



Eurocentrism and Democracy

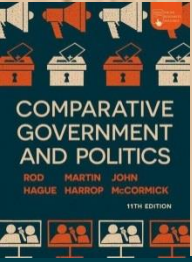


What is eurocentrism?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbqA6o8_WC0

See also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePTwDkeydhY>

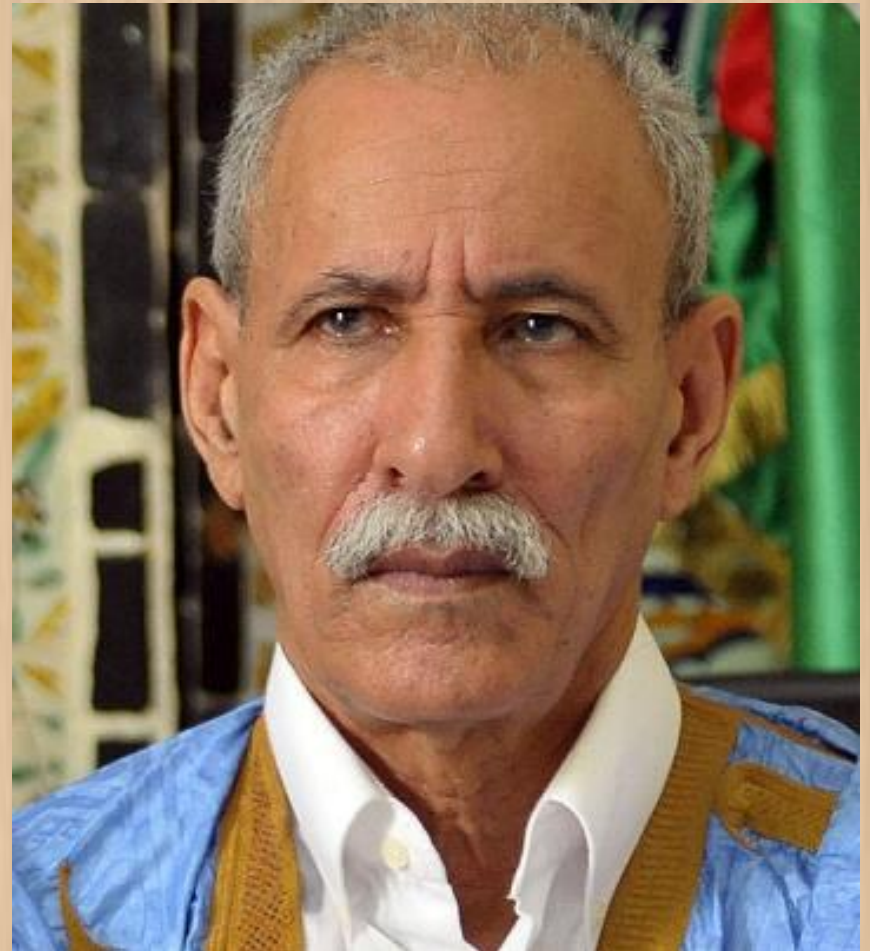


Eurocentrism, democracy and Africa

- Was Athenian democracy inspired by Egyptian models of governance? As well as Egypt, the ancient kingdoms of Mossi, Songhay, Mali, and Kongo also had representative political systems
- Democracy was intrinsic to many African societies ahead of European colonisation
- Is the way we define democracy Eurocentric? "African cultural democracy": <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/western-style-democracy-in-africa-is-just-a-way-of-pushing-the-neoliberal-agenda/>
- Africa's democratic successes are overlooked because they contradict the eurocentric narrative that Africa can't 'do' democracy without the West
- There's a eurocentric tendency to overlook genius African political thinkers

The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)

- The Congress of the Polisario Front – responsible for electing the National Secretariat and the President. Congress members are elected by the populace.
- The Saharawi National Council (the Parliament). Members are elected by the Populace. Responsible for passing laws and censoring government.
- The National Secretariat (the Ministers)
- Secretary General of the Polisario and President of the Republic (Brahim Ghali)



Democracy in exile?

- **What's "democratic" about the SADR?**

- elements of "direct" democracy
- strong focus on representing traditionally underrepresented members of the community
- free and fair elections
- equal media coverage of all candidates

- **What's "undemocratic" about the SADR?**

- Only one 'party'
- High concentration of power in one leader
- Some evidence of past repression of opposition e.g. Saharawi "perestroika" in 1988

What's life like in the camps?

Watch this documentary set in a barber shop in the camps:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctFz35vjURI>



Before the seminar, please read the following, and see the questions on BlackBoard

- Van Binsberg 1995
- Isakhan 2016
- Wilson 2010

You'll find the Isakhan reading on BlackBoard and the others on the reading list.

I know this is quite a lot of reading, but it will potentially help you a lot with your essays – think of it as work now that you won't have to do later!