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.

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

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 county could have varying implications for identity changes based on interaction and living conditions. It is important to note that the correlations between identity and cultural factors may vary depending on the context and location of immigration.