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**MATRICULATION NUMBER:** 19/LAW01/208

**COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT:** Law

**COURSE CODE:** GST 203

**COURSE TITLE:** Government and Political Institute of Nigeria

**QUESTION:** Do a two page review of chapter 7, “Political Parties in Nigeria” in Salient Issues in Government and Nigeria’s Politics.

**CHAPTER 7.**

There are many definitions of political party. According to R.G. Gettel, political party is a group of citizens who act as a unit and use political power to control the government and carry out its policies. Agbaje defines political party as a group of persons who have the same opinion and support the same cause. Dowse and Hughes see political party as a formally organized association of people who have the sole purpose of acquiring governmental control. There are various characteristics of political parties. They include:

1. Political parties capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties have party ideology. These party ideologies help to classify parties.
3. Political parties must be national-minded; they must take into consideration the interest of the people/nation.
4. Political parties should also be organized as it can only get strength from a well organized structure.
5. Political parties must have party manifestoes that guide their conduct during and after elections.
6. Political parties are guided by party constitution which directs the way party officials and members should act.

There are six types of political parties, namely; elitist/cadre party, mass party, ideological party, broker party and charismatic or personality party. Also, functions of political parties include: political mobilization and recruitment, political education, political representation, interest aggregation, political stability, conflict management and political integration, organization of government, provision of alternative government and policies, electoral competition and governance and goal formation.

Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo were in the forefront of political parties and party formation in the 1920s. The first political party in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) and this party was led by Herbert Macaulay who is regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The party was based in Lagos. After this party came the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C. Vaughan. There’s also United National Independent Party (UNIP) led by Eyo. There are four problems that confronted political parties prior to independence. They are:

1. The political parties didn’t have a national outlook.
2. The political parties focused more on personalities rather than issues.
3. The political parties were polarized because of intra-party and inter-party conflicts.
4. Defection of political parties led to the fall of political parties.

In September 1978, the ban on politics was lifted which was followed by the launching of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in Lagos. The party’s main goal was national unity with the slogan “one nation, one destiny.” There’s also the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)and its main support base is the Yoruba land. The main goals of the party were free education, free health services, and full and gainful employment. The Nigerian Peoples’ Party (NPP) was gotten from the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC). Its main support base is the Igbo. The major goal of this party was to work towards full employment for all Nigerians. And then, there’s the Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP) which was led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. Its base is Kanuri and its slogan was “politicians without bitterness.” These parties constitute the parties in the second republic. Parties in the third republic include: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Three political parties were registered in the fourth republic in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The names of the registered parties are the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) which changed to All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP) in 2002 and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Some other parties in the fourth republic include: Action Democratic Party (ADP), All Progressives Congress (APC), Congress of Patriots (COP), Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), Green Party of Nigeria (GPN), Labour Party (LP), United Progressive Party (UPP), Reform and Advancement Party (RAP), etc.

In a nutshell, this chapter just talks about what political parties are, the first political parties in Nigeria and the political parties that were in the first republic in Nigeria up to the fourth republic.