

**STUDENT'S NAME: IWORI, DAVID ODEMADIGHI. MATRICULATION NUMBER: 19/LAW01/127.**  
**COLLEGE: LAW. LEVEL: TWO HUNDRED. COURSE TITLE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.**  
**COURSE CODE: GST 203. LECTURERS' NAMES: DR TEMIDAYO D. OLADIPO, AND DR IDOWU O.**  
**OLALEYE. DATE GIVEN: FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2021. DATE SUBMITTED: SATURDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY,**  
**2021. ASSIGNMENT: DO A TWO-PAGE REVIEW OF CHAPTER SEVEN (POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA) IN**  
**SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA'S POLITICS BY TEMIDAYO D. OLADIPO, AND IDOWU**  
**O. OLALEYE.**

### **A: DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES:**

1: *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (New Ninth Edition)* defines a political party as an organization that you can vote for in elections, and whose members have the same aims and ideas.

2: *Wikipedia* defines a political party as an organized group of people who have the same ideology, or who otherwise have the same political positions, and who field candidates for elections, in an attempt to get them elected, and thereby, implement their agenda. Political parties are a defining element of representative democracy. While there is some international commonality in the way political parties are recognized and in how they operate, there are often many differences, some of which are significant. Most political parties have an ideological core, but some do not, and many represent ideologies very different from their ideology at the time the party was founded. Many countries, such as Germany and India, have several significant political parties, and some nations have one-party systems, such as China and Cuba. The United States of America (USA) has two predominant political parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.

### **B: INTRODUCTION:**

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In liberal democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion; even in autocratic systems of government, they help the governments maintain its hold on power. In either case, political parties are an important link between government and the people (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2002). In the political process of a given political system, the party is an essential political agency. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics. It is an invention that first developed in the nineteenth century in response to the appearance of elections involving large numbers of voters. Politicians developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and like-minded friends get elected, but the party proved to have many other uses as well as, and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics (Shively, 2008).

The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America, and it was there the first parties developed. By the 1820s, there were well organised parties, and the Democratic Party, which can trace its roots to that time, is the oldest political party in the world. In Britain, 1867 was the first year in which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes. Similarly, all over Europe, whenever a reasonably large and varied electorate was established with the coming of democracy, the political parties appeared. Political parties in Nigeria developed, following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalist movements in the 1920s.

### **C: CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL PARTIES:**

**1: LEGITIMATE CAPTURING OF POWER:** The major feature of political parties is to capture governmental power through constitutional means. But capturing power by some violent or unlawful means cannot be allowed in the arena of political parties. This means that, capturing of power must be through peaceful and lawful means. Unfortunately, elections conducted in Nigeria by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent National Electoral Commissions (SIECs) have seen political parties go above board to win elections by extrajudicial means.

**2: IDEOLOGY:** Political parties always have broad principles adopted by its organization, which is referred to as party ideology. The party ideology also serves as the basis for classifying parties as either leftist or rightist or liberal or communist or conservative or socialist or capitalist. Again, it is unfortunate that in Nigeria, most political parties do not have clear-cut ideologies; this is one of the reasons defections happen every now and then.

**3: ORGANISATION:** A political party should be an organized body, because it can only derive strength from an effective organizational structure. Such organisation is necessary to establish rapport with the masses.

**4: MANIFESTOS:** These are written statements in which groups of people, especially political parties, explain their beliefs and say what they will do if they win elections. It is unfortunate however, that in Nigeria, there are usually widely publicised manifestos stating what and what will be done if elections are won; but when those elections are won, different reasons arise why those manifestos cannot be religiously followed.

### **TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES:**

**1: BRANCH/MASS POLITICAL PARTIES:** This type of political parties cut across tribes, interests and individuals. People wishing to become members are free to join. Memberships of mass parties are mainly composed of different sections of the society. The programme or manifestos of such parties are directed towards the welfare of the people.

**2: CAUCUS/ELITIST POLITICAL PARTIES:** These are made up of people of the upper class in the society. These people believe that the control of government should be their preserve. In addition, it should be in the hands of those with distinction and high intellectual standing.

**3: RELIGIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES:** Religious doctrines existing in a country determine the formation of these political parties. In some countries, religious political parties are very strong in the political process.

**4: BROKER POLITICAL PARTIES:** These are political parties of the rich and the poor. They work towards bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, and promoting equality and welfare of the people.

**5: CHARISMATIC/PERSONALITY POLITICAL PARTIES:** Individuals with unique and enviable qualities, talent, e.t.c., can form these parties because of the charisma of those individuals that formed them. An example is Action Group (AG) of Chief Obafemi Awolowo.