

THE POLITICS OF BLAME-GAME AMONG POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA: A CASE OF PUBLIC FLATULENCE IN SELF DEFENSE

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10517706

Abstract: Modern politics in Nigeria has been characterized by blame-games with ingenious offensive and defensive dramatic performances by various individuals or political party faithful and actors. It's quite unthinkable how successive governments try to count and recount the failures of administrations past instead of addressing the challenges headlong. However, nothing can excuse the shameful scenes where political office holders pass blame always with the presupposition of self-exemption which amounts to "public flatulence in self-defense." Lately, it has become a political style, allowing core duties that affects the well-being of the people to evaporate into thin air after the blame-game without anybody being held accountable. The growing character of individuals, institutions, or ministries to self-extrication by the strategy of "shifting blame from the concrete particular to the intangible general could best be described as disgraceful". Political leaders now prefer to dump the "refuse" of their failure at the doorsteps of the opposition parties. Indeed, this game of passing blame or washing one's hands like Pontius Pilate before the public is quite frustrating to Nigerians who daily suffer the effects of bad and unresponsive governance. It's on the above premise, this work examined the politics of blame-game and how much that has impacted on democratic consolidation, the role of the opposition parties and in delivering the dividends of democracy. Data collected for this work was basically secondary and analyzed using content analysis. The findings showed that there is an established culture of blame game strategically employed to divert the attention of the public from core issues of citizens' welfare. This paper recommends legislations against such practices.

Keywords: Politics, Political Parties, Public Flatulence

1.1 Introduction

Politics in Nigeria especially within the past few years have been characterized with blame upon blame on the previous administration for failing to perform her statutory roles. This trend became very worrisome as it became obvious that it was clearly a strategy adopted to divert the attention of citizens from holding the current administration responsible for anything. One can't help but wonder if the purpose of governance is not to address issues and bring

solutions to societal problems. Politicians running for office in modern liberal nations — heads of opposition parties and members of shadow cabinets — are also often criticizing the existing administration and its particular party officials (Weaver, 1986). Agreeably, "any time a government resorts to blaming the opposition for their failure to deliver on their mandate and responsibilities to the people, it is a clear sign that they have accepted that they have outlived their usefulness," former opposition leader and now

Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago since 2015, Keith Rowley, said in 2013.

When President Muhammadu Buhari took office in 2015, his ministers and many All Progressive Congress (henceforth abbreviated as APC) loyalists took turns accusing the Jonathan administration and his PDP criminal cohorts for all of the country's current ills, including the economic crisis he acquired, with Buhari himself leading the campaign or crusade (Nnanna, 2016). They resorted to blaming the People's Democratic Party (henceforth abbreviated as PDP) for their headaches, bellyaches, and heartaches, rather than implementing sensible and realistic policies to promote their "change and later next level agenda". Inept leaders have always been known for playing the blame game. They lack the vision and ambition to elevate their thought to great heights, as well as an understanding of what is required to be done to alter society. Buhari and his Party have recreated the blame game and elevated it to a governance philosophy (Onye, 2017). Because the same mix-multitude politicians are on both sides of the divide who work for any government in power under an inclusive arrangement, when the PDP was in power for 16 years, it faced the avalanche and myriad of criticisms of failures, ineptitude, cluelessness, and so on, which APC is now facing. Blame is an unavoidable aspect of our global and political behavior. Those who fail to complete their responsibilities are always found escape-goating others. Their failings had to be the result of someone else's acts, not their own (Onye, 2017). This practice of pointing fingers at others dates back to Adam and Eve's initial transgression (Anthony, 2020). Unpleasantly, it has become the hallmark of the APC led administration that blames the previous administration for all the woes in Nigeria. Here is a government that promised to "address power and energy problem in six months, bring insecurity to the barest minimum and defeat of Boko Haram and the

rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant insurgents, ban on government officials from going abroad for medical treatment, create three million jobs per year, fight corruption, create additional middle-class of at least 2 million new homeowners in our first year in government and 1 million annually thereafter and...making naira stable at the international market" but failed flagrantly. It has become obvious the promises were mere strategies to wrestle power from the PDP. They were empty and disspcakably lofty. Getting power for primitive accumulation was at the bottom of the above "bogus" electioneering promises. No wonder the politics of blame game became centripetal in this administration. The monumental corruption and consequent suffering experience under the APC led government can best be described as gargantuan ranging from "monkey swallowing countless millions, python swallowing countless millions to fire consuming millions in Accountant General's office and other monetary agencies".

