

BOOK REVIEWS

Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction? Marina Ottaway. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999. viii + 138 pp. paper: \$10.95.

Africa's New Leaders is almost certainly the most authoritative study yet published on this subject. It is also far more significant than its brevity suggests. A critique of the politics of rising expectations, régime survival, and structural change in the 1990s, its analytic frame rests on two main pillars. One is modernization theory, at least its still-fashionable assumptions in US policy and NGO circles regarding the promotion of Western-style democracy in different climes. The other concerns structural spin-offs from Cold War's end, in particular opportunities for autonomous initiatives by new-generation state élites in Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaïre). The study's focal puzzles are no less clear. How did five of Africa's most prominent new "élites of means" seek to reconcile their régimes' military antecedents and weak social institutionalization with heightened expectations for government openness, political accountability, and economic reform? Are these leaders veritable agents of social transformation, or pragmatic tacticians seeking to reinvent - and put their own imprints on - the respective states? How had fundamental principles and incremental process blended under these régimes, and how did this effect state-society relations?

Ottaway's answers are expressed in original, accessible language, although few will fail to notice pointed similarities with modernization discourse of the 1950s and 1960s. New-generation leaders, she argues, are not politically chaste or ideologically naïve. Rather they are well-honed tacticians who rejected the "failed policies of their predecessors" and are willing to challenge the global order, promote new identities and interests, and "devise new strategies to overcome old problems" (pp. 1, 10, 83, 106, 110, 126). No exemplars of transformation (p. 5), all except Kabila have had the institutional landscape "unusually" inclined in their favor (p. 14). They also symbolize some craving for change best understood through a combination of empirical and interpretive methods. Hence, Africa's New Leaders does straddle policy and academic analysis. It probably will not excite readers seeking elegant engagement with theory, detailed documentation of sources, or an index. Surely, however, it offers down-to-earth lessons to Africa watchers - policy experts, aid managers, democracy activists, scholars.

The leaders' collective record, Ottaway concludes, has been mixed. In real terms "new-generation" rhetoric and praxis had differed very little from the founding fathers' (pp. 8-9). Yet the cases have varied significantly: Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea stand far above Rwanda and the Congo in attainment. Ottaway herself doubts whether Laurent Kabila fits in the group élan (p. 13, 92-3) as others have doubted Ugandan President Museveni's putative grandfather status. Factors shaping differentiation within the bloc have included the character of domestic social

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v4/v4i3reviews.pdf>

forces, the leader's personal rôle and régime leverage, and how the mix has shaped constructions of political and economic reform on domestic and international levels.

As the 1990s dawned, several African dictators saw power slip through their fingers. With local pressure for change reaching new heights, some of Africa's tyrants lost their once-gilded thrones. Successor régimes in turn courted groups and élites less beholden to foreign powers and more inclined to unorthodox methods, including force (pp. 10-2, 112, 126). Thus there was the emergence of "African solutions to African problems," a troubleshooting quasi-strategy that has met the leaders' propensity for forceful self-assertion without undermining the West's interests (pp. 115-6). For example, military intervention in the Sudan and in Zaïre not only showed how resolute the new régimes could be, but both adventures also hinted at some *pro qui pro* with US interests in the region and an all-too-easy blurring of principle and exigency in their policy processes (pp. 108-13).

The domestic arenas have been more convoluted still. All five societies were in some "protracted turmoil" (p. 10) through the 1980s. The leaders' bequests were institutionally bankrupt estates with high ratios of liabilities to assets. Little surprise then that the first overriding public priority was to restore or establish minimum conditions of collective existence - productive infrastructure, traditions of civil life, effective authority structures, and mechanisms for conciliation and participation. All this Ottaway calls "democratic capital," incorporating Putman's social capital (p. 13). Without plentiful supplies of it, she argues, periodic elections, competing political parties, independent media, free market economy, the attributes of democracy beloved of US policy and Western NGOs, are likely to accentuate pre-existing ethnic, religious, and social divisions in society, at least in the short term (p. 124). Better an unfashionable transition agenda than perdition by indiscretion!

