use of identity for purposes of illegal immigration and illegal work" (DHS 2006).

That the company was already using Basic Pilot may indicate that the company was protecting itself from government sanctions by following government regulations and programs to help ensure that they would not be held liable if they happened to unintentionally hire unauthorized workers. Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security in 2006, also explained, during the same press conference about Operation Wagon Train, that "...as a consequence of participating in Basic Pilot, if you participate in that in good faith, then you are not going to be charged criminally or be held civilly liable" (DHS 2006). So this indicates that because Swift & Co. was participating in

Basic Pilot they were not charged or punished for having unauthorized workers in their facilities.

It is not known if the company was knowingly hiring undocumented workers, however, since they were following government regulations and using the government's verification program they likely could not be held responsible, whether they were intentionally hiring undocumented workers or not. This shows some of the shortcomings of current immigration policy and enforcement strategies. With the use of identity theft and forged documents it is especially difficult to discern and prove which employers are intentionally breaking the law and which employers are simply doing their best and using the tools that the government has given them and who unknowingly and unintentionally are hiring undocumented workers (GAO 1999, 2005).

However, the former member of management did describe one change that was made, this being that a more thorough background check was conducted and that there was better follow up with applicants' past employers when the information was given. This change was spoken of as being a minor, unimportant change. Although this may have been perceived as a minor change to the former member of management, and likely to plant management as a whole, it was likely a significant change for those workers considering applying for jobs at the plant after the worksite raid. This would likely affect who was able and willing to apply for jobs at the plant after the worksite raid and could be an important factor in why the plant hired more native-born workers after the worksite raid than they had before the raid occurred. There was no evidence from the interviews that the company favored or intentionally hired more native-born workers following the worksite raid, but it is likely that they hired more native-born workers due to immigrant

workers likely being wary of the plant after the worksite raid and also that the more thorough background checks with the better follow up with applicants' past employers may have acted as a deterrent to some immigrant workers. This may be a long-term impact as immigrant workers may continue to be deterred by the more thorough background checks and the follow-up with applicants' past employers.

The workers were perhaps impacted the most by the worksite raid and its aftermath. Many workers may have lost family members such as spouses and siblings in the worksite raid (Bulkeley 2006; Sanchez and Burr 2006). The worksite raid led to financial difficulties for many of the families that had family members taken away in the raid (Bulkeley 2006; Sanchez 2007; Sanchez and Burr 2006). According to some of the participants that were interviewed, following the worksite raid many of the workers felt a loss of trust in plant management and the company. However, two of the participants mentioned that one thing that helped to restore trust was that following the raid there were members of plant management who came down to work on the production floor with the workers to help keep the plant running. It was also mentioned in two of the interviews that it did not take too long for the workers to come to believe that the company was not responsible for the worksite raid happening.

Nearly all the workers that were contacted, by myself or the other participants, were not willing to be interviewed, and are still very wary of talking about the company or the worksite raid even though it has been over four years since it occurred. Meatpacking workers have always been restricted in what they can say about their work and the company. None of the participants indicated in their interviews that any new company policies had been added that had to do with being interviewed or speaking



about the worksite raid. It may not be part of any official policy to not speak about the worksite raid, but workers likely fear the consequences of the company finding out that they had spoken about it. It would certainly seem likely that the company would not want its workers speaking about the worksite raid after the unwanted attention that the company received following the raid.

One of the most surprising and unexpected impacts of the worksite raid that was spoken of in an interview with a native-born worker who has worked at the plant for less than 5 years was that in some ways many of the workers who were not taken in the worksite raid, native-born and immigrant alike, in fact likely benefitted from the raid through the many positions that were left open after the loss of so many workers in the raid. There were opportunities for advancement and movement to better or preferred positions that were not available before the worksite raid and the loss of so many workers. Many workers were likely able to get positions that were difficult to get before the worksite raid because they were likely filled by workers with greater experience and seniority.

It was also found in the interviews that were conducted that there were no significant changes or adaptations mentioned that workers at the plant made after the worksite raid. One of the participants who worked at the plant for over 10 years explained that the workers that were not taken away in the worksite raid were not afraid to come back to plant after the raid because "...the ones that were there knew that they were legal, knew that they could work there and that they were fine." This may help to explain why it seems that workers did not make any significant changes or adaptations at

the plant since those that were not taken away likely did not need to make any changes since they had been verified as legal and authorized workers.

### *Short-Term Impacts*

This new immigration enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids is fairly recent and is still continuing to develop. For this reason it is important to understand the possible short-term impacts of this strategy. This strategy of using worksite raids is very effective at finding and arresting those workers who are in the U.S. illegally or who have committed identity theft (I.C.E. 2007a). I.C.E. likely has the resources and capabilities to effectively seek out and arrest those workers who have committed, or are currently committing, crimes such as identity theft (I.C.E. 2007a, 2008a). However, they can only be effective for one company and one worksite immigration raid at a time. I.C.E. cannot perform worksite raids and investigations at every plant and company in operation. This enforcement strategy likely reaches a very small portion of the workers and employers who are committing these crimes. This strategy is also likely to be effective only for the day of the worksite raid and will likely serve as a deterrent to other workers and employers for only a short period of time. This strategy also may only increase the demand for higher quality forged documents and/or increase the use of identity theft as workers strive to avoid getting caught.

