

**Group and Associations in the Governance Process of
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ABSTRACT It has increasingly become evident that the system of government inherited from the colonial powers in Africa have proved to be a failure, because of the reasons of uninhibited particularism and the inherent contradictions found within western systems of democracy in Africa. The advent of global political and economic reforms initiated by most countries in Africa since the attainment of independence has necessitated a pursuit for countries in Africa to renovate themselves democratically. The compelling political challenge being to mobilize the collective will of group and associations and civil societies to work in concert with formal institutions of government so as to bring about democratic governance and sustainable development. This paper adopts the Weberian theorem of rational-legal domination as its tool of analysis to argue for the fact that leaders (politicians and bureaucrats) occupy a position of trust which compels them to respect the social contract. Importantly, it has to be made clear that even though civil societies are informal bodies, their operations becomes formal once it is able to establish recognition as the vehicle for mobilization by members. Therefore, both the formal and informal organs of administration are presented as importing rationality in the attainment of set objectives through the means of effective co-ordination and control and an emphasis on the depersonalization of an office. The conclusion here is that neither the formal nor the informal bodies are being recommended to substitute one another in the governance process. Rather, there should be a convergence between formal governmental bodies and renovated civil society, group and associations in what could be termed the fit between societal and state norms and expectations.

'Africa faces grave challenges and the most urgent of these are eradication of poverty and the fostering of socio-economic development, in particular, through democracy and good governance'

New partnership for Africa's Development, Declaration on democracy, political, economic and corporate governance. Durban South Africa, July 2002.