Here lies the case for "sequencing of reforms" (p. 133), a re-affirmation of conventional wisdom on the "crisis of adaptation" in Africa. Such discourse had peaked coincidentally with "political order" in the 1970s, prompting the debate as to whether economic development and political liberalization should be pursued (and achieved?) one at a time before or after each other, hardly in tandem. In theory, a phased transition does offer a promising, "steady as she goes" process. In the hands of politically insecure state élites, however, it has long helped to reinforce self-serving experiments from colonial indirect rule to Uhuru and Ujamaa. Such paradigms proliferated in Africa through the 1970s, occasioning neither political liberalization nor economic development but near-total collapse that necessitated the structural adjustment programs during the 1980s. In this circumstance, the either-or format of the study's sub-themes, Democracy or State Reconstruction, may have, in effect, lent scholarly credence to the leaders' self-legitimizing platforms. At this stage some might ask what is new about the new leaders - apart from the delusions of élite cycles and vitriolic criticism of international actors. Others simply will murmur *déjà vu* in cynical resignation!

Ottaway's goal, it seems, is not so much to advance the leaders' claims. It is rather to show how unrealistic and insensitive to sub-optimal African conditions US policymakers and NGOs have been in pushing democratic reforms (p. 105). The "development first, democracy later" strategy is fraught with risks; Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea's leaders, Ottaway asserts, admitted that, "if their present policies are successful, they will have to be modified radically in the future" (p. 9). This need not make them closet despots in the eyes of donors and opposition figures. But progress on the transient frame is not democracy either, only further confirmation

that the transition to democracy cannot begin in these societies until after "basic problems... are resolved to some degree" (pp. 12, 130). What constitutes "some degree" is open to interpretation. It is also open to abuse by wily rulers; but so too is precipitate unleashing of competitive elections and market forces on societies just emerging from long-running conflict. In this frame, Ottaway's innocuous realpolitik meets scholarly endeavor. Western donors and activists need to rethink their paradigms lest they become irrelevant (p. 5); leaders who had shown "much less concern for the final outcome" of their policies (p. 9) deserve the benefit of the doubt nonetheless (p. 9). Yet, because arbitrary reversals and even re-traditionalization are real possibilities, today's incremental choices might well be building blocks for tomorrow's personal or small-group empires (p. 130). So where are the new-generation régimes headed?

There are no definitive answers, only pointers. Economic restructuring was high on the agenda; production had improved dramatically in all cases except the Congo. Policy reform, including deregulation, decentralization, and privatization had proceeded apace, more intensely in Uganda and Ethiopia than in Rwanda and Eritrea. Some pluralism has emerged in Uganda and Ethiopia (pp. 120-1); moreover, Ugandan NGOs have been more receptive to incremental change than opposition parties (pp. 40, 44). Étatism has remained Eritrea's favored strategy (pp. 57-8), while Rwanda has prevaricated, and Kabila's Congo has slipped into virtual paralysis. In all cases, a ghoulish fear of the recent past has dominated popular imaginations nonetheless, fueled in part by official discourse (pp. 89, 128-9). As a result, domestic opposition has been ineffectual, or driven to embrace self-defeating measures, from obdurate insistence on principles through election boycotts to armed attacks on régime symbols (p. 120). The populace also seemed quiescent, keeping (or kept) well away from matters substantive as state-led mobilization subsumed popular participation (pp. 26, 43-5, 53, 79, 88) and rulers tried out new and not-so-new mechanisms constructed in their personal or small-group images (pp. 27, 118, 126).

Africa's New Leaders is strongly recommended, as much for its authoritative analysis as for its wider import. The study bears out several general lessons. First, to the extent that gaps between expectations and social reality are proverbial in institution-building the world over, the euphoria of the 1990s most certainly reflected dissatisfaction with ousted régimes rather than with the potential of the new. Second, new leaders' seeming rejection of institutional perspectives in favor of "everyday approaches" is far from realistic. While institutions themselves do not make social change any more feasible, change is not sustainable at all without institutions. Progress has been slow in these cases partly because of the leaders' high personal stakes in possible outcomes. If developmental states are almost always ruler-friendly, then opportunities to construct new mechanisms in situations of near-zero institutionalization must promise abundant payoffs, including variants of gerrymandering. Africa's new state élites have yet to face the challenge of creating an environment that includes all publics and encourages the growth of productive debate and countervailing viewpoints. The well-worn game of doing one thing at a time, although convenient, has merely postponed doomsday time and again, providing justification for sit-tight leaders of all hues. It is far too costly in the long term.

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North Africa in Transition: State, Society, and Economic Transformation in the 1990s. Yahia H. Zoubir (ed.). Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999. 299pp. Cloth: \$ 59.95.