It also seems that it is not effective at arresting those employers who knowingly and intentionally hire illegal immigrants, however it seems that at this point that there is no effective way to do this due to the lack of better government programs and tools for employers to use to verify workers' employment eligibility. With improved employment

eligibility verification programs and tools it would likely be much less difficult to prove that an employer is knowingly and intentionally hiring unauthorized workers and to hold them accountable since they would have adequate programs and tools to verify their workers' employment eligibility with greater certainty and accuracy. Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security from 2005-2009, described one possible solution to the problem of detecting the identity theft and fraud that is used to gain employment during a press conference about Operation Wagon Train in 2006 (DHS 2006, 2011b). He indicated that the solution would require action from Congress "...that allows us to have the Social Security Administration identify multiple uses of the same Social Security number in different places, so we could see there's an identity theft issue here and a fraud issue here" (DHS 2006). Solutions such as this would provide employers with better tools to verify their workers employment eligibility and also make it less difficult to prove an employer knowingly hired unauthorized workers.

### *Long-Term Impacts*

The use of this strategy may also have many impacts in the long-term. To continue to expand this enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids it would likely be extremely costly since the number of worksite raids being conducted would continue to increase. This strategy could also lead to a cycle being created where when I.C.E. conducts a worksite raid and workers are arrested and taken away, that for a short period of time other workers would be deterred from trying to get a job with that company and the employer would be more careful about not hiring unauthorized workers and about better verification of workers' eligibility. However,

after a while this deterrent affect may pass and workers and employers would be willing to take the risk again, since the odds would likely still be small that they would get caught.

Many employers likely depend upon an immigrant workforce to fill the jobs in their industries and do the type of work that many native-born workers are likely not willing to do. It is very difficult to prove that employers knowingly and intentionally hire unauthorized workers (GAO 1999, 2005). The use of identity theft and forged documents makes it even more difficult for employers to be sure that they are hiring authorized workers (GAO 1999, 2005). As of right now, employers do not seem to have the resources or tools to ensure that they do not unknowingly hire workers who are not authorized to work in the U.S. and who have committed identity theft or used forged documents. The former member of management and a former worker that worked at the plant for over 10 years both expressed that they felt the government does not provide employers adequate tools to ensure they do not hire unauthorized workers. If an employer is in fact knowingly and intentionally hiring unauthorized workers they are able to use this line of reasoning as an excuse and are likely receive no legal or financial penalties because of the lack of evidence against them that prevents it being proven that they knowingly and intentionally hired unauthorized workers (GAO 1999, 2005). An impact of this strategy in the long-term could be that the government would develop better programs and systems for verifying worker's eligibility. This would be a strong deterrent for employers since with better verification programs and systems there could be proof that they knowingly and intentionally were hiring unauthorized workers and they could be held accountable. Better verification programs and systems would also

serve as strong deterrents to unauthorized workers who would be more likely to get caught.

## CONCLUSION

While this study has provided important insights into the short, medium, and long-term impacts of immigration policies and especially of the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids on workers and employers and how they have responded and adapted following a worksite immigration raid at the Swift & Co. meatpacking plant in Hyrum, UT in 2006, the scope of this study is limited due to the small number of interviews I was able to conduct with workers and members of plant management. I faced several difficulties finding current and former workers who were willing to speak about the company and the worksite raid. It was also extremely difficult to find any members of plant management who were willing to also speak about the company, the worksite raid, and the hiring practices and procedures of the plant. This is a difficult obstacle that future research may be able to overcome by spending a significant amount of time with workers and gaining their trust before requesting interviews or information. Conducting follow-up studies also may be productive in securing more interviews, as those who previously were not willing to be interviewed will have had time to see that those participants interviewed in the past were protected through good research practices, especially that confidentiality was maintained to protect those who participated.

Another limitation of the interviews was that only one non-native born immigrant worker was willing to be interviewed. This is a major limitation since immigrant workers were the most affected by the worksite raid at the plant and also are impacted the most by the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. The

immigrant workers would also be able to give important information about the use of identity theft and the actual hiring practices of the company. Future research may benefit from seeking interviews at meatpacking plants that have not experienced a worksite immigration raid or at other industries near where a worksite raid has taken place. This may allow for information to be found through those workers and employers not directly affected by the worksite raid but that have certainly been impacted by it.

The lack of interviews with members of plant management is another limitation of this study. This leads to a lack of information about how the company and plant management are responding and adapting to this new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. Conducting studies specifically focused on the executive corporate members of the company would be helpful in addressing this lack of information and provide valuable insight into how the company is responding and adapting to immigration policies and the new enforcement strategy. However, receiving the company's permission to conduct interviews with plant management and executive corporate members would likely be very difficult and would require a great deal of trust from the company.

Conducting interviews with I.C.E. officials would reveal what the short-term and long-term expectations are of this new enforcement strategy and what they perceive are its greatest challenges and benefits. They would also be able to provide the financial information about how much the worksite immigration raids cost and if they believe the increased use of worksite raids is effective enough to be worth the cost of maintaining the new enforcement strategy in the long-term.

There is much that needs to be done in future research about recent immigration

policies and especially the new enforcement strategy of the increased use of worksite immigration raids. An important part of future research would be to further study how workers and employers are responding and adapting to the increased use of worksite immigration raids. A greater number of interviews are needed, especially with immigrant workers and members of plant management. Research needs to be done to evaluate if this is an effective enforcement strategy that will be beneficial in the long-term, when considering the financial and social impacts it has on companies, communities, workers, and families. By conducting more research, the best policies and strategies for dealing with immigration issues can be found, and current policies and strategies can be improved. This research will have an important impact on future immigration policy and the enforcement strategies that will uphold it.



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