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OLITICAL BREADCRUMBING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

IBUKUNOLUWA BOSE OLOJEDE, PhD; & JOSEPH OKO ODEY

Department of Public Administration, Lagos State University

Corresponding Author: <u>proudlybosedey@yahoo.com</u>

Orcid Number:0000-0002-7667-4015

ABSTRACT

ustainable development goals requires constructive regeneration of political and attitudinal transformation. However, political bread crumbing has contributed in state failure and prevented the masses from enjoying the dividends of development unfortunately. sustainable political bread crumbing does not come without its consequences particularly for sustainable development. It is a breeding ground for corruption andmaladministration and keeps the people desensitized to pervasive underdevelopment. Thus, owing to destructive capacity of political breadcrumbing particularly for sustainable development in Nigeria, the objective of this paper is to examine the causes of political bread crumbing .Qualitative technique was adopted and the findings from this paper reveals that political bread crumbing destroys the prospects of any nation to meet up with achieving the entire goals of sustainable development and this is so

Introduction

Political bread crumbing is a form of politricking and emotional manipulation in which politicians use attracting the attention of the electorate to their political party or interest in order to earn their votes without any genuine or real interest in serving the people or committing to the responsibilities attached to the office. Thus, the politicians do this by giving the people just enough crumbs to keep them feeling intrigued and loyal to their political interests.Hence,right around elections or electioneering periods,

politicianspretentiously start talking about socio-political and economic challenges

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because the electoral process is often manipulated to the detriment of the voters who more often than not are already carried away by crumbs and so these manipulated elections often produce leaders who are not only disconnected from the yearnings and developmental goals of the nation, but are totally irresponsible to the public. It therefore concludes and recommends that, since political bread crumbing has become an obvious threat to the survival of sustainable development goals, it is important that legal frameworks should be established wherein the local governments in collaboration with traditional institutions and NGOs should be made to conduct monthly and annual seminars on political education and citizen enlightenment in ways that enhance sustainable development.

Keywords: Failed State; Political Bread Crumbing; Political Deception; Politricking; Sustainable Development.

laguing the communities and ways they intend to fix these challenges. They also give false hopes by engaging the media to talk about their agendas, plans and laudable ideologies and strategies, take pictures with the youths, social media influencers, entertainers, activists and grassroot people, form committees engaging youth leaders, women leaders or community leaders to talk about what they will do if elected (Hoffmann and Patel, 2022). In the light of this, political bread crumbing is a form of political deception and antic where they give just enough to keep potential electorates interested in their political parties without ever having the intention or willingness to deliver on the campaign promises they dangle (Zimmerman, 2022).

This reveals that political breadcrumbing is a political technique used by politicians and political leaders when they have not performed up to expectation or fulfilled their electoral promises but want a second chance from the electorates. Therefore, they achieve this by going to the communities, creeks and core grassroot areas to appeal to the emotions and sentiments of the people, give them adequate time and attention or affection and pretend to care just to keep the electorates loyal and hoodwinked to their political parties regardless of how poorly the politicians perform. Basically, it is the act of beguiling the people into supporting a political interest without the intent of fulfillingthe constitutional obligations and developmental obligations attached to such office. In other words, political bread crumbing one of the familiar manipulative tactics of

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grooming used by politicians to temporarily gratify the masses and further their political aims by sporadically offering a glimmer of hope such as providing infrastructural facilities during campaign periods, donating to charitable courses and providing scholarships, health care facilities, food and clothing materials to the rural people as well as attending grassroot religious and social events for a short period of time as a way of keeping the masses feeling indebted to them during elections and as soon as the politicians achieve their objectives of winning elections, they disappear with no intentions of continuation. Fundamentally, political bread crumbinghas been used effectively in Nigeria's electoral campaign to manipulate the psychologies and thoughts of voters in the attempt to sway the voters in supporting the politician's political interests and so the essence of political bread crumbing is to mislead the people to expect more or something they do not intend to achieve by giving gifts and making dishonest catchy political statements which will disarm the suspicion of the public into making them eagerly expectant and hanging on the fake promises offered to them (Yusuf, 2021).

