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MINORITY REPORT

THE CITIZENSHIP ISSUE

This paper aims to spread cultural awareness of the challenges facing historically and ethnically under-represented groups in the IMSA community and the world as a whole. We believe that with proliferation of knowledge through words, we can confront the stereotypes facing these groups and change commonly held misconceptions.

Language in America: Is English Essential?

By Joscelyn Garcia

The United States is not a melting pot anymore; it is now a mixed salad bowl. Before, when people immigrated to the United States they understood that they were breaking ties with their motherland country. Forms of communication were scarce. People were expected to fully assimilate into American culture where everyone had to speak the same language; America was a melting pot. This notion lasted until the twentieth century where children were punished in school if they spoke a language that was not English. This resulted in many children never learning their heritage's language. However, now there are so many forms of communication that no one has to break ties with their country of origin. The melting pot notion is dying and people are holding strong to their culture such as my family. Diversity is prospering in the United States.

I am proud that I can

speak, write and read in Spanish. My parents only speak to me in Spanish and growing up I was always surrounded by people who knew and spoke Spanish. It resulted in me being in Spanish only classes until third grade since I did not know enough English. My parents have been living in the United States for over 30 years, but they are not fluent in English. Some people get upset about Hispanics not knowing English, especially if they have been residing in the United States for a long time. People ask "Why don't

some Hispanics learn English, when our ancestors assimilated into the United States and learned English?" The reason why some



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Courtesy of <http://tucsoncitizen.com>

People Without A Nation

By Luis Gomez

Imagine going off to vacation in Italy. In Italy, you enjoy your vacation. You're not so happy to come back because you love it there. When you return to the U.S., they tell you in the airport that the U.S. no longer recognizes you as a citizen of America. You cannot enter the U.S. or return to Italy. What do you do? You've just become stateless. But what does statelessness mean? According to the UN Refugee Agency website to be stateless "is to be without

nationality or citizenship".³ There are about 12 million stateless people in the world.

The statelessness issue is well portrayed in the movie The Terminal, released in 2004 and directed by Steven Spielberg. Viktor Navorski is a man from fictional Krakhozia who tries to enter the U.S. but is denied entrance. His native Krakhozia suffers a coup d'état rendering him stateless. He cannot return to Krakhozia or enter the U.S. as America does not recognize the



legitimacy of its new government.

Viktor Navorski departs from Krakhozia and arrives in the New York airport. As he gets off the plane he makes his way to the immigration booth. He is asked to

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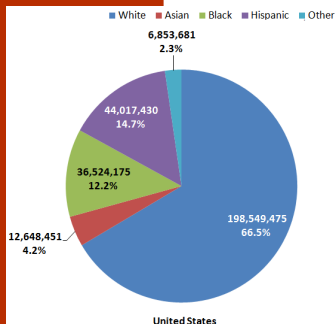


Courtesy of
<http://www.myngle.com>

With connections throughout the world, learning the language of a new country is no longer essential.

Asians outnumber whites at IMSA, which is not the case of the general population of the United States.

**US Population by Race / Ethnicity, 2006.
© Political Calculations, 2011**



Language in America, continued

Hispanics do not know English is because they do not have to. A Hispanic can live in the United States without having to know English. Many live in communities where mostly everyone is Hispanic. Business and professionals around the country offer service in Spanish. There are Spanish language television, radio stations, businesses, and so on. Therefore, it is not required for a Hispanic to know English in the United States and live comfortably. In the United States, English is the language of the government, but we live in a society where many speak Spanish.

However, it is not like Hispanics do not want to learn English. When asked if they want to learn English, 80% of Hispanics said yes in a recent study conducted by United Way in Salt Lake City¹. Learning

English is not easy for every immigrant living in the United States. Immersion is a great way for a person to learn a language but if you are surrounded by those who speak your language it is hard to be fully immersed. Many end up learning English when surrounded by people who speak English. In addition, a lot of immigrants do not have the time to go to school to learn the language because of work and family commitments. The biggest goal for immigrants is to have a source of income to sustain their family. Learning a language is not a priority. Also, the fact that most immigrants come to the United States when they are adults. Makes it harder for a person to learn a second language.

Our country is now a mixed salad bowl where diversity is supported. People are preserving their original

culture. Therefore, I feel that people should not say "it bothers me when they do know how [to speak English] and won't in public." That to me means non-assimilation². I find it beautiful to hear foreign languages, as it shows that we are a diverse nation. Speaking a different language should not be admonished. Immigrants should not be criticized for not knowing English because our nation makes it possible for people to live in the country without knowing the English language. It would be amazing if our schools adopt the European method of teaching foreign languages from a young age. The melting pot is gone and multiculturalism is important.

IMSA Minorities vs. USA Minorities

By Jennifer Bailey

Where does this leave the remaining 18.7% of us? According to these same statistics, 8.3% of us are African American, 5.3% are Hispanic, 2.5% are biracial, and 2.5% are either not reported or "other". Clearly, these percentages are far from racial makeup of the United States, which is 63.7% white, 12.6% African American, 8.7% Hispanic, 6.2%, 4.8% Asian, 2.9% biracial, and 7.3% "other". Asians are definitely a minority in the United States, while at IMSA, the opposite is true.

