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**QUESTION**

Do a two page review of chapter 7, “Political parties in Nigeria,” in salient issues in government and Nigeria’s politics

Political parties in Nigeria

Political parties nowadays exist as an indispensible part of democracy, governance and politics. Political parties began as an invention of the 19th century in response to the large number of voters participating in elections. Political parties were created by politicians to get themselves or likeminded friends to get into political power. The first modern electoral democracy existed in America as well as the first political parties. In Britain the year 1867 was the year there was a first widespread of votes. The political parties in Nigeria developed simultaneously with the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movement in the 1920’s.

According to Shively (2008), “a political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain power or maintain power”. Although it is difficult to define political parties in terms of a single aspect as it performs countless functions R.G. Gettel defines “a political party as a group of citizens more or less organized who act as a political unit and who by use of political power aim at controlling the government and carrying out government policies”. The above definitions lead us to the point that a political party joins people together in a formally organized structure and it is a group of citizens more or less organized having some agreement in broad principles of national policy with an effort to capture political power by some constitutional means.

*Characteristics of Political Parties*

1. A political party must capture governmental power by constitutional means; this is its major feature. The means of such capture must be peaceful and lawful.
2. Political parties must possess a *party ideology* which is a broad principle of its adopted public policy. The party policy helps in the classification of parties.
3. Every political must exist as national minded as its aims and functions must take into consideration the interest of the nation as a whole.
4. A political party should exist as an organized body as it can only derive strength from a good organizational structure.
5. A political party must possess a manifesto which controls their conduct during and after winning an election
6. Political parties possess their own party constitution that regulates the conduct of members and officials of the party both within and outside the government.

*Types of political parties*

1. Elitist/cadre party
2. Mass party
3. Ideological party
4. Broker party
5. Charismatic or personality party

*Functions of Political Party*

1. Political mobilization and recruitment
2. Political education
3. Political representation
4. Interest aggregation
5. Political stability
6. Conflict management and political integration
7. Organization of government
8. Provision of alternative government and policies
9. Electoral competition and governance
10. Goal formation

*Political parties in Nigeria*

Political parties formed following a rise of nationalist consciousness and groups were formed to oppose colonial misrule, such as: the National Congress of British West Africa Territories in 1920, the West African Student Union in 1925 and Lagos Youth Movement in 1934. The Clifford constitution allowed for the formation of political parties as it provided four elective seats in its legislative council.

*The political parties that existed in Nigeria from 1950-1966* consisted of political parties that were formed without a national outlook and were focused on a particular region as it consisted of members from only those regions and strove to focus power and development on that region alone and not the whole country. Two major political parties were formed in that period: the Action Group [AG] a typically Yoruba group from the political wing of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and the Northern People’s Congress [NPC] a typically northern group from the Jam’iyya Mutanein Arewa. Other splinter parties formed from the now three major ethnic political parties due to the multiparty system in Nigeria such as Northern Element Progressive Union [NEPU], The United Middle Belt Congress [UMBC] and the United National Independent Party [UNIP]. These pre-independence parties faced many problems such as the lack of national outlook as emphasis was placed on the sectors more, an emphasis on personality rather than issues, inter and intra party conflicts and lastly frequent defections as no lasting loyalty to the party remained.

*Political parties of the second republic[1979-1983] in Nigeria* began after the previous ban on politics was lifted in September 1948 and 35 political parties rose to contest the 1979 general elections but only five were registered by INEC those were the NPP, NPN, GNPP, PRP and UPN.

*The political parties of the third* republic were only two as General Ibrahim Babangida who facilitated the transition to civil rule and for the first time Nigeria had only two constitutional parties they were the Social Democratic Party [SDP] and the National Republican Convention [NRC].

*The fourth republic [1999- date]* as at now has a lot of political parties but only three were introduced in preparation, these were the Alliance for Democracy [AD], All Peoples Party [APP] which changed in 2002 to All Nigeria Peoples Party [ANPP] and lastly the Peoples Democratic Party[PDP]. The PDP won the national election that year and maintained its stronghold for 16 years.