

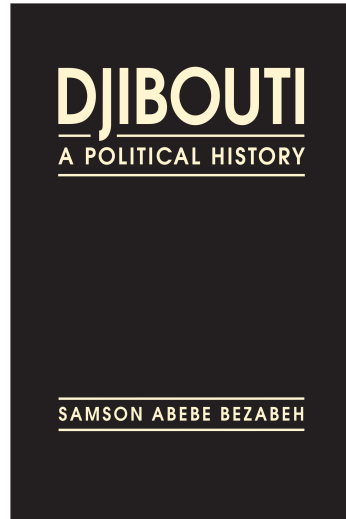
EXCERPTED FROM

Djibouti:
A Political History

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ISBN: 978-1-68585-952-7 hc



LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS

1800 30th Street, Suite 314
Boulder, CO 80301 USA
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fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the
Lynne Rienner Publishers website
www.rienner.com

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1

Djibouti's Political Dynamics

THE PERIOD OF DECOLONIZATION PROMISED TO THE COLONIZED a new era of hope in which they would see freedom in an independent state. This “freedom time,” as Gary Wilder writes in his book on negritude and decolonization, became problematic, as freedom from colonial rule raised more problems than solutions.¹ Rather than becoming a way out, freedom from colonial rule led to freedom for continued autocracy in the postcolonial state. The anthropologist David Scott puts it aptly in *Conscripts of Modernity*: the romantic vision of the decolonial period ended in tragedy.²

This failure does not relate only to the specific politics of decolonization, but also to the overall enthusiasm that the world has shown to state forms of political organizations, which Ashis Nandy eloquently captured in the phrase “the romance of the state.”³ Although forming states was regarded as the solution to colonial and postcolonial problems, modern states entered into crises as they proved to be unable to mediate contending identities. Except in a few situations, democratization processes that came to be regarded in the 1990s as solutions for “third world failed states” were also put into disarray, leading scholars to question the appropriateness of conceiving such states as being in democratic transition.⁴

Like millions of others who have experienced lack of freedom under the yoke of colonialism, the inhabitants of present-day Djibouti felt that the demise of colonialism and the establishment of an independent state would lead to freedom, prosperity, and equality. Although they achieved independence on 27 July 1977 with much pomp, they found that, as in many other parts of the world that experience decolonization, freedom

from colonial rule led only to freedom for continued oppression.⁵ *Djibouti: A Political History* is an account of how the “romance” of the independent Djiboutian state ended in tragedy. That romance—that is, the hope that Djiboutians had of living prosperously, peacefully, freely, and equally in their independent state—failed not once but multiple times. Despite this, Djiboutians remain faithful to the romantic ideal of having a modern state in which political representation and equality are achieved, freedom is realized, and progress and modernity are actualized. In view of the continued aspiration for such a state, it is not far from reality to claim that, despite existing as a postcolonial state for more than four decades, the state of Djibouti has still not been born. Its citizens have gotten their hopes up time and again only to discover that the romance has failed once more and the romantic aspiration has ended in tragedy. The people’s hope for living freely and equally in their own state is converted into a situation wherein these dreams are altered into oppression, inequality, and the absence of peace.

Of course, romance does not always lead to tragedy. On the ashes of tragedies, opportunities also arise. The ills that come with the failure of the state romance are intertwined with opportunities. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the modern state is its contradictory nature, which makes it a breeding ground for both tragedies and opportunities. This state of affairs enmeshes its subjects between the two extremes, as they become unable to permanently disentangle the unfolding tragedies from opportunities and vice versa. Beyond recounting the tragedy of the romance of the state in postcolonial Djibouti, this book also tells the stories of opportunities that function as tragedy’s conjoined twin. In doing so, it shows how the failure of the romance of the state has led to opportunities for the ruling elites, and how these opportunities have in turn created unending cycles of tragedies.

