NAME: JIMOH AISHA OMOBUKOLA

DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

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QUESTION: IN ABOUT 2-PAGE REVIEW CHAPTER 15 “an overview of the idea of pressure group” in SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS, PAGES 194-200

A pressure group is a formal or organized body with a common interest whose fundamental is to put pressure on any governmental institution with the goal of influencing government policies and law to its own advantage. It is referred to as “The Functional Representative”. This is the idea that various pressure groups represent different sectors of the society based on their functions. This is usually done through their occupations or professions. For example, the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), represents the Lawyers and Solicitors, also the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which champions the interests of academic and conditions of learning in Nigeria’s universities.

According to Anifowose (1999) pressure group is described as “interest groups, lobby groups or even protest groups”. What pressure groups seek to achieve is to ensure that government does their biddings. And with some pressure through the right channels and means, pressure groups are able to make government listen to them. In addition, these groups influence both public policy, administration, and even a long way to determine political structures of the society and forms of government. Examples of pressure groups in Nigeria are: Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Arewa People’s Congress (representing the Hausa tribe).

Pressure Groups and political parties activities may sometimes appear similar, but they are different from each other. Firstly, political parties seek to gain government powers while pressure groups do not seek to gain power, rather they influence political decisions. Secondly, pressure groups narrow their goals while political parties have a wide range of policies. Also, political parties are accountable for their actions while pressure group are not actually accountable for their actions. But pressure group and political are not that different as they have something in common as relate to achieve certain social changes.

While pressure groups are acknowledged as potentially beneficial to a democratic society, problems can arise when the democratic process becomes dominated by a specific groups. In this situation, the voice of a small group with narrow interest can become overly influential. Sometimes, due to their own selfish interest, pressure is mounted to alter the direction of government decisions, while not considering government’s limited resources.

There are various types of pressure groups which are: interest groups, cause groups, insider groups and outsider groups, anomic groups, associational groups and non-associated groups. Interest groups also seen as sectional groups, representing the people in the society. For instance, trade units like the CBI (confederation of British Industry) known as the voice of business in the country. Cause groups are promotional group which seek to promote particular causes, for example charities and environmental groups like the Amnesty Intentional. Insider groups are regularly consulted by the government e .g The Nigeria Bar Association, outsider groups have no access to the government e. g the animal liberation Front. Anomic groups have unpredictable actions and behavior as they work based on the moment and situation in the society, they are sometimes violent. Associational groups are usually registered with appropriate authorities in a state or country while non-associational groups are pressure group without a formal organization.

Functions of the pressure groups include it serves as a link between the government of the day and the people it governs. It promotes public participation in the activities of government of the day. Pressure groups serve as sources of information to the government. Their activities ensures that government do not perpetuate themselves in power thereby drifting into a dictatorship. They also promote the interest of the minority by acting as the watchdogs on the government.

In conclusion, pressure groups may adopt a variety of strategies to achieve their goals, including lobbying elected officials, media advocacy, and direct political action (organized protest). They lobby with governmental officials directly though friends, spouses, children and other relatives. Also, pressure groups may sponsor bills in legislative houses and contact legislators to ensure the passage of the bills