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## EDITORIAL

### Denizens, Artists, and Terrorists - Disarmament, Development and Diagnosis: Understanding Africa in Australasia and the Pacific.

Tanya Lyons  
Flinders University  
Jay Marlowe  
University of Auckland  
David Mickler  
University of Western Australia  
Alec Thornton  
University of New South Wales

This issue of ARAS welcomes on board two new editors to the team, thus providing editorial representation stretching from the west of Australia to the southern tip of New Zealand. David Mickler from the University of Western Australia (Perth), and Alec Thornton from the University of New South Wales (Canberra), have joined existing editors Tanya Lyons from Flinders University (Adelaide) and Jay Marlowe from the University of Auckland (NZ), as well as Chair of the ARAS Editorial Board Tony Binns from the University of Otago (Dunedin, NZ), and ARAS Books Review Editor Nikola Pijovic from the Australian National University (Canberra).

This particular issue is also demonstrative of the multidisciplinary strengths and broad appeal of ARAS. ARAS has over the years provided a forum for research on the African diaspora in Australia and New Zealand. Indeed, for example, no less than 43 articles on the African Diaspora in this region have been published in ARAS since 2008 (see Lyons, 2015). This issue is no different, and we are grateful for the contribution by Finex Ndhlovu on “Marginality and Linguistic Cartographies of African Denizens as Spheres of Possibility in Regional Australia”. In this lead article Ndhlovu uses the concepts of ‘denizenship,’ ‘marginality’ and ‘cartography’ to demonstrate how ‘multilingualism’ among African-Australians living in regional

Australia needs to be understood more broadly, in order to frame the transnational futures and global/social networks of some of Australia's more recent citizens. This diaspora theme also ties in well with the UN's International Decade for People of African Descent, which has commenced in 2015 and runs to 2024 and seeks to highlight *People of African descent: recognition, justice and development*.

Mokua Ombati, a social scientist from Moi University in Kenya, has written a fascinating survey of "Public Artworks: Creative Spaces for Civic and Political Behaviour in Kenya." Ombati's research on the works of graffiti artists - 'Artivists' - with a political message, demonstrates how they are challenging and questioning the political elite, political corruption and the ensuing violence associated with general elections in that country. By using graffiti (unwanted art in unwanted places) in the urban landscape, they are exposing truths, providing an alternative source of information and contributing to social transformations that are demanding a more peaceful politics in Kenya. This article was completed prior to the 2 April 2015 *al-Shabaab* attack at Garissa University in Kenya, which resulted in 148 deaths, most of them students, and highlighted the clear failures by the Kenyan state and its security services to protect its citizens. According to Ombati, together with graffiti artist and photographer Boniface Mwangi, they both organized a week long vigil for all of the victims of the massacre. Held at the Freedom Corner (a space intimately associated with the late Nobel Peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai), the event was attended by thousands of Kenyans and was full of artistic performances. If the *Graffiti Artivists* can engage the imaginations and actions of youths as a form of social transformation, then this more creative avenue of 'protest' and public voice should be supported by the state, rather than the alternative formations attracting disenfranchised and disenfranchised youths, such as *al-Shabaab* and Boko Haram.

Indeed, in this issue Mohammed Sulemana and Govand Azeez argue that the rise of terrorism and terrorist activity, in West Africa in particular, has occurred through the opportunism of "mobilizing the sighs and cries of the oppressed and appropriating them through appealing to Islam". Thus, what has made Islam so popular in this region, has also enabled it to be taken over by *militant jihadism*, with violent motivations that invariably either engage or terrorise the population. Over the last couple of months, Boko Haram has been pushed back from the territorial gains it had made in north-eastern Nigeria by a combination of the Nigerian military, the forces of neighbouring countries and private military contractors from further

afield. While the militant group has not been defeated, this roll-back coupled with the historic victory by opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari in the Nigerian presidential election on 28 March—the first time power has democratically shifted from one party to another in Nigeria—provides the opportunity for Nigerians to reshape some of the security, corruption and economic challenges facing Africa’s largest country.

Christopher Hills was awarded the 2014 MONASH / AFSAAP Postgraduate Prize for his article “*Gendered Reintegration in Liberia: A Civilised ‘Kwi’ Failure?*” He argues that in terms of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration specific to post-conflict Liberia, the pertinent issue of gender and gender relations must be central to the discussion and any actions undertaken. While the post-conflict period of any nation’s struggle can offer a moment for gender equality to perhaps be considered, Hill argues in this article that such a feminist ideal is time and time again quashed by ‘foreign impositions’ and the resulting ‘hyper-masculinised society’.

Claire Cooke’s article “Married to Freedom? The Importance of Marriage for African Methodist Episcopal Missionary Women in South Africa, 1900 – 1940” provides a more positive outcome for some women’s mobility, to and from Africa, within the context of missionaries and marriage. In her archival and historical study of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Mission, Cooke demonstrates that while African-American AME women had to be married in order to travel to Africa on mission work, South African AME women didn’t have to be married, and could travel to America as unmarried women. Cooke’s work is a significant contribution to the field of African missionary history.

John Mugambwa, Associate Professor of Law at Murdoch University makes an interesting contribution to the debate current in Uganda on the “Proposal for Compulsory Land Acquisition for Economic Investment in Uganda”, and argues that subject to ‘checks and balances’, it is an appropriate power for the government to have, in order to achieve the investment required to create economic development. This is an examination of the laws and policies of the Uganda state that will surely create future debate.

Finally in this issue, Ana Rita Sequeira’s article “The Introduction of Rapid Diagnostic Test for Malaria in Mozambique: Local Appropriation and Complementary Therapeutics,” is particularly relevant for ARAS readers and AFSAAP members. Public health initiatives have been a strong feature of the Australian aid program to African countries, and there are many more NGOs which are concerned with this issue.

However, how many programs and initiatives have failed because the local context had not been factored in? Sequeira's research conducted over four years in Mozambique provides an analysis of the types of 'lay knowledge and practices' which 'arose' from the introduction of the Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) for malaria, which challenged the biomedical science behind the tests and the disease.

These articles from leading scholars and researchers in African studies demonstrate the strengths of this journal to attract high levels of scholarship and original research, despite the current climate in the academy to only publish in 'ranked' journals, which are invariably commercially operated. As we know, this does not mean that the articles they publish are any better than what independent journals do. Indeed the integrity of the peer review process is not determined by the publisher's annual turnover. As argued by Lyons (2015) "ARAS remains an independent journal published by AFSAAP and is now in its 36<sup>th</sup> year of publication." Subscription to ARAS is modest at \$80 for individuals, and \$105 for institutions, and includes AFSAAP membership (see the inside covers of this issue). Subscriptions to commercially published African studies journals on the other hand – that are required to produce up to 3 or 4 issues a year - can amount to over \$900 annually for an institutional subscription or \$190 for individuals, and this money only goes to pay the publisher and the editors (and certainly not the peer reviewers!). ARAS subscribers are investing in AFSAAP and its associated activities supporting members. This includes promoting African Studies and awareness of Africa in Australasia through events such as the Annual AFSAAP Conference; opportunities for postgraduates and researchers in this region – such as the Annual AFSAAP Postgraduate Prizes (sponsored by Monash University); and the award of bursaries to attend other African Studies Association Conferences around the world (see <http://afsaap.org.au/opportunities/> for further information). AFSAAP has declared 2015 *The International Year of Citing ARAS* articles in all of your research and publications in order to increase the profile of ARAS and the work of its committed editors and authors working on African Studies in the Australasia and Pacific region. Thank you for your support and enjoy reading this issue of ARAS.

### **Bibliography**

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