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# Identities among Immigrants in Utah County

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## Abstract

Immigration has been a controversial topic in the United States since the first immigrants voyaged to the Americas. Throughout the United States' history, there have been heated debates on what is acceptable as immigration and what is not. Identity is a big factor that comes into play when analyzing the lives of immigrants. How do immigrants form their identities? Is identity changeable? Does where you live affect your identity? While there have been many studies on immigration, there are very few studies that focus on the construct of the identities of these immigrants. Many variables can be attributed to the formation of an identity. What variables actually help individuals construct their identity? We explore whether or not other peoples' views of the participants actually affect their identity. With so many other factors of where an immigrant can construct their cultural identification. Our questions include: how do immigrants identify themselves? What factors affect how immigrants identify themselves? What factors are most important? Because we draw our data from working immigrants living in Utah County, our research will serve as a pilot study for future research on identity among immigrants in the U.S.



## Key Findings

Cultural identity was more affected by other's views than work identity in this sample. Immigrants who felt **isolated**, identified with their country of origin. Immigrants who felt **integrated** identified with the U.S. Many respondents **were not sure** whether they identified with their country of origin or with the U.S.

*One interviewee said "I have two at homes. One at home [referring to her house] I think is right here in this room. We're always here, this is how I associate my new family."*

Immigrants were often not satisfied with their jobs, and often used language skills as a determinant for whether they should have a good job. One immigrant felt there was a direct correlation between how well one speaks English and how good ones job is in the U.S. when asked if he was satisfied with his job, *"No, because I do not earn enough money because I think I can earn more in another job. I feel that always with my English I could work somewhere else. I speak just English at my job. All English."*

## Methods

### Sample:

-20 working immigrants in Utah Country  
-Collected and transcribed between January – December 2009

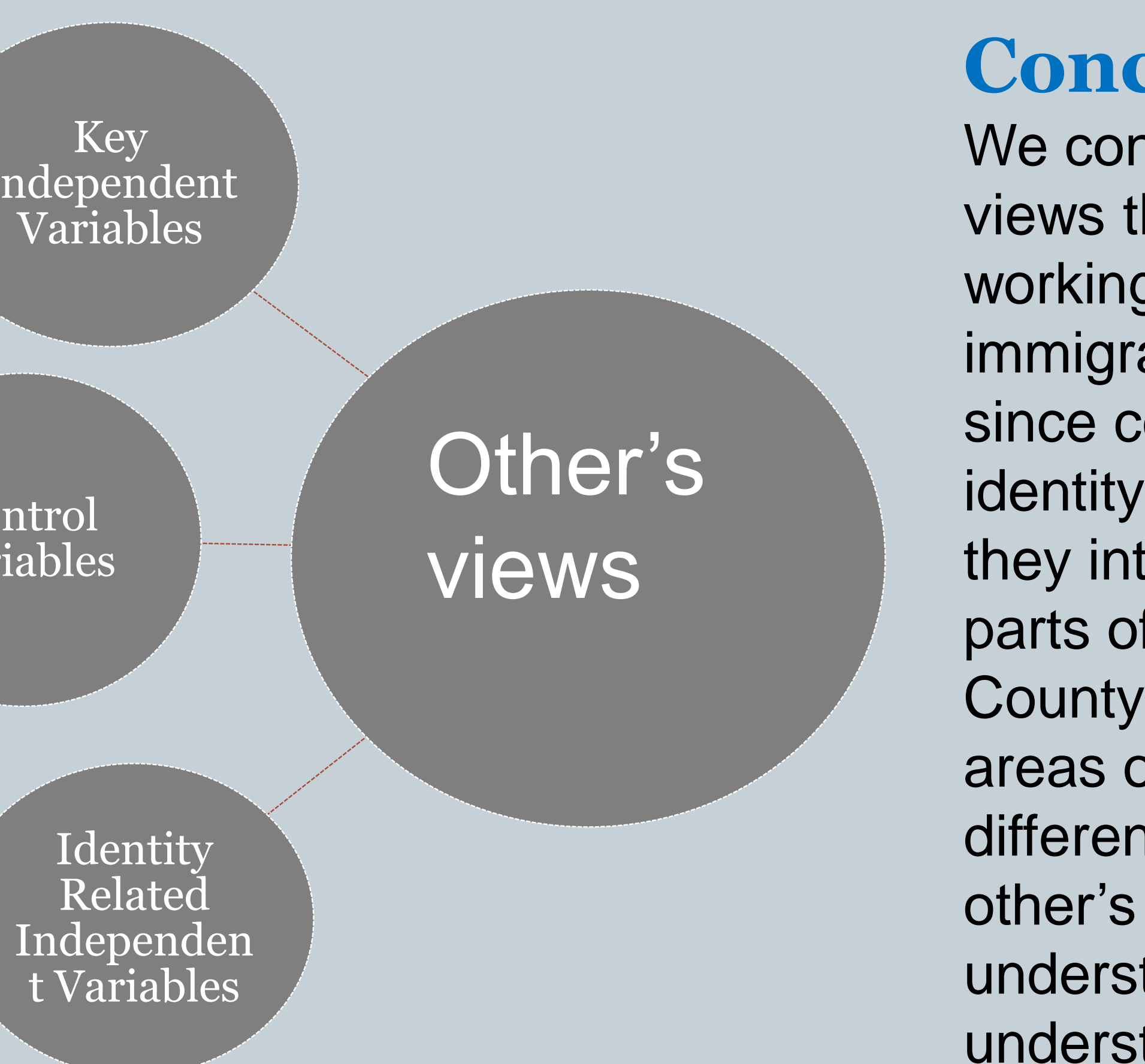
### Data:

-*Dependent variable: Other's Views*  
-Independent variables: Work Identity, Cultural Identity, Social Ties  
-Themes: Integration, Isolation, Identity change since coming to the U.S., Family and Identity

- Job satisfaction
  - Social ties
  - Income

- Age
- Race
- Gender

- Work Identity
- Cultural Identity



## Conclusion

We conclude that cultural identity is more influenced by other's views than work identity. We also have evidence that for these working immigrants, the concept of identity is changeable. Some immigrants were able to assimilate and construct new identities since coming to the United States. Our conclusion that the identity changes based on where the individual lives and who they interact with could have interesting implications in different parts of the United States. Because our study covered Utah County, with unique cultural implications of its own, different areas of the country could attract and keep immigrants with different experiences, assimilation, and identities. By viewing other's in a positive and accepting manner, cultural understanding is bound to follow. Coming to a sound cultural understanding in Utah County between immigrants and naturalized citizens will create a greater sense of peace and integration in schools, neighborhoods, and the community and will improve the work force as a whole.