NAME: OGBEBOR SUSSY EHIZOGIE

DEPARTMENT: LAW

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COURSE: GOVERN MENT AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

DO A TWO PAGE REVIEW OF CHAPTER 7, “POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA” IN SALIENT ISSUES IN GOVERNMENT AND NIGERIA’S POLITICS.

Political parties are an essential feature of politics in the modern age of mass participation. In the democratic systems, they help to keep governments accountable to public opinion; even in autocratic systems of government. They help the government maintain its hold on power. According to Dickerson and Flanagan, 2002, political parties are an important link between government and the people. The political party crops up in all aspects of politics and in any given political system, the party is an essential political agency. Politicians developed the idea of political party at that time as a device to help themselves and likeminded friends get elected, but the party proved to have many other uses a well and went on to become a ubiquitous feature of modern politics. The first modern electoral democracy was the United State of America and by the 1820s, there were well organized parties. By the 867, it was the first year in Britain which there was a reasonably widespread extension of the votes. In Nigeria, political parties developed following the growth of nationalist consciousness and sentiments and nationalists movements in the 1920s. A political party is a group of officials or would be officials who are linked with a sizeable group of citizens into an organization, a chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain and maintain power. Some of the characteristics of a political party include:

1. To capture governmental power through constitutional means.
2. Political parties have a broad principles of public policy also known as party ideologies.
3. Every political party must be national minded
4. Political parties have party manifestoes which guide their conduct and after winning election
5. Political parties have party constitution which guide and direct the conduct of party officials and members within and outside government.

There are various types of political parties and they include:

1. Elitist/ Cadre Parties: This political party draws its membership from the highest echelon of social hierarchy in a country.
2. Mass Parties: This political party draws it membership from all sections of the society and it has a very wide membership.
3. Ideological Party: This political party is formed with political ideology and beliefs which forms the bases of the party.
4. Broker Party: This political party is formed with its members drawn from the upper and lower part of the society.
5. Charismatic or Personality Party: This is a political party formed or led by individuals with charisma

Political parties perform the functions listed below:

1. They educate the people politically
2. They ensure that there is stability in the country
3. They organize the government
4. They represent the people politically and make their needs become known
5. They manage conflicts and political integration

The Nigerian National Development Party (NNDP) is regarded as the first political party that was formed in Nigeria in 1923. It was led by Herbert Macaulay who is regarded as the father of Nigerian nationalism. The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was formed in 1934 by a group of young Nigerians led by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya and Dr. J.C Vaughan. In 1944, National council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC). It was later renamed the National convention of Nigerian citizen in 1960 when some parts of Cameroon broke away from Nigeria.There was two major political parties that emerged between 1950 and 1951 and they included the Action Group (AG) which was inaugurated in April 1951 and the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) which was inaugurated also in October 1951. These parties emerged from cultural associations because of the prospects of the 1951 elections following the Macpherson’s constitution. The Action Group emerged from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a pan Yoruba cultural society. The Northern People’ Congress emerged from the Jami’yya Mutanein Arewa.The ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978. Following that, about 53 political associations sought to contest the 1979 general elections but only five of these associations were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission. These parties include the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria People’s party (GNPP), the People’s Redemption Party (PRP) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) which was the offshoot of the Action Group. There was also the Nigerian Advance Party that registered to contest in the 1983 elections.General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to civil rule decree through which two political parties were registered and they included the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which was headed by Chief Tony Anenih as its national chairman and The National Republican Convention (NRC) which was headed by Chief Tom Ikimi as its national Chairman. Three political parties were registered in preparation towards the elections in 1998 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Nigeria now has eighty eight political parties currently.