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**A TWO-PAGE REVIEW ON CHAPTER 7: POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA.**

Political parties are important agencies in politics of mass participation as they serve as a link between the government and the people. It is an invention that was first developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. As at 1820, there were organized political parties with the Democratic Party being the oldest in the world.

There are various definitions of political parties by different political thinkers. We shall be considering a few in this review. According to R.G Gettel, political party is a group of citizens more or less organized, who act as a political unit and use political power to control the government and carry out its general policies. Agbaje defines political party as a group of persons bounded in policy and opinion in support of a political cause, which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its office. Herman Finer, on his part, defined political party as ‘an organized body with voluntary membership, its concerted energy being employed in the pursuit of Political Power’. From the above opinions we infer that a political party is a group of citizens organized, having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

We shall be looking at some characteristics of political parties in this paragraph. A major feature of political parties is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. Another feature is the party has manifestoes which guide their conduct during and after winning elections. Every political party must have aims and functions taking into consideration the nation. Finally, political parties are guided by party constitution which direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

There are different types of Political Parties and they include the following: Elitist/Cadre Party: This party draws its membership from the highest authority of social hierarchy in a country such as doctors, business tycoons, lawyers etc. Mass Party: This party draws its membership from all sections of the society and have wide membership. Examples of such party is peoples party, labor party etc. Ideological Party: This party forms its bases

on political ideology or benefit. Charismatic Party: This party is formed by individuals with charisma. It revolves around the personal qualities of the leader.

Some functions of political parties are as follows; political stability, organization of government, electoral competition and governance, political education, conflict management and political integration.

#### POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA FROM 1920 TILL DATE.

Political parties in Nigeria developed due to nationalist consciousness and sentiments. The Nigerian National Development Party(NNDP) is regarded as the first political party in Nigeria. The party was led by Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon(NCNC) was formed in 1944. It was the first political party to be organized to seek total independence for Nigeria and it was the major party until 1950. Between 1950 and 1951, Action Group(AG) and Northern People's Congress(NPC) emerged from cultural associations. The leader of AG was Obafemi Awolowo and its main aim was to capture leadership in the western region. The leader of NPC was Jam'iyya Mutanein Arewa and its main aim was combating ignorance, injustice in the Northern region and also for power in the region.

In the second republic, five parties were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission and they include National Party of Nigeria(NPN), Nigerian People's Party(NPP), The Great Nigeria People Party(GNPP), People's Redemption Party(PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria(UPN).

In the third republic, Nigeria had a constitutional two party system which were Social Democratic Party(SDP) and National Republican Convention(NRC). SDP predicated populism, progressiveness, underdevelopment and crises while NRC favored more private initiatives and more state regulations. It paid less attention to free education and other social welfare policies.

Alliance for Democracy(AD), All People's Party(APP) later changed to All Nigeria People's Party(ANPP) and People's Democratic Party(PDP) were registered by INEC in preparation for the fourth republic. AD gained political power in 6 states of the south-west between 1999 and 2003. APP won 9 gubernatorial elections in the north-west and middle belt zones during the 1999 elections. PDP has a main aim of preserving the integrity, unity and sovereignty of Nigeria. This party won the presidential elections in 1999 and maintained it for 16 years. Other political parties have been registered by INEC e.g All Progressive Congress(APC), Youth Party(YP).