Unfortunately, politicalbread crumbingdoes not come without its dire consequences particularly for sustainable development. It is a breeding ground for corruption, maladministration, impunity and keeps the people desensitized to the infrastructural decay. It also keeps people contented with mediocrity and crumbs so much that they are misled into thinking that leaders are performing well and demanding for better leadership and development is asking for too much or asking for the impossible or unreasonable. It also keeps them in a state of settling for less or the barest minimumwhere they are ill-equipped, uninformed and too weak and ignorant to challenge poor governance or demand for better developmental policies and welfare (Emejulu and Obijekwu, 2020). In the light of this, the main thrust of this paper is to examine the implications of political bread crumbing on national development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- 1. To examine the causes of political breadcrumbing
- 2. To identify the implications of political breadcrumbing on sustainable development
- 3. To proffer solutions to the menace of political breadcrumbing in order to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria



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Concept of Political Bread crumbing

Politicalbread crumbing is a form of political manipulation or politricking where political actors and their minions feign interest and affection for the welfare and development goals of the masses especially during campaign seasons. In other words, state actors pretend to be emotionally, financially and physically invested in the socio-political and economic woes of the people when they are really not. They often accomplish this by providing emotional connection with the people and also providing temporary political succor before or during electioneering seasons to distract the masses from the anger, resentment and disappointment they have against the politicians and to also reinforce active political participation of the people. Therefore, political bread crumbing raises the hopes of the people to keep them hooked till elections without any concrete sustaining agenda. This suggests that political bread crumbing is a preparatory and predatory process involving grooming the potential electorate with insincere compassion and empathy for the intent of winning their votes in order to exploit them or not even be of any service to them (Yusuf, 2021).

This suggests that political breadcrumbing is a narcissistic form of political manipulation used by politicians to monetize democracy (Olojede and Aina, 2023) and elections or debase democratic processes to bread and butter in order to convince the struggling masses who are still at the food survival stage to trust them with the responsibility of governance. Hence, political breadcrumbing often takes place when the masses or electorates are still beset by parochial and elementary issues at the expense of corporate governance and ideology based politics. Thus, riceties is the crumbs employed in swindling the masses and so riceties is the distribution of common staple foods such as rice, beans, oil, pasta, garri, yam flour, salt, sugar, condiments etc to the poor in exchange for their votes. The humanitarian distribution is done wearing the cloak of deception such that the politician is presumed to be kind, empathetic, generous and caring. This reveals that poverty and unemployment is a very good administrative eco system used in facilitating political breadcrumbing. Fundamentally, political bread crumbing is usually fixated on food (chips,doughnuts, biscuits, candy, groundnuts, cashew nuts, cornflakes, carbonated drinks etc), cash and gift distribution (campaign t-shirts ,local fabrics, face caps, bracelets, recharge cards etc) to the exclusion of actual manifestoes, ideologies and developmental issues affecting the electorate (Bamidele, 2014).



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This therefore implies that political bread crumbing is not just a scheming tactic used in defrauding the people in convincing them to mortgage their future and a chance for development for crumbs, it is an anti-democratic activity that destroys the very essence of governance and public administration. Thus, political bread crumbing is a treacherous device employed by politicians to make the voters believe and accept what the politicians throw at them regardless of how corrupt or incompetent they are. In summary, political bread crumbing is a calculative strategy used by politicians and enabled by the poverty and illiteracy of the people to provide false temporary relief and empty promises in order to exploit the electorates for their own agenda applying baiting strategies such as guilt tripping, deception, propaganda, false hope, ethnicity, intrigue, gas lighting, projection, scare mongering, scare campaign and invalidation and stonewalling when called to accountability (Nnagbugwu, Onyekwelu and Onyekwelu, 2019).

Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development means the capacity of a national economy whose initial economic condition has been more or less stagnant for a long time to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product at rates perhaps 5%-7% or more in ways that are sustainable to meet future demands. This implies that sustainable development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization using methods that create consistency without jeopardizing the needs of the future. Based on the preceding analysis, sustainable development is the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilizations in accordance with their own choices while establishing opportunities and prospects for future challenges. It therefore makes sense to conceive sustainable development as amulti-dimensional process, subsuming fundamental changes structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth and the eradication of poverty adopting methods that will not truncate the future (Nwosu, 2013). Similarly, sustainable development means the attainment of self-governance for a consistently long period of time. It also signifies the provision of essential infrastructure that create a healthy atmosphere, proper provision of education, food security, communication and environment for its citizenry for as long as possible. From the foregoing,



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sustainable development is the ability of thatnation to build socio-political institutions permanently and comity of nations (Akanji and Akosile,2001). This suggests that sustainable development is a widely participatory process of directed social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for majority of the people generationally. Hence, sustainable development consists of the synergy of advancement of goals such as promoting literacy, improving nutrition and health, limiting family size or increasing productivity (Opaluwa and Akanni, 2014). In the same vein, sustainable development connotes a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, institutions, political attitudes as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty while giving thought and plans to future generations