I seek to provide a comprehensive and accessible account of the political history that Djiboutians have experienced since the country’s independence from France in 1977. Few accounts of Djibouti’s history have been published.⁶ The first comprehensive English-language book on the political history of Djibouti was published in 1968 by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, before the country obtained its independence.⁷ Another comprehensive book in English is the work of Robert Tholomier, originally published in French in 1977 as *A Djibouti avec les Afar et les Issas* and then in English in 1981 as *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa*.⁸ There are also article-length publications that focus on specific and topical issues—such as the civil war that erupted in Djibouti in 1991, interethnic conflicts, migration, border disputes,

and Djibouti's geopolitical significance—as well as policy briefs and reference works.⁹ Although scholarship on Djibouti in French is relatively large compared to that in English, those also tend to focus on colonial history or on particular aspects of Djiboutian politics.¹⁰ *Djibouti: A Political History* seeks to fill a gap by relating the political tragedies and opportunities that have arisen in postcolonial Djibouti.

The Drivers of Domestic Politics

In examining the political history of Djibouti, I argue that three general factors were important in giving shape to the political conditions that Djiboutians are now experiencing: Djibouti's geographical position, its politics of exclusion and gradations of citizenship, and its colonial past.

Geographical Factors

Djibouti's unique geopolitical position has attracted the attention of external powers and global forces and has also functioned as a resource curse (see Figure 1.1).¹¹ Located at the gate of the Red Sea, the country's southern territory is adjacent to the Gulf of Aden, while its northern section adjoins the Bab el-Mandeb, the 30-kilometer strait that connects the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea (see Figure 1.2).¹² This strait also serves as a bridge between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. In the contemporary world, Bab el-Mandeb functions as an oil route through which millions of barrels of oil pass annually—4.8 million barrels per day in 2017, according to the United States Energy Information Administration.¹³

Djibouti's location on this oil route makes it a strategic place for controlling the transshipment of oil and other trade goods. For Western nations, it is also a key position for monitoring the movement of arms out of unfriendly countries such as Iran and North Korea. In the post-9/11 period, Djibouti also served as a choke point important to Western countries for deterring militant Islamic groups. Ever since its independence, the strategic value of its geographical position has meant that Djibouti has functioned as a *de facto* garrison town for world powers to safeguard their own interests, especially the flow of capital. Immediately after independence, France, its former colonizer, remained established there, while conservative Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia made sure that Djibouti was stable and did not join the Soviet bloc by providing it with cash and membership in the Arab League.¹⁴ Since the end of the Cold War, and particularly since the events of 9/11, Djibouti's role as a garrison state has increased. The United States established its first, and at present its only, military base in Africa within its

Figure 1.1 Location of Djibouti Map



Source: Author.

borders.¹⁵ US allies who were engaged in the hunt for Osama bin Laden and in the war in Afghanistan, such as Germany and Spain, also stationed military personnel in Djibouti. More recently, Japan and China have constructed military bases there. In short, Djibouti hosts the only US military base in Africa, the only external Chinese and Japanese military bases in the world, and the only French base in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region. For the French, the base in Djibouti is also their most important base in the world.

Throughout Djibouti's postindependence period, the foreign military powers with a presence in the country have had a strong interest in maintaining the country's stability as well as the status quo of the elite

Figure 1.2 Map of Djibouti



Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*.

who have come to power. As a result, Djibouti has been ruled by a single extended family, and power has been transferred only once—from the first president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, to his nephew, Ismail Omar Guelleh. The external presence has provided opportunities for the elite as a result of the rents and the political legitimacy that they derive from it. The Djiboutian masses, however, are experiencing a lack of freedom, despite the fact that they now live in a postindependent state that promised them a rosy future.

The presence of global powers is not the only external factor that plays a role in Djibouti; another is the regional dynamics. These have

provided the Djibouti elite with an additional opportunity to consolidate their grip on power.