Yahia H. Zoubir has compiled a fine collection of essays about developments in North Africa in the 1990s. Although this collection of essays represents a variety of viewpoints, some even contradicting the others, the stress is always on the social, political, and economic explanations for developments in North Africa. In the Anglo-American academy, North Africa has not received much attention and, as such, the literature on the region lacks depth. By making use of his personal connections, Zoubir has elicited contributions for this book from the well-known scholars of Maghreb, adding to literature on this underrepresented region. While the focus of this book is North Africa, Algeria gets more coverage than other countries of the region, perhaps due to the Algerian focus of the editor himself.

The book is divided into three parts. The first five chapters in part one address economic and political developments in the Maghreb. In particular, the authors try to account for the failure of the "development phenomenon" in the Maghreb. Pointing to constant political instability in Maghrebi states, the authors place the reason for this failure at the feet of a weak civil society with constant repression from above. While Henry Clement's chapter involves a dialectical exposition on the development of civil society in the Maghreb as a whole, Zoubir, Layachi, King, and Deeb focus on the development of civil society in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya, respectively. Both Zoubir and Layachi deal with the changes arising out of economic liberalization, and predict a bright future for civil society. With a comparative focus on East Asian cases, King attempts to account for the failure of Tunisia in fulfilling "Western expectations" (p. 61). In the case of Libya, Deeb advances a well-rounded argument that the health of the Libyan economy, in spite of oil revenues, remains fragile. All this is set to lead towards a conflict-filled transition if and when Qadaffi's rule comes to an end.

The second part of the book deals with more specific issues in the Maghreb. Claire Spencer cautions policy-oriented researchers to pay more heed to the history and diversity of Maghreb in their research, which she argues is focused heavily on Islam at the expense of other socio-cultural explanations. In the following two chapters, Mohammad Azzi and Yocef Bounandel deal with the topics of youth and human rights in the Maghreb, respectively. Azzi examines the prevalence of alienation among the youth, who form the majority—approaching seventy to eighty percent—of the unemployed in the Maghrebian countries. A worsening socioeconomic situation, according to Azzi, leaves the Maghrebian youths with violence as the only medium of expression. According to Bounandel, the worsening socioeconomic conditions over the last decade are also responsible for the worsening human rights situation in the Maghreb, although Morocco is an exception to this secular trend.

International pressure has proven especially important in bringing about improvement in the human rights situation in Maghreb. Francophone intellectuals in Maghreb, who have raised

human rights issues repeatedly, have not fared well in their own societies. This, according to Geesay, could be accounted for by the colonial baggage of the French language, which is viewed with mistrust by the Maghrebians. Nora Colton examines the emerging markets in Maghreb, and prescribes cautious liberalization because of the unpredictable political ramifications of speedy liberalization. Robert Mortimer rounds off the second part of the book by examining the rise and eventual decline of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), which he blames on the tensions between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara.

The last four chapters are more or less in the field of security policy studies, with the first two-by Youbir and Volman-tackling the issue at the Maghrebian level, while the rest concentrate on the international level beyond the shores of the Mediterranean. Youbir's chapter on the geopolitics of the Saharan conflict, which has been a bone of contention between Algeria and Morocco, reveals that although France and the United States support the Moroccan position, Spain still supports the Saharawi people because of its historic guilt over not addressing demands for Saharawi self-determination. Following this, Volman looks at the military expenditure in Maghreb, which at this moment favors Algeria over Morocco, because of its oil and gas revenue receipts.

In the last two chapters, the authors deal with US policy in the Maghreb (Zoubir and Zunes) and the European Union's policy toward the Maghreb (Joffe). Zoubir and Zunes examination of the US policy orientation toward different members of the Maghreb finds a policy that, although mindful of the longtime friendship with Morocco, singularly emphasizes economic liberalization. They also notice that the US is moving to lessen the hegemony of France in the region. Lastly, George Joffe provides a well-rounded chapter on European Union policy toward the Maghreb, focused on economic issues at the expense of political and security issues. Although the EU agenda toward the Maghreb is mainly driven by Spain and France, of late Germany and Britain have started making their presence felt.

Although this is a fine collection and the editor has received significant participation of authors from the Maghreb, there is a paucity of references to Arabic sources. There is also a neglect of the cultural issues in explaining the events of the last ten years, which have been fostered mainly by the Islamic opposition challenge. Although the authors do address the issue of the international dimensions of the Maghrebian issues, there is no systemic treatment of how the Maghreb fits into global capitalism. Finally, even though women authored four of the chapters, there is no specific piece devoted to the roles of women in the Maghreb.