Thus, sustainable development is conterminous with capacity expansion and freedom. As capacity expansion, it requires adequate empowerment of the state and society such that they can adequately distil their complimentary responsibilities well as institutional and governmental stability in order to satisfy present and futuristic entitlements (Omotola, 2006). This indicates that sustainable development a process of moving the social system increasingly upwards such that the citizenry can actualize their innate abilities and be able to cope effectively with the challenges of life. What this suggests is that it is a concept that provides remedies for the shortcomings and maladies of future generations. Therefore, sustainable development refers to a state of maturity which characterizes a nation state. This maturity results from the interplay of modern political, economic and social forces and processes which transforms the lives of its people in ways that create accelerated progress for transgenerational wealth (Olatunii, 2020).

Fundamentally, sustainable development is the capability of a nation to achieve comprehensive improvement or refinement in all ramifications of its existence (economic, political , cultural, religious and technological) aimed at satisfying humanity's needs at present and in the future via natural usage and replenishment of natural resources while preserving for future generations. This reveals that sustainable development is a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potentials over a sustained period of time while



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maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental systems (Ogundare, 2020).

Finally, there are seventeen sustainable development goals according to Aransi (2017) which is addressed below:

The Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate poverty in all its ramifications globally
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

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Causes of Political Bread crumbing

According to Egonmwan(2020;Nwosu,2013,Olojede and Odedina,2023) there are several reasons for political bread crumbingand some of them shall be indicated below:

- 1. Unemployment and Underemployment: There is a rising unemployment profile in third world countries. This is significant in the rating of underdevelopment and so one of the consequences of unemployment and underemployment is that it makes the masses politically and economically vulnerable to the schemes and manipulations of politicians. In addition to that, it puts them in a position where they are so hungry and disempowered to think of the long term consequences of being politically bread crumbed particularly as it affects sustainable development
- 2. Self-Seeking Nature of Men: The human nature of man instinctively makes man think about their own benefits in any situation as well as the best method at any level that makes them succeed in having their way even if it involves deception, pretense, cunning devices and scheming. Thus, politicians always seek to achieve the most favorable option that gives them the prospects of winning elections even when they have little or nothing to offer the people. Hence, during elections, they wear a garb of patriotism that is not sincere just to win the people's trust for their selfish ambition. Hence, in Nigeria, the politicians having mastered the art of manipulation, decoy, politricking, treacheryand pretense have come to terms that the only way they can have an edge over their political opponents during elections is by first winning the people's trust and in winning the people's trust, they can get majority of votes and the method to achieve this is by breadcrumbing the electorates. This is done by telling them what they want to hear, give them false hopes and play with their emotions. By doing all of this, they will generate the passionate support of the people to their side
- 3. Obsession for Political Positions: Obsession for political offices, titles and ranks refers to when a public official is dominated and engrossed with legitimate and illegitimate actions that lead to a higher political rank rather than ensuring the public interests when taking an initiative. Public officials and politicians who engage in political bread crumbingor selling an illusion to the people resort to different manipulative strategies to achieve their aim. Hence, their main goal is usually to earn higher salaries

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or networks without being interested in serving the masses and so the real job to serve the public becomes sidelined when they achieve their goal because service to the people was not their major priority in the first place.

- 4. Personal Factors: The existence of poverty and corruption in a country rich with human and natural resources like Nigeria indicates that poverty is man- made and intentional. Thus poverty and ignorance often creates the demand for political breadcrumbing during electioneering by the masses themselves which is often beneficial to the politicians as it will help the politicians evade responsibility and accountability. Infact, it creates a lead way for corruption and gives the people no moral or legal justification to demand for good leadership and developmental policies because they have traded their votes for stipends and crumbs from political minions
- 5. The citizen's lack of Discretion: The citizen's lack of discernment is another factor that enables political breadcrumbing by the political class and this is one of the factors that has not just hindered national development it has also inhibited democratic consolidation and an effective public administration in Nigeria. Thus, the citizen's pervasive ignorance, lack of prudence, willful amnesia, ethnic bigotry and quest for immediate gratification has made them easily beguiled and bread crumbed by some political charlatans every electioneering period and so because of the citizens lack of sound judgment, they fall easily into the antics of crooked politicians who breadcrumbs by giving pseudo empathy in the form of luring the people with money, food items and infrastructural facilities in order to garner their votes during elections and ensure that they are unable to demand for accountability
- 6. Psychological imbalance and Illiteracy:Another reason why political breadcrumbing has been successful in Nigeria is because majority of the citizens are illiterate, poor,emotionally unstable,paranoid, politically apathetic andfatalistic.Thus this has contributed in no small measure to politicians using the political breadcrumbing,deception and hovering strategy to win elections
- 7. Extreme attachment to culture and Traditions: Third world countries are identified by the existence of traditional institutions with great emotional attachment to the traditional rules, norms and values. Unfortunately, many