Politics of Exclusion

In addition to the external factors, internal dynamics have shaped the way politics has been organized in independent Djibouti. Postcolonial Djibouti has been marked by a politics of exclusion and gradations of citizenship. Some of Djibouti's ethnic groups—Afar, Somalis, and Arabs—are considered the “major” ethnic groups in the classical colonialist and nationalist representation. Others, such as people from Ethiopia and the subcontinent of India, are considered “minor” or “other” ethnic groups and are regarded as exterior to Djibouti despite their long presence in the country. The political power in the country is divided among the major ethnic groups. Within this grouping, the Somalis, particularly the Issa Somali from the Mamassan clan, hold top political positions, while other groups hold secondary positions.¹⁶ The ethnic tags that are attached to the presidency and the position of prime minister are telling in this regard. While the presidency is held by an Issa from the Mamassan clan, the position of prime minister is always occupied by an Afar, the other major ethnic group in Djibouti. The same happens in the legislative assembly, where there are quotas for Afar, Issa, and Arabs. This situation has generated a sense of grievance, because despite the affirmation of equal citizenship, people do not feel equal. It has also led to a civil war and to sporadic interethnic conflicts between the Afar and the Issa.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that ethnicity is the only internal factor that shaped the tragedy of the romance of the state in Djibouti. The limited studies on Djibouti focus largely on the ethnic factor to explain postindependence political tragedies.¹⁷ In postcolonial Djibouti, marginalization did not take a purely interethnic form, but also took a political form: the president sidelined any politicians, irrespective of their ethnic background, who seemed to be seeking more political power or who started to contradict him. A number of people who aspired to the presidency or other higher political offices, such as the chairmanship of the ruling party, were thrown out of their positions of power. These efforts have led to a constant process of reshuffling and recycling in which the political elites swing between government offices and opposition political parties. It has created a situation in which the president and those associated with him try to settle political differences and quell opposition through the distribution of benefits, including government positions. As a result, Djibouti politics has become a politics of “older newer elites,” in which the opposition is

animated by old guards. Thus, the romance of the state, which affirms that freedom, equality, and prosperity will be achieved in the modern nation-state framework, has become an unattainable object of desire even though people are still motivated by the ideal.

Colonial Past

The tragedy of postcolonial Djibouti is influenced not only by factors from the present, such as the flow of capital and the need to securitize it, but also by factors that one might think had passed with time. It is this “past,” more specifically the “colonial past,” that is the third factor in shaping politics in Djibouti. In coming to Africa or any other part of the colonized world, the European powers not only sent white men armed with guns but, to quote David Scott, they also “*introduced a new game of politics* that the colonized would (eventually) be obliged to play if they were able to be counted as political.”¹⁸ Beyond the chains and other forms of brute force that were used to create a docile colonial subject—who had to obey or be flogged in public, buried alive and left to die, or blown up by gunpowder inserted into their rectum¹⁹—colonialism created a sophisticated playing field, a situation in which certain forms of conduct were enabled by being regarded as political while others were rendered unavailable or redundant because they did not fit the new definition of what political conduct should be.²⁰ In short, colonialism was a redefinition of the condition of the subject by altering his desires through the introduction of political modernity.

In Africa and elsewhere, the political modernity that came to be introduced through colonialism was the result of the insertion of the colonized into a project of political modernity whose roots can be traced to Enlightenment Europe.²¹ The newly introduced political modernity brought about the formation of the modern state with its institutions and ideologies. It entailed the creation of bureaucracy, rule of law, and expert-based scientific rationalism, but above all it entailed a certain form of liberal mentality that promised citizens a happy future that would be delivered through a representational system of politics in which citizens would elect their representatives.

Within the context of Djibouti, the new political game that was introduced by the colonialists rested primarily on the refashioning of ethnic identification. The French, as part of their mechanisms of rule, organized the society along essentialized and reified ethnic categories. In the representational form of politics that was introduced after World War II and following the agitation against the French empire, ethnic categories became the basis for political participation. In Djibouti, choosing

a representative who stood not only for the individual but for ethnic groups, which were now understood as a reified category, became the new desired political conduct, quintessential for this new game. At the time of decolonization, the colonial blueprint that entangled politics with ethnicity remained intact; the Djiboutian elite and France, who conducted the negotiations that led to independence, opted to continue the ethnic politics matrix, wherein the political structure was organized in terms of ethnicity, and political representation in the state became a matter of quotas. The continuation of this ethnic-politics matrix from the colonial period meant that the independent state that Djiboutians expected to be the solution for the ills of the colonial state remained unrealizable, as the “new” state became entangled in an ethnic quota system based on a notion of minority/majority.