The population of American schools is not always a microcosm of the United States' ethnic breakdown. Before IMSA, the middle school I attended was

predominately African American, as was the population in my school district hometown. The high school I attended, a Catholic high school, was predominately white, as are most followers of the Catholic religion. I do not doubt the effect of these demographics on my experiences at each school. Most of my friends were of the majority race at each school and I did not have any experiences with some minorities at all until I arrived at IMSA.

In a different way, does the racial makeup of IMSA also affect us? Will a student who has stuck to members of his race for most of his time at IMSA have an adjustment period upon being

IMSA Minorities vs. USA Minorities, continued

forced to mingle with others following graduation? Of course, this varies for each student, as does how each student adjusts to IMSA's demographics.

Before IMSA, the only time I had contact with Indian Americans was through business transactions. Now, my roommate (and half of my quad) is Indian and I performed in the Diwali show for the second time this year. Many other IMSA students attest to the same experiences.

"There is a wealth of

experiences available at a school with people all over the state," says Sarah Lisk, an IMSA senior. "At my old school, people were white and Asian, but here I am friends with different types of people."

"This year, ISA [Indian Student Association] represented Indian culture in a new way through the MC skit. Arranged marriages are an aspect of the culture that many people outside of the Indian culture know of. In our skit, we showed that the bride and groom both still had a choice in

who they married. We tried to make IMSA students who are not of Indian background aware of what goes on during the arranged marriage process."

Though IMSA's demographics are unlike those of the United States, we have had diverse experiences that we would have never had at our old schools. We all interact with a wealth of people every day, and for that we should all be grateful.

"We can address genocide, religious persecution, and privation of non-basic rights, but we cannot address people who are not recognized as human."

People Without A Nation, continued

remain aside and soon after he is escorted to meet the head immigration officer. The officer explains to him that his country is in revolution and that the U.S. does not recognize Krakhozia's government any longer. This renders him stateless.

Many stateless people feel a lack of identity. They suffer many problems caused by their civil state. They have trouble finding jobs, health care, schooling, and travel is extremely difficult for them. Stateless people who have children cannot grant any citizenship to their children, either, thus rendering the children stateless.

Statelessness can be caused by the breakup of countries like the Soviet Union or from discrimination of the state towards that specific group. The people who are stateless are in augmentation as a result of the negligence of state policies to first reduce and then eliminate statelessness. Reduction is the first step to a real solution to the problem. Elimination of statelessness would come if states grant some kind of rudimentary citizenship. Currently in the U.S. our immigration system does not address this problem.

As Americans, members of a nation that has almost no stateless people, why should we address this issue? After all, the 12 million

stateless people live in countries of that seem to be of low interest to the average Americans. The real issue here is that we are not addressing it. We can address genocide, religious persecution, and privation of non-basic rights but we cannot address people who are not recognized as human, thus states bestow no rights to them. It is one thing to deny some rights to an individual, but to deny the existence of another is an outrageous injustice. This is no different from other fights for civil rights. The people who are denied as humans in these fights are citizens and the people who are denied citizenship are being denied as humans in the same cruel essence.

Ashamed to Be American

By Jordan Williams

Have you ever had to convince someone else that you are a citizen of the United States? I have lived in a western suburb of Chicago my entire life, and I have never had to prove my citizenship. Most Americans are like me. We have not had to worry about belonging here, so many of us do not fully understand the gravity of not feeling accepted.

As I have gotten older, I have had the opportunity to meet people

from all over the world. It is so interesting to learn about their cultures, and I pride myself in saying that I have welcomed each of these people into my heart, no matter where they are from. However, as much as America tries to advertise diversity and freedom, prejudices are still very prevalent in our society. With that said, I wonder how people who were not born here are able to survive when they become US citizens.

I remember being a child and hearing prejudiced comments made toward my Latino friends. For some reason, people thought it was their place to question the legitimacy of someone else's citizenship. After 9/11, I remember seeing a girl of Middle Eastern decent ostracized by her classmates because of what they thought they knew about her and "her people." Eight-year-olds are clearly not experts on the matter and

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Ashamed to Be American, continued

neither are most adults, yet many Americans take it upon themselves to attack (both verbally and physically) people of a foreign descent, telling them that they do not belong here and should go back to their own country.

In recent years, I have witnessed discrimination against my Asian American friends, and while I try my best to speak out and educate others, it is hard when you live in a country full of people with similar prejudices. So many different minority groups are targeted every day in the US. No one ever wants to talk about it because it is a "minority issue," but I wonder, how many different groups of people must become outcasts before the outcasts become the majority, and the problem becomes worth discussing? In my opinion, this issue needs attention.



Courtesy of <http://www.laughingplace.com>

IMSA Minority Report

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If you have any questions or comments concerning this issue or IMSA Minority Report in general, please do not hesitate to contact us at either jbailey@imsa.edu or jordanwilliams@imsa.edu.

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