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of the Nigerian culture perpetuates ethnic chauvinism and predominantly promotes image of ascriptive and diffused orientation as well as political breadcrumbing. Thus, traditional societies are typically closed societies and areusually antagonistic to anything that tampers with cultural patterns. Hence, third world countries like Nigeria are characterized by social divisions which intends to fractionalize the society thereby making political bread crumbing and manipulationeasier for political actors.

Theoretical Framework Political Deception Theory

This study is hinged on the political deception theory propounded by Nicollo Machiavelli in 1532 and sopolitical deception or bread crumbing comes from the Machiavellismschool of thought which argued that political deception has been a manipulative tool in politics and administration for a very long time. Machiavelli advocated its use in his republic when he advanced for a noble lie to be told to the citizens of the state. This falsehood was meant to be pushed to the masses to make the masses overlook the failures of government and buy into the politicians political interests by providing enough crumbs to make them forget government's ineptitude and create division of the state into three sections made up of the rulers, the soldiers and the craftsmen. Thus, this political deception is projected to deceive the people into accepting less than they deserve and ensure that they are not discerning enough to notice poor governance or demand for accountability and development. Hence the major aim of political deception is to groom the masses into accepting whatever developmental projects allotted to them by the state. Basically, politicians often adopt this strategy to ensure that the people aredocile enough for the state men and politicians to capture the state without the masses realizing it on time. Another interesting perspective of this school of thought is that political deceptionor bread crumbing according to the Machiavellian principle is the push for the use of craftiness or cunningness by political leaders in order to secure and protect the parochial interest and prestigeof political and administrative elites. Essentially, he epitomized the doctrine of political breadcrumbing and emphasized it as a necessary political tactic of winning the loyalty and support of the people and by extension, elections. Most importantly, he noted that for any political or administrative leader to succeed and have a seamless administration without the people revolting, the politician or administrator must be a great pretender and

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know how to sell an illusion to the people. This therefore makes him an effective breadcrumber by satisfying immediate gratification and providing immediate necessities to disarm or quell their anger over poor governance or social injustice. Therefore, from the Nicollo Machiavelli perspective, he emphasized that the ability to be manipulative and use whatever calculative means necessary to gain political power is what is referred to as political bread crumbingand that is essentially what makes a political actor successful. Thus, the principle of political bread crumbingas suggested by Machiavellism encourages political leaders to use or engage in techniques such as decoy or strategic pretense to serve their own needs and give them the prospects of winning elections (Towler, 2020). Hence, Machiavelli further justified this theoryby stating that political deception is a necessary political method for electoral success and bread crumbing works particularly on people who are simple minded and corrupt because politicians will always find people who are willing to be fooled or allow themselves to be deceived because they are preoccupied in satisfying their immediate needs without giving thought to sustainable development (Emejulu and Obiekwu, N.D).

In the light of this, this theory is relevant to this study because it exposed why there are numerous white elephant projects across the state, ineffective developmental and poverty alleviation programmes, uncompleted/abandoned infrastructural facilities as well as lip service to corruption, poverty, national insecurity, terrorism and banditry. This is obviously so because the political and administrative elites have psychologically and financially captured and groomed the minds of the people into making them believe that the next elected leader is always the messiah or savior to emancipate them from unemployment and squalor only to disappoint/discard them and then engage them in bread crumbing and hovering during another campaign season by giving them little dopamine and adrenaline in the form of gifts, attention and pseudo nationalism to make them suffer amnesia while repeating the cycle again during every election period.

Methodology

Documentary method was adopted for this study. Hence, data was sourced from national and international academic publications. These consisted of relevant text book, inaugural lectures, conference proceedings and academic journals. The



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data gathered from the aforementioned method was analyzed using qualitative descriptive technique.