The ethnic politics matrix was not the only holdover from the colonial regime. Colonization also imposed Enlightenment universalism and modernity. Focusing on reason and the individual subject, Enlightenment modernity presented a worldview that is animated by ideas of well-being, progress, and equality. It presented a millenarian thinking whereby human beings will achieve freedom and economic progress within the framework of the modern state. This millenarian vision, despite its repeated failure and inherent intangibility, has captured the imagination of the world for the past 200 years, as Chantal Mouffe²² asserts in *The Return of the Political*. Djiboutians did not become an exception to this situation. The promise of living in freedom, equality, and prosperity within the modern state framework gave hope to the Djiboutians amid repeated setbacks to actualization of freedom, equality, and justice within their state.²³ Since independence, Djiboutians have been engaged in protests and have appealed to the international community by invoking human-rights protocols. They have also waged an armed insurrection in an attempt to deliver the state from its postcolonial tragedies. These activities were particularly intensified during election periods and other key historical moments that touched Africa and the wider world, such as the second liberation movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s and the Arab Spring that started in 2011. Their actions have led to limited results that mostly benefited the elite. Ignoring the desires of the masses, the elite engaged in negotiations that were meant to give them personal and short-term benefits, such as ministerial positions within the government. In postcolonial Djibouti, attempts at negotiation and reform serve the purpose of temporarily calming the “opposition” (whose leadership is composed of recycled elites) rather than advancing the realization of the romance of the state.

As a result, instead of living in the state that they came to *desire*, Djiboutians continue to live in their *real* state, where repression is abundant, citizens exist in a hierarchical system where some are regarded as being “more citizens” than others, and the elite benefit from the rents that they obtain from external actors who want to ensure the smooth operation of capital in this strategic location. Still, even in the face of repeated failures, Djiboutians remain hopeful that the romance of the state will be realized in the near future.

The multifactor analysis that this book engages in shows how the Djiboutian state and society came to be shaped. Looking through the historical lens, we can see that, like many African states, Djibouti has been shaped and influenced by its colonial legacy. We also see that Djibouti is a rentier state. The presence of foreign military bases has become the foundation of a patron-client relationship, allowing the elite to entrench themselves even further as a result of the income and the legitimacy that they gain from the involvement of foreign powers. Given Djibouti's geopolitical situation and the dynamics that this location has generated, it is clear that the country sits at the very core of the world capitalist system because of its role in overseeing the smooth flow of capital through the Red Sea.

The State of Djibouti

The multiple perspectives on Djibouti presented in this book are necessary to counter the stereotype that this country has suffered in scholarly and popular characterization. Djibouti is often regarded as a French spot in the Horn of Africa, which places too much emphasis on its colonial heritage. At other times, looking at the behavior of the elite, it simply seems to be a place dominated by patron-client relationships. It is one of the best examples of neopatrimonialism in the world, and more recently it has become a place where global powers compete for economic hegemony. All of these views are true, but any individual characterization of Djibouti is misleading. Besides masking the full character of the Djiboutian state, it also hides and de-emphasizes the aspirations and dreams of the Djiboutian citizens themselves—a subject that is given great emphasis in this book. There is a commonly held stereotype that Djiboutians are citizens of a small state who do not really care about the institutionalization of democracy, freedom, and equality. This stereotype ends up excluding the country from political discussions about the Horn of Africa, because it portrays Djiboutians as an apolitical group of citizens who live in a country dominated by patron-client relationships and

rentier income and who have no political dreams that they seek to achieve. This book takes us out of this unfortunate characterization by documenting the various modern political struggles that the people have undertaken at different periods, including the colonial independence struggle to the second independence, the civil war that emerged in the 1990s, and the more recent dynamics of the country.