This being said, I would not hesitate to recommend this book to a wide variety of audiences. There is something here for all interested parties.

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Success and Failures of Microbusiness Owners in Africa: A Psychological Approach. Michael Frese (ed.). Westport: Quorum Books, 2000. Pp. 203. Cloth \$59.95.

Which factors make for entrepreneurial success or failure in Africa's microbusinesses? Who do you ask and where do you go for answers? The authors of *Success and Failures* went into African cities to observe and interview microbusiness owners. They talked to real people enmeshed in the daily grind of survival, impregnated with the uncertainty of success and failure in a precarious business environment. Altogether five studies were conducted in Zambia, Uganda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

The studies focused on two broad sets of factors that influence microbusiness success: psychological and socio-demographic factors. Psychological factors include entrepreneurial orientation, personal initiatives, innovativeness, proactiveness, planning strategies, and motivation of employees. Some of the socio-demographic factors include the age of the business, unemployment as the reason for start-up, employment of family members, and education. By investigating both of these aspects, the authors show that psychological variables are the better predictors of microbusiness performance. Frese and his collaborators challenge many stereotypes about microbusiness owners in Africa. For instance, they discovered that employing family members does not necessarily decrease success. The authors advise policy makers and researchers alike to pay more attention to psychological factors than the typical socio-demographic factors that have usually received more attention from governments, donors, and researchers.

The psychological factors identified in this book really amount to plain old management. This reveals a basic and commonly made observation: microenterprise owners in Africa need management skills. The authors are simply saying that owners who have applied some management principles (planning, goal setting, employee motivation, competitive analysis, etc.) are more likely to succeed than their counterparts who have not recognized that management works. The researchers examine how thoughts, ideas, and attitudes regulate and control management actions. Their investigations reveal that psychological strategies (i.e., management techniques) are used when they are compatible with the personality characteristics of the owner and environmental constraints (resources and restrictions).

From this finding the authors argue that it is possible to find people with the "right" personality who are likely to succeed in entrepreneurial ventures. They advocate that training, selection, and support systems ought to be put in place to ensure that persons with the identified psychological factors are nurtured to success from adolescence. There are serious problems with this view. Advising African states to go beyond setting up proper economic and legal frameworks to selecting the "right" persons to succeed seems very unpalatable. Second, administering a test to ferret out who will succeed or fail is not in the spirit of competitive capitalism. This idea admittedly comes from the failed policies of communism. The authors state that "Many countries, particularly the early socialist ones (even poor ones), have used an early selection approach of high potentials in the areas of sports and music. Thus, often four-or-five-year-old children were selected in competitions and offered unique training opportunities in special schools. We think a similar model can be used in the areas of entrepreneurship" (p. 187). It is important to identify teenagers with high potentials in entrepreneurship, but this

should be left to parents and the market. Government and public institutions should not use taxpayer money to give privileged access to resources and skills.

There is yet another problem with the advice offered here. These scholars unfortunately "psychologise" the whole development process in Africa. No doubt it is important to understand the actions and motivations of entrepreneurs, but it is more important to understand the historicity, institutional framework, and dynamics of social forces in Africa. To sever entrepreneurs from the specificities of Africa's colonial and postcolonial experience places undue weight on psychological matters instead of the concrete socio-political conditions that have primarily fueled development efforts.

At this point, what is needed in Africa is a balanced approach to tackling the recalcitrant problem of underdevelopment, not another scholarly perspective or tantalizing tool. Psychology can help us formulate policies for the ubiquitous informal sector, but it is wrong to over-emphasize this in defiance of the logic and dynamics of social forces.

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Free Speech in Traditional Society: The Cultural Foundations of Communication in Contemporary Ghana. Kwesi Yankah. Accra: Ghana Universities Press (distributed by ABC Ltd, Oxford, UK), 1998. Pp 46. Paper \$8.50.

Kwesi Yankah's 1997 inaugural lecture at the University of Ghana raises the question of how African structures and norms of communication have coped with European intervention. He asks,

"Are modern notions of free speech, free press, free expression which are already operative in our post-colonial regulative institutions, compatible with communicative norms and social structures in traditional society?"(p. 3).

