

PARTY POLITICS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The central role played by political parties in the development and nurturing of a virile democracy and its consolidation cannot be overstated. Where democracy survives for a long period of time, it is because political parties, among other vital institutions, are well established, and have played the role expected of them. In Nigeria, the return to democracy since 1999 has ushered in a renewed process of democratization and, thus, heralded another opportunity for the country to launch a new strategy towards democracy, after many years of lost opportunities under a prolonged period of military authoritarian rule. This essay examines the nature and character of party politics in Nigeria and its impacts on democratic governance, essentially from historical perspective. It concludes that to advance the democratic project, the Nigerian public needs to gain confidence in its institutions. The public needs to feel that there are organs of the political system that can guarantee fairness and justice and that are not undermined by wealth through corruption. Common citizens must have recourse to democratic institutions in order to express demands and resolve conflicts.

Keywords: Political Party, Politics, Governance, Democracy.