The lesson we can draw from their experience also illuminates not only how Djibouti should be studied but also how the studies of other Horn of Africa countries should be approached. As in the case of Djibouti, there is a tendency of analyzing the politics of the Horn of Africa by looking at a single factor or by giving much more weight to internal dynamics.²⁴ In adopting this multi-factor analysis, I attempt to answer the call that scholars studying political transition in Africa have made. As Eghosa Osaghae²⁵ and Chris Allen²⁶ have pointed out, political transitions are often analyzed as events that occurred at a particular point in time. They have also been understood through the lens of a single factor, such as ethnicity, which thus came to be regarded as a defining characteristic of the African state. This has led to a false historicism and a single-factor bias. By engaging in multi-factor analysis, this book aims to avoid this particular pitfall of the study of political transition in Africa.

In identifying external, internal, and historical factors as important for understanding the politics of Djibouti, this book does not adopt a threshold thinking—in which sociohistorical factors are considered mutually exclusive from each other. Instead, it regards the three factors as existing in a continuum and as having a simultaneous effect despite their diverse temporal and spatial origins. Often in the analysis of African politics, the external is assumed to be fully exterior to the internal. An analysis that adopts this kind of discontinuous perspective gets off to a faulty start, as it does not account for the ways in which the external and internal overlap. It tacitly engages in a “vertical conceptualization of the state,” wherein the state is conceived as being on top of society.²⁷ As James Ferguson has pointed out, this vertical perspective on the entanglement of state and society has been a mechanism for legitimizing state authority that masks the way in which the state is embedded in a transnational apparatus of governmentality.²⁸ The net effect of a vertical perspective has been to look at African state dynamics as homegrown national problems.²⁹ As will be made clear in the coming pages, the political situation of the postcolonial state cannot be explained away by adopting a tailoring strategy that cuts off the external factors from the internal and the historical ones. The following sec-

tion briefly demonstrates this by outlining the contents of the remaining chapters of this book.

Plan of the Book

In this book I argue in favor of a nonreductionist view that seeks to understand the dynamics in postcolonial Djibouti by adopting a multi-spatial and multitemporal perspective. This viewpoint rejects the reduction of African postcolonial conditions and their tragedies to purely domestic factors and argues for an analysis that takes global dynamics into account. Demonstrating the conjunction of internal, external, and historical factors, the book proceeds as follows.

Chapter 2 provides a historical contextualization. After briefly detailing the precolonial history of Djibouti to dispel the commonly held assumption that Djiboutian history started with the arrival of the colonizing power, France, an explanation is given of how the modern Djiboutian subject was born through the various game-changing strategies implemented by the colonial power. This exposé is followed by a section that narrates how Djiboutians who had come to believe in the romance of the state went on to struggle for an independent state of Djibouti in which freedom, prosperity, and equality would finally be realized.

Chapter 3 shows how this dream of freedom and equality was thwarted in the postcolonial period. Focusing on the first twenty-two years of independence under Hassan Gouled Aptidon, Djibouti's first president, the chapter demonstrates how the colonial architecture of power continued to influence the postcolonial politics of Djibouti. I argue that the unwillingness of the elite to dismantle this architecture, which was marked by the entanglement of ethnicity and politics, became a factor in the failure of the romance of the state. The chapter also shows how the romance of the state is affected by the institutionalization of a single-party system and the sidelining of political officials.

Chapter 4 examines the end of Aptidon's rule. His decision to step down because of illness provided another moment of hope for Djiboutians who aspired for an equal, just, and prosperous state. This hope was expressed by Guelleh, the president's nephew, who had long been considered his designated successor. The election and its aftermath are documented in detail. I analyze the consequences of the continued rule of one party—the Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès (RPP), which Aptidon established in 1981—and explain why Djiboutians have repeatedly oscillated between the romance of the state and its tragedy. In addressing this paradox, the chapter highlights the importance of

France's continued role in maintaining Djibouti's postcolonial tragedy. Because of its crucial geopolitical position, Djibouti ended up providing the United States with its first military base in sub-Saharan Africa, Camp Lemonier, in the early twenty-first century. Djibouti's involvement in the War on Terror further entrenched the ruling elite.