Yankah identifies and describes the norms, modes, and functions of speech in pre-colonial Akan society, from instruments connected with speech (such as talking drums and the linguistic staff carried by the chief's orator) to forms and modalities (verbal taboo, silence, indirection, and open critique). All of these, according to Yankah, demonstrate the existence of a wide latitude for expressive freedom in pre-colonial Akan and other African societies.

Against this background, Yankah discusses the consequences of colonial intervention and new media such as print and radio which arose from and reflected the socio-economic system of capitalism. When introduced into Akan and other societies, these new media complicated the relationship between free speech and appropriate cultural behaviour. Although Africans were capable of both adopting and resisting the foreign systems, genuine tensions emerged, which remain today.

To illustrate his point, Yankah cites conflicts between leaders and the media in contemporary Ghana and, by extension, other parts of Africa. He highlights the problems of keeping inherited cultural communicative norms in the face of these new developments

resulting from European intervention. In pre-colonial African society, norms and parameters guided free speech, but European institutions and media forms destabilized these parameters. As a solution, Yankah suggests that the indigenous cultural norms need to recognize and adapt to certain exigencies of contemporary reality, such as electronic media and radio. Those involved in contemporary media and its institutions need to study and pay attention to the indigenous cultural norms.

In terms of identifying and describing the resources and modalities of speech in pre-colonial Africa, Yankah's book is very useful. His theoretical framework, however, is rather conventional, if not unhelpful. He sees Africa in terms of a dualism between "traditional" and "modern" and associates "modernity" with "western." This framework, well-entrenched in African studies, is very problematic, to say the least. Do we need this Eurocentric perspective, which categorizes pre-colonial African societies as traditional and equates modernization with "western" influence? Is there no African modernity? Did Africans sit still for millennia waiting for Europeans to come and modernize them? There must be a better way of theorizing the notions of tradition, traditional, modern, and modernity.

Each cultural institution, object, and practice must be seen as the result of many forces and processes. In every society, there were rebels and critics who challenged the norms; there were people who disobeyed, questioned, mocked, or ignored tradition; there were also pioneers. All these were the forces of change from within. Even such a "traditional" figure as the chief's orator, whose office and paraphernalia Yankah considers as having been there from time immemorial, has not been static (p. 9).

Another common error in African studies which also appears in Yankah's book is generalizing about Africa on the basis of a specific African society. Again and again, scholars of Africa study a culture -- Yoruba for example -- and then write as if Yoruba and African were synonymous. Since his study focuses on Akan society, Yankah needs to maintain that focus consistently and never confuse Akan with African, as he does occasionally.

The failure to theorize afresh the notions of traditional and modern, or at least to realize the essentially neo-colonial ways in which these terms are used in relation to Africa, is the chief weakness of Yankah's book. This problem runs throughout the book to the very end. This problem aside, Yankah's book is very informative. It covers a broad range of issues and has a bibliography valuable for further study. This book is suitable for any library.

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Traditional African Names. Jonathan Musere. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2000. 400 pp. Cloth \$65.

Until the publication of this book, it was extremely difficult to find any volume that collects and defines the meanings of African names in English. Africa is a diverse continent with many cultures, traditions, and languages. Names are part and parcel of all African traditions, and

virtually every African indigenous name has a distinct meaning or connotation. While it would be next to impossible to compile a comprehensive thesaurus of all African names, let alone their synonyms, this book compiles about 6,000 names from central, eastern, and southern African countries, such as Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Although the compilation of African names is not entirely a new phenomenon, what distinguishes this book from previous ones is its simplicity in name descriptions and definitions. This volume looks at the in-depth meanings of indigenous as well as adopted African names. African personal names have multitudinous functions such as the association of one's occupation, habits, or personality. Many African names emanate from one's ancestry through clan, ethnic/tribal, or religious affiliation. Names can also be commemorative of ancient wars and conquests. Since most of these names emanate from the "Bantuphone" region of east, central and southern Africa, it is not uncommon for many of them to have a similar meaning, albeit different pronunciations. A word such as Muntu connotes a person, but actually it is derived from the common linguistic descent of people in this region. It is therefore not surprising that the word "ntu" is common among most ethnic groups in this region and carries the same meaning. For example, a word such as "Gahungu," which denotes a small or young boy, has a similar connotation amongst the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa ethnic groups of Rwanda and Burundi.

The author also includes new African words that have been adopted from Western political and cultural contexts. For example, the word "Democracy" in most African contexts is pronounced as "Demokrasi." Like other African names given to people during a certain historical phenomenon, this word has been given to some newborns during the current democratic struggle on the continent.

