

I Stand with Adam: Racism, human rights and our democracies. Editorial

Ruth Reynolds

University of Newcastle
Australia

I stand with Adam Goodes, Australian Football League player, an Indigenous player, a great footballer, Australian of the Year and a decent human being. This is an Australian issue but also a global issue and one of great import for social studies teachers. It is about bullying. It is about mob behaviour fuelled by a few media celebrities. It is about racial vilification and it is about democracies protecting the rights of minorities and working out how to counter radical and extreme views. Adam Goodes was booed by a crowd of 10,000 people in a recent football game because he performed an Indigenous war dance when he took a goal. Some groups took exception to the dance and the response has continued in every game since then to the point where he has decided not to play. This is in a country where we proclaim ourselves as being tolerant, giving everyone a “fair go” and valuing and forgiving our football heroes just about every transgression. This is a country where we love to have the New Zealanders come over and perform the Maori Haka war-like dance before football games but we seemingly do not approve Indigenous dances. Australians are standing up on this I hope. (<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/booing-adam-goodes-australians-must-unite-against-racism-20150731-giosk2.html>)

As this journal advocates for a global perspective on social issues of relevance to us all, from whichever nation we belong, I thought this case might be a useful prompt for considering the importance of social studies teachers in advocating for, and continually monitoring, our democracies. I had just read Audrey Osler’s article in the latest NCSS journal *Theory and Research in Social Education* (43:2) and a key section of her article was titled the Fragility of Democracy. She pointed out that reconciling different worldviews and consideration of pluralism in schools and communities is a key challenge for 21st century democracies. The Council of Europe Group of Eminent Persons’ report of 2011 argued that a person’s identity is voluntary and personal and no one should be forced to choose one identity over another. However Osler points out that work by researchers such as Banks (2004) has found that individuals can be denied full citizenship rights because of others’ perceptions of the characteristics or identities related to culture, identity, gender and sexuality for example. Education for democracy “requires the development of skills and attitudes in all students, both mainstream and minoritized, which equip them to defend democratic principles and to struggle for justice with those who encounter discrimination or exclusion” (Osler, p 250). A number of articles in this issue address issues of democracy, of learning to weigh up alternative perspectives, of trying to ensure students learn about alternative perspectives, to look for the information that is missing in explanation for events, to listen for the silenced voice. Let us continue to work hard for our democracies.

Articles in this issue are rich and varied. A number of them address the themes of racism or what can be a source of racism, a lack of a larger world view and acknowledgement of a diversity of views in our society. Waterson & Moffa address the importance of the role of the social studies teacher in rural areas where acknowledgement of the validity of local cultural

knowledge and identity in these communities can also provide a platform for a global view of issues. Eraqi points to the lack of Arab, Muslim, and Arab and Muslim identities in American textbooks and some of the possible repercussions of such silent voices. Ryter investigates the different ways in which World History is taught and “received” in classrooms in the nation; and Yoder explores the “history wars” associated with the writing and teaching of history education in Lebanon. Trade book misrepresentations of the Holocaust are explored by Bickford, Schuette & Rich; while the importance of teaching how to reliably source information is elucidated by Damico & Baildon. Finally Heafner & Fitchett present their findings of a study of instructional time devoted to teaching and to administration which concluded that very little time is actually devoted to social studies in our classrooms. With such a mass of important issues to be addressed (as represented in the articles in just this journal issue) we need to advocate for further time, and to have this area of the curriculum acknowledged as of great importance to our society generally.

The **International Perspectives** section of our issue this time introduces something new for our readers. Following from our previous issue one of our authors who is interested in Human Rights education in schools, and has a law-education based perspective on it, considered the Social Justice publications associated with Human Rights Education (HRE) in issue 4(2) provided by Felisa Tibbitts from Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) and Rosemary Blanchard who is Chair, National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Human Rights Education Community and proposed some perspectives for a stronger law education focus in schools. Anatoli Rapaport, our editor for this section, asked Felisa to respond and so now we have an intellectual conversation on the place and role of law education and HRE in Social Studies education. We would like to continue such conversations so if you are interested in making an observation on any of our published articles please do so. Additionally in our International Perspectives section we include observations and comments from two authors involved in building intercultural travel abroad experiences for pre-service teachers/college students, one instigating a semester long in-school experience in Italy and one a week long service learning project in Swaziland. As Veltri pointed out the CC3R Framework (College and Career Readiness) seeks to prepare students to enter a “globally competitive workforce,”(NCSS, 2013). There are multiple programs attempting to do just that but the actual number of students involved is very small. Piecemeal approaches and add-on courses often used to address this issue have proved ineffective (McDonald, 2005; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010), while research shows that perspectives about diverse groups can be improved by direct and indirect contact with people from minority backgrounds (Hewstone et al., 2014). However, developing cultural competency in education seems to remain at the margins in teacher education programs despite it being acknowledged as a vital skill (Cushner & Mahon 2009). We are thus very happy to present stories of how teachers have worked so hard to develop intercultural competency in their students but would welcome strongly researched papers on this too. Longitudinal studies would be especially welcome. How has this experience changed students’ lives over a long period?

Welcome to a new **Media Review** editor, Kate Ferguson-Patrick, who I have worked with for many years and who brings a British background to our international editorial team. She has sourced some new publications for review including an edited volume of reviews of films for a study of genocide (Michalczyk & Helmick). This latter text provides a background essay providing historical context to particular atrocities, and then chapters describe films or documentaries about the atrocity to elucidate various perspectives. Wayne E. Ross, editor, has completed the

4th edition of his popular text, *The Social Studies Curriculum* continuing its participatory and critical approach to democratic understanding as a fundamental aim of social studies teaching and learning. A further interesting text is a volume edited by Stevick & Gross, where authors write about educational experiences can approach the teaching of the Holocaust from the US, Germany, Australia, Scotland, Israel, Latvia, Estonia, and other European countries.

Last but not least our amazing **Social Justice Issues** editor, Gloria Alter, has worked with Jamie Naidoo and Miriam Sweeney to provide a very useful analysis of the importance of culturally authentic literature and digital media in the promotion of positive identity development among children and young adults and the fostering of global awareness. As experts in Library and Information Services they provide sites for support for those who need texts of any variety to teach for a social justice perspective, and a clear rationale for such study.

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