Chapter 5 looks at the second term of Guelleh's presidency. After his reelection, Guelleh tried to appease members of the opposition party, Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie (FRUD), by giving them ministerial positions. This amounted to an attempt to solve Djibouti's latest political problems by fine-tuning the ethnic quota system whose roots can be traced to the colonial period. The strategy was not entirely successful, as not all members of FRUD agreed to be lured into the government; some opted to continue their armed struggle. A breakthrough for Guelleh came in 2002 when a conclusive agreement was made with those members of FRUD who had opted to continue with the civil war. With this major agreement, Djiboutians finally felt that hope was on the horizon. But these expectations were dashed by the postagreement election. The ruling elite actually strengthened their hold on power because the decentralized voting system gave them a far greater share of the vote than previously. The government also used a border conflict with Eritrea as an excuse to silence its opponents.

Chapter 6 documents the events that followed Guelleh's decision to run for a third term. I describe at length the conflict between Guelleh and Abdourahman Boreh, the businessman and close ally of Guelleh who was head of the Djibouti Port Authority. Guelleh's bid for the third term coincided with the Arab Spring. The removal of other long-serving Arab leaders, such as Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, reignited the desire of Djiboutians to establish a just state. Hoping to achieve this, they took to the streets. In this chapter, I describe the efforts of the people and the government measures. I also explain why, despite the opposition to a third mandate, the elite at the top managed to maintain power, and I examine the internal and external factors that permitted it. One new dynamic was Djibouti's involvement in peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The chapter shows how this seemingly benevolent activity actually contributed to furthering the regime. Furthermore, as a key strategic area in the Red Sea region, Djibouti became one of the hubs for coordinating anti-piracy activity. This new style of involvement perpetuated the cycle of romance–tragedy–opportunity that has become the defining feature of postcolonial Djibouti.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to the political situation of Djibouti after the Arab Spring, corresponding to the third mandate of Guelleh. Although

the violent crackdown that followed the Arab Spring–inspired demonstrations initially frustrated the hopes of many, the beginning of the third mandate led to a considerable rise in hope. One of the key factors in this was the government's willingness to change the playing field by reforming the electoral law from the majority-takes-all principle to proportional representation. In this chapter, I describe how Djiboutians organized themselves to challenge the government in electoral spaces not only by following a secularist option, which had previously been the main trend, but also, for the first time, by following an Islamist strand. Furthermore, I discuss how the regime's legitimacy increased as a result of the Yemeni civil war. Despite the strain on Djibouti's economy and stability brought by an influx of thousands of Yemeni refugees, the ruling elite benefited from the situation, as Djibouti became virtually the only space in the Red Sea region where the global powers could take action to rescue migrants, refugees, and other people who were trapped in the Yemeni civil war. Another development on the international level has been the increasing Chinese involvement in both economic and military affairs, and I describe at length the Chinese presence in postcolonial Djibouti.

Chapter 8 concludes the book with a brief summary of Djibouti's evolving role in the Horn of Africa—which is growing more militarized—asking whether Djiboutians will ever experience the romance of the state.