The alphabetical listings of these names as well as the book's well-prepared index will be very helpful to those that are not familiar with African appellations. This book is highly recommended for scholars and students of African anthropology, linguistics, literature, history, and politics, as well as anyone interested in learning more about an important aspect of African culture.

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Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Pp. 455. Cloth: \$35.00.

Runaway Slaves addresses the still widely held belief that, in the slave system of the United States of America, "slaves were generally content, that racial violence on the plantation was an aberration, and that the few who ran away struck out for the Promised Land in the North or Canada" (p. xv). Throughout *Runaway Slaves*, John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger stress that the majority of slaves in the United States fought the system and their white oppressors. Moreover, they lived under constant threats of physical and mental violence and were

conditioned to respond in kind. Furthermore, slaves ran away in great numbers, and when they ran they did not necessarily go North. In fact, they more often ran to places where they had relatives or loved ones.

The book is well-organized, with chapters describing everyday acts of rebellion, reasons for running, how they tried to keep their families together, their reasons for becoming violent, how they planned escapes, and where and how they hid. Moreover, the book details how the slaveholders hunted fugitives, what happened to the slaves once they were taken back into bondage, and how the slaveholders attempted to manage their human property. The authors attach seven appendices, including advertisements, petitions, tables of locations and destinations of runaways, and examples of correspondence. Almost one hundred pages of notes detail the sources.

Franklin and Schweninger undertake a detailed analysis of hundreds of newspaper articles, advertisements, and court documents in order to establish many of the "facts" of life in slavery, as well as a foundation for the tenor of relations between blacks and whites. Their analysis of these documents addresses a gap in contemporary scholarship on slavery, which has focused on slave narratives, diaries of slave planters, and plantation records. In fact, the authors assert that newspapers and court documents have their own "unique strengths" as primary source materials. For instance, masters advertising for the return of their runaways "had little reason to misinform their readers and every reason to be as precise as possible" (p. 295). They gave graphic physical descriptions of the runaways and their known connections around the country. Moreover, court petitioners suing for release from slavery "realized that it behooved them to be as forthright and candid as possible" (p. 295). These petitioners often had nothing to hide, because all the community knew their circumstances; furthermore, presenting the facts in graphic detail could possibly sway the verdict their way. Therefore, contemporary white notions of slaves and black resistance to slavery are well-represented in these documents.

The bits and pieces of stories that the authors put together from the fragments of newspaper clippings and runaway notices are remarkable. This technique, however, can be a bit confusing when several different notices or runaways are mentioned in the same paragraph. Moreover, the reader may become intrigued by the ways a particular slave rebelled and wish to know more about that particular individual. The downfall of writing from advertisements is that, in most cases, one never does know what happened to the person in question. This narrative angst, of course, only replicates to a small degree the terrible anxiety that the friends and family of the slave must have felt. For as Franklin and Schweninger make clear, slave families often did not know where their loved ones had fled. They also understood very well the penalties inflicted upon captured runaways. For example, slave owners often contracted professional slave catchers with dogs to chase their runaways. One plantation owner admitted to using such methods: the catcher's dogs treed the man and pulled him out of the tree. The owner then had the dogs bite "him badly, think[ing] he will stay home a while" (p. 161).

In addition to detailing the reasons and the methods of those who ran, the authors "seek to analyze the motives and responses of the slaveholding class and other whites" (p. xv). To this end, they have detailed the owners' announcements about runaways, their rewards for apprehending the slaves, and their discussions of the tribulations that pursuing the runaways caused. The results of this analysis are telling. Masters were often incensed that trusted slaves

ran away without "any unjust or injurious treatment" and they would pursue those slaves until the time and expense became overwhelming (p. 169).

Franklin and Schweninger have done a thorough job reading runaway advertisements and court cases "against the grain" to determine the possible reasons why the slaves ran away and committed other crimes. For instance, they claim that "fear, anxiety, retaliation, frustration, anger, and hatred propelled slaves toward violence" (p. 79). When slaves ran, they often took more of their owner's property than just themselves. The owners described every item stolen. One runaway called Jerry took with him "a 'considerable quantity' of clothes, 'an aged sorrel horse,' a pistol, and eighty dollars in cash" (p. 145). A slave named Sam left wearing "a green frock coat with a black velvet collar, blue pants, a high-crown black hat; he carried with him a black leather trunk containing a variety of other clothing, including a reddish frock coat with a velvet collar, a green cloth coat and a white hat" (p. 80). What this detailing makes clear is the slaves' understanding that anything preventing them from acquiring material and intellectual resources was the basis of their continued enslavement. When they absconded, they took some of the materials that could help make them free.

