NAME: AMADI CHIBURUOMA YVONNE

MATRIC NO: 19/MHS01/088

COURSE CODE: GST 203

DEPARTMENT: MBBS

CHAPTER 7, ‘POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA,’

Political parties are important characteristics of politics. It serves as a link between the government and the people. It helps the government to maintain its hold on power. Political parties were first developed in the nineteenth century as a solution to the large numbers of voters that turned out for election. The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America where the first ever political party was formed. The Democratic Party is the oldest political party in the world which was created in the 1820’s.

The word ‘Political Party’ has a lot of definitions. Some of them which are as follows; According to R.G Gettel, “A political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and who by the use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out its general policies.” Also, According to Agbaje, “A political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention, for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices. In conclusion, A political party is a group of citizens, more or less organized, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy withy an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

Political parties have characteristics. Firstly, A political party is to grab governmental power through constitutional means which should be gone about in a peaceful manner as lawlessness isn’t allowed. Secondly, Political parties have party manifestos which is used to guide their conduct during and after winning election.

There are different types of political party such as the Elitist party, Mass party, Ideological party, Broker party and Charismatic party. Starting with the Elitist Party, this is basically a party that extends membership to the elite people of the country. It is for those at the highest point of social hierarchy in a country such as intellectuals like doctors, lawyers or the business tycoons and traditional rulers. Next is the Mass Party, this political party has wide membership as the political party extends its membership to all sections of the society. Some of the names of the parties under this type are labor party, workers party and so on. Some functions of political parties are political education, political stability, organization of government, political representation and so on.

Now, onto political parties in Nigeria. It started in Nigeria due to the development of national consciousness and nationalists’ movements. Some nationalist’s agitators formed groups and associations to organize against colonial misrule which formed the National Congress of British West Africa (1920), the West African Student Union (1925) and so on. The reason or fulcrum for the emergence of political parties in Nigeria was due to constitutional development.

Some of the early political parties from 1920-1950 are the Nigerian National Development Party   
(NNDP) which was said was the first political party in Nigeria. It was formed in 1923 due to the elective principle of the Clifford constitution of 1922. The party was formed mainly by the leaders and they won the three seats given to Lagos in the legislative council in the 1923, 1928 and 1933 elections. Secondly, we have the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which was formed in 1934by Ernest Ikoli and other young Nigerians. They won elections to the Nigerian Legislative Council in 1938. Lastly, we have The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which was formed in 1944 and was later changed to National Convention of Nigerian Citizen when some parts pf Cameroon separated from Nigeria in 1960. Its president and secretary were Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe. The party fought hard against the Richards constitution of 1946.

Next are the Political parties in Nigeria between 1950-1966. There were two major parties between 1950-1951, they were the Action Group and Northern People’s Congress. The AG started as apolitical wing of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in 1950. Its leader was Obafemi Awolowo. Their main aim was to provide leadership to and capture political power in the western region. The NPC was formed in 1949 by Dr. Dikko, Aminu Kano and son on, after it was emerged from Jam’iyya Mutaein Arewa. Their main purpose was to combat ignorance, idleness and injustice in the northern region and control of government in the North. Some smaller parties arose due to disagreement between major parties such as the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) which was formed in 1950 by Late Aminu Kano and so on.

Furthermore, are the political parties in the second republic of Nigeria. After the ban on politics was lifted in 1978, about 53 political associations wanted to contest in the 1979 general elections, five of which were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. They were the National party of Nigeria, Nigerian People’s Part, The Great Nigeria People’s Party, The People’s Redemption Party and the Unity Party of Nigeria. Although another party was registered to contest, Nigerian Advance Party for the 1983 elections. The NPN started in September, 1978 in Lagos. It comprised of former NPC leaders, tribal unions, committees of friends and son. They won the presidential election in 1979 in 7 states and ruled the country for 4 years and 3 months. The UPC was regarded as an offshoot of the Action Group. Their aims were in its four-cardinal point program, which were free education at all levels, free health services for all citizens, full and gainful employment of all able-bodied and integrated rural development. They won gubernatorial election in 5 states in 1979.

Next, we have the political parties in the Third republic of Nigeria. Here, Nigeria had a constitutional two-part system in which two parties were registered in accordance with constitution of Nigeria. The two parties were the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. The SDP had its registered offices in the FCT, Abuja. The party won the annulled presidential elections of 12 June 1993. The NRC had its offices in the FCT, every state capital and local government headquarters. They favored more private initiatives and paid less attention to free education and welfare policies.

Lastly, are the political parties in the fourth republic. Here, 3 parties were registered towards the election in 1998 by the INEC. The names were Alliance for Democracy and All Nigeria People’s Party and People’s Democratic Party. AD gained political power in six states by winning the governorship elections. The APP won 9 gubernatorial elections in the north west and middle belt zones during the 1999 elections. The PDP won the presidential election of 1999 and maintained its stronghold on presidency for sixteen years.

In conclusion, Nowadays, Nigeria’s political face challenges such as corruption and others. We as citizens need to tackle these problems to make the parties to be more focused on enforcing cohesion among Nigerians and engendering the development of Nigeria.