Notes

1. Wilder, *Freedom Time*, 1–21.
2. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*.
3. Nandy, *The Romance of State*.
4. See Carothers, "End of the Transition Paradigm"; Levitsky and Way, "Election Without Democracy."
5. For a discussion of how freedom from colonial rule led to freedom for continued oppression, see Wilder, *Freedom Time*.
6. Jones, Kumana, and Tunga, *Djibouti History, Culture and Tourism*; Stehr, *Interesting History of Djibouti*; Hamilton, *History of Djibouti, Political Governance*.
7. Thompson and Adloff, *Djibouti and the Horn of Africa*.
8. Tholomier, *Djibouti: Pawn of the Horn of Africa*.
9. See Kadamy, "Djibouti: Between War and Peace"; Schraeder, *Djibouti and "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti"*; Alwan and Mibrathu, *Historical Dictionary of Djibouti*; Styan, *Djibouti: Changing Influence* and "Djibouti: Small State Strategy at a Crossroads"; Brass, "Djibouti's Unusual Resource Curse"; Bollée, "Djibouti: From French Outpost to US Base"; Marks, "Djibouti: France's Strategic Toehold in Africa"; Shehim and Searing, "Djibouti and the Quest of Afar Nationalism"; Sun and Zoubir, "Eagle's Nest in the Horn of Africa"; Mason, "Djibouti and Beyond"; Dini, "Migration Management, Capacity Building"; Frank, "Ripeness and the 2008 Djibouti–Eritrea Border Dispute"; Bezabeh, *Subjects of Empires*; Le Gourellec,

“Djibouti’s Foreign Policy in International Institutions”; Dvoracek and Zahorik, “Small but Strategic.”

10. For major works on the precolonial and colonial history of Djibouti, see Dubois, *Djibouti 1888–1967*; Imbert-Vier, *Tracer des frontières à Djibouti*; Coubba, *Les Afar and Mahmoud Harbi*; Prijac, *Lagarde l’Ethiopien and Le blocus de Djibouti*; Ali, *Histoire et archives de Djibouti*; Aubry, *Djibouti l’ignoré*. On ethnicity and ethnic conflict in Djibouti, see Imbert-Vier, *Tracer des frontières à Djibouti* and “Afar, Issa . . . and Djiboutians”; Coubba, *Djibouti: Une nation en otage and Le mal djiboutien*. On contemporary social dynamics, including territoriality, migration, and issues of administration, see Chiré, *Djibouti contemporain*. On the geopolitics of Djibouti, see Gascon, “Djibouti: Singapour sur Mer Rouge.”

11. See Brass, “Djibouti’s Unusual Resource Curse.” CIA, *The World Factbook*, Location Map of Djibouti, 2021a, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>.

12. CIA, *The World Factbook*, Map of Djibouti, 2021b, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>.

13. United States Energy Information Administration, *World Oil Transit Chokepoints*, 25 July 2017, https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/special_topics/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/wotc.pdf.

14. Following independence, Saudi Arabia was the second country after France to give substantial aid to the new country. For more on the role of Saudi Arabia in Djibouti affairs, see Legum and Lee, *Horn of Africa in Continuing Crisis*.

15. See Sun and Zoubir, “Eagle’s Nest in the Horn of Africa.”

16. The Somalis are divided into four clans (Dir, Hawiye, Issaq, and Daarod). The Issa are a subclan of the Dir family and are further divided into lineages, one of which is the Mamassan lineage. For a full description and analysis of the clan system among the Somalis, see Lewis, *Blood and Bone*.

17. See, for example, Coubba, *Djibouti: Une nation en otage and Le mal djiboutien*; Kadamy, “Djibouti: Between War and Peace”; Shehim and Searing “Djibouti and the Quest of Afar Nationalism.”

18. Scott, *Refashioning Futures*.

19. For the various forms of torture deployed, including those described in this book, see James, *The Black Jacobins*. For the cultural link between torture and colonialism, see Taussig, *Culture of Terror*.

20. Scott, *Refashioning Futures*.

21. On the interaction between political modernity and Enlightenment, see Friedland and Boden, *NowHere*; Mitchell, “The Stage of Modernity.”

22. Mouffe, *Return of the Political*.

23. On the link between Enlightenment, European political modernity, and the creation among the colonized of the desire to exist within a just state, see Sarr, *Afropia*; Scott, *Refashioning Futures*; Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*.

24. See, for example, the work of Alex de Waal, *Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, in which the entire politics of the Horn of Africa is explained through the flow of cash, or what he termed “the political market place.”

25. Osaghae, “Study of Political Transition in Africa.”

26. Allen, “Understanding African Politics.”

27. Ferguson, *Global Shadows*.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Ferguson, *Anti-Politics Machine*; Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*.