Runaway Slaves does well in discounting the popular myth that slaves were docile and cowered in the face of white oppression. In fact, as Franklin and Schweninger show, a great deal of violence was inflicted upon slaves, and the slaves reacted in kind. The authors establish that "most of the violence was spontaneous, and most of it was directed against whites-owners, members of the owner's family, overseers" (p. 77). In nearly every Southern state, slaves were indicted for killing their owners or members of their owner's family. For this reason in particular, *Runaway Slaves* is a valuable resource for undergraduate courses dealing with slavery, as undergraduates often come to this subject with "romantic, *Gone with the Wind*" notions of the peculiar institution. Moreover, the authors cite all the primary sources they use, making this book a valuable resource for those interested in archival research on slave narratives, slave codes, and African American history.

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Women of the Sahel. 1995. Directed by Paolo Quaregna and Mahamane Souleymane, 52 minutes. Distributor: First Run/Icarus Films. 52 minutes / Color / Sale/video: \$390; Rental/video: \$75

This documentary presents women of Niger and the range of activities in which they engage to make a living. The video's title evokes Niger's geographical location, namely the Sahel region of West Africa. Niger's economy is based on herding, agriculture, and mining. The industrial sector is extremely small and people in salaried employment counted only about 150,000 out of a population of eight million when the film was made in 1995. As a result, women -- as well as men -- look to the so-called "informal sector" to generate cash. In the course of the film, its directors take the viewer on a journey across Niger, demonstrating the vital roles

women play in supporting themselves and their families. They do not dwell on the fact that most, if not all, of the women presented are Muslims, but it is noteworthy in light of the popular images of Islam in the United States. The women in the video provide a good counterpoint to prevailing stereotypes.

The journey begins in Gaya, a town on the banks of the Niger river close to the border with Benin and Nigeria. The narrator introduces "Mamou", who heads a busy household while her husband works as a truck driver. The filmmakers show how she takes advantage of available opportunities. In a peanut-producing area, but with no field of her own, she buys groundnuts in the market and turns them into oil and snacks; she purchases fish and fries them for sale; and she occasionally travels to Benin to buy goods for resale locally.

For enjoyment, Mamou still participates in rehearsals of the local dance troupe, although she has stopped going on tour with it as a singer. The narrator's explanations in English language voice-over are interspersed with Mamou's own commentary on what she is doing. Her words, spoken in Hausa, appear as subtitles in English. In like manner, the viewer encounters women in other parts of the country who extract and process salt from the soil; dig up gypsum and transform it into plaster; weave brightly-colored mats, or make pottery to sell to traders or leather products to sell at the local craft center.

The emphasis throughout is on women's activities, but ethnicity also is highlighted in the last segment dealing with Tuareg women. The comparison that is drawn here between "Tuareg women [that] are not exhausted by hard physical work ... [and] other women in the Sahel" implicitly resurrects colonial distinctions between the "noble" nomads and sedentary folk dulled by hard labor. It also ties labor to ethnicity rather than to class or social hierarchy. The statement that "[for Tuareg women] there is a great freedom of expression [in] celebrating births and marriages" reinforces this impression and glosses over the fact that women of nearly all ethnic backgrounds also celebrate life cycle events through dance and other forms of artistic expression.

Placed in the context of Women's Studies, the video uses a "women's roles" approach to the subject matter. This means that women's activities are presented and their contributions highlighted with no more than passing reference to gender relations and the wider political economy of which they are a part. Cooperatives are mentioned in several instances but their benefits and problems, the impetus behind their creation, or their relationships to local household and community structures are never seriously discussed. In spite of these criticisms, the video is suitable for use in a range of classrooms (e.g. women's studies, introduction to Africa, economic anthropology) at the secondary school and college levels and is a welcome addition to the available audiovisual resources on the subregion.

Instructors and students interested in complimentary readings may wish to consult: *Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900-1989* by Barbara Cooper (1997); *The Poetics and Politics of Tuareg Aging: Life Course and Personal Destiny in Niger* by Susan J. Rasmussen (1997); *Historical Dictionary of Niger* by Samuel Decalo (1997).

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