Political Bread crumbing and its Implications for Sustainable Development

One of the greatest consequences of political bread crumbingon sustainable development is the threat it poses to democracy, electoral administration and every prospect of a nation in achieving sustainable development. This is so because good governance is undermined by twisting and subversion of the minds of the electorate from the formal duties and public roles toprivate and pecuniary interests. Thus, the lack of social and health determinants like portable water, clean sewage and sanitation system , healthy environment, access to qualitative health care, intensive emergency care and food security are the obvious results of squandering, incompetence and ineptitude of government officials which has been facilitated by years of political bread crumbing. For instance, the Niger-Delta area like other states in Nigeria has been engulfed inconstantsocio-political uprising, upheaval and protests which has led to increase inpoverty insurgency, militancy, terrorism and banditry and this is as a result of elected officials who feel they are not obligated to be accountable to the people and this is so because the people have been successfully bread crumbed and hoodwinked. Thus, the near absence of socio-economic facilities such as good roads, electricity and functional health care centershas led to further avoidable loss of lives, investments and properties. In addition to that, political breadcrumbing destroys the prospects of any nation to meet up with achieveing the entire goals of sustainable development and this is so because the electoral process is often manipulated to the detriment of the voters (who more often than not are already carried away by crumbs) and so these manipulated elections often produce leaders who are not only disconnected from the yearnings and developmental goals of the nation, but are totally irresponsible to the public. Hence, when the elected officials do not account to the electorate, good governance becomes relegated to the backburner while mediocrity and impunity have a field day. Thus, the most dangerous result of political bread crumbing is the truncation of an effective public administration that translates to sustainable development (Ikpeze, 2015).

Secondly,political breadcrumbing creates an anarchical sociopolitical environment rife for political impunity,political violence,insurgency and large scale corruption. Unfortunately, this discourages genuine foreign investors from





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doing business with the country in any way. It could also adversely affect bilateral relations with other countries.Its long term effect is Nigeria's continued dependence on other nations and foreign donors to augment its lean economy's purse. Again because of the lack of accountability political bread crumbing breeds, it always comes with its attendant consequences antithetical to sustainable development some of which includes kickbacks, racketeering, bunkering, swindling, brigandage, extortion, multiple thumb printing on ballot papers, the announcement of votes in areas where votes were not castedand winners of elections ending up as the losers as well as general interference with electoral freedom or obstruction of free and fair elections. This results into the electorate being assaulted or killed during elections or arson takes place at will and losers end up clinching victories even in polling centerswhere votes were not cast. Consequently, the long term effect is that the society suffers for it as this leads to poor delivery or no delivery in the achievement of sustainable development goals at all levels. Hence, the funds having been siphoned into private pockets, leaves the average citizens in particular and the nation in pervasive poverty and underdevelopment. This is especially because some corrupt politicians may need to recoup the monies spent in electioneering and political breadcrumbing. Finally, Political bread crumbing opens doors for mediocrity in governance and failed leadership. A collapse in internal security such as is presently the case in Nigeria where militancy, banditry, broad daylight robbery,terrorism,aggravated assault,wanton destruction of lives properties, kidnap and assassination are rife. For instance because of the pervasive insecurity, underfunding and terrorism particularly in the northern part of Nigeria, many highly placed public servants fly out of the country at the slightest feeling of pain to get the best medical attention but the poorly funded and ill equipped domestic health sector awaits the generality of the citizens who cannot afford foreign medical care. A key example is that of former President Muhammadu Buhari who flew out of the country in June, 2016 just to have foreign physicians see to his ear infection (Ibiam, 2016)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Political breadcrumbing are abusive political patterns detrimental to the achievement of sustainable development goals and used by some unscrupulous politicians with the enablement of some corrupt bureaucrats to keep the masses ignorant and oblivious of their rights and contributions as citizens to what

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governance should entail in regards to sustainable development goals. Therefore, since political breadcrumbing has become an obvious threat to the survival of sustainable development goals, it is important that legal frameworks should be established wherein the local governments in collaboration with traditional institutions and NGOs should be made to conduct monthly and annual seminars on political education and citizen enlightenment in ways that enhance sustainable development. Secondly, policies should be made in naming, shaming and blacklisting politicians and their mercenaries who engage in political breadcrumbing, vote buying and giving of gifts during electioneering. Again, it is cardinal that every political parties must have substantial and workable ideologies before they are allowed to market their candidates to prevent state capture, impunity and political breadcrumbing and lastly for political breadcrumbing to end, good leadership at every helms of affair, either at the federal state or local government is a necessity. Therefore, the people must take the first responsibility of voting for leaders who have a precedence or good track record of leadership excellence by doing their due diligence of investigation instead of engaging in emotional voting or voting for tribal or religious reasons.

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