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Internal degradation caused by ineffective and visionless leadership has been a factor in the collapse of numerous societies throughout history. Many Nigerian political leaders suffer from a nonchalant and cretinous leadership syndrome that has evolved into a profession of scapegoating their predecessors for the rot of society rather than seeing their own laziness, incompetence, and lack of vision as significant contributory factors in that collapse. This is the result of Nigerian leadership's enemy, the "blame game" syndrome (Onye, 2017). Political parties in Nigeria, particularly the two major political parties, the APC and the PDP, have done nothing to improve matters or bring Nigeria ahead by mere blame game. Blaming past and present leaders hasn't helped our country overcome its current problems (Chris, 2020).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major aim of the study is to look at how political parties' blame games have negatively impacted on democratic governance. The study's specific objectives are;

- To examine the politics of blame game among political parties and how that has negatively impacted democratic consolidation.
- To investigate the role of the opposition parties in a democratic system and how that can help in delivering the dividends of democracy.

1.4 Research Questions

- To what extent has Nigeria's democracy been harmed by the politics of blame game?
- To what degree has opposition politics contributed to the consolidation of democracy?
- To what extent can opposition parties help in delivering the dividends of democracy?

1.5 Justification for the Research Problem

The main purpose of this study is to look into the relationship between political parties' blame games and Nigeria's failing democracy. This is necessary in order to comprehend the "finger pointing" that has lowered the country's democratic qualities. The study's goal is to show that the current situation of blaming opposition parties will result in the country's total degradation and slow growth, rather than progress, because blame on its own is futile without a conscious effort to establish policies that will lead the country in a progressive direction. Shamefully, this is done with little or no thought on constructive criticism.

The study will provide some light in understanding the politics of blame games, its impact on Nigerian democracy, and how opposition parties' use of this technique has worsened rather than improved the democratic state. This will attract attention to the hazards that blame games pose to citizens, who are typically the ones who bear the brunt of their effects.

As a result, policymakers, governments and intergovernmental organizations, among others, will benefit from this knowledge in establishing strategies to combat blame games, strengthen the country's democratic status, and address national democratic problems. Furthermore, the research is expected to add to the academic body of knowledge on opposition party politics of blame and its link to the deteriorating democratic practices. More particularly, how the blame game in Nigerian politics has led to complacency and revealed the leadership deficit and incompetence among political leaders, as well as increased the country's insecurity.

1.6 BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

1.6.1 Conceptualizing Blame Game – Meaning of Blame Game

The blame game was explained in the journal "Political Insight" published in June 2020. Politicians are primarily motivated by wanting to avoid responsibility for failings rather than attempting to claim credit for success, according to the journal, because the public has a strong 'negativity bias.' It was also asserted that appreciation will be as temperamental as well as brief, whereas vitriol will be as strong as it will be long-lived, so politicians will use a variety of manipulations and strategies to avoid blame, including agenda-shaping, scapegoating, buck-passing, defection, and confidentiality as part of a deeper 'Teflon immorality' (Matthew, 2020). A blame culture, according to Adrienne Hardwick in "Oxford Research Briefings," is an environment in which people, or groups/teams of individuals, are regularly pointed out and blamed, criticized and blame is divvied up for mistakes and errors. People are hesitant to accept responsibility for their actions and mistakes because they are afraid of criticism and reprimands from their managers and leaders as a result of this. It also causes people to be hesitant to take risks or speak up. Countries are always playing the blame game and setting political agendas, but

civilized states avoid using violent and aggressive controversies to combat their opponents. Maintaining a positive image of the country and its people requires keeping morality in check during the political blame game. The sarcastic, pitiful, and wretched remarks made about political figures endanger national unity and solidarity (Nasir, 2018). Our elected lawmakers have been unable to carry out even the most basic responsibilities due to the time and energy spent blaming each other. The path model of blame proposes that blame judgments emerge from a conceptual framework already present in everyday social consciousness, which includes concepts like cause, agent, intentionality, and reasons, hence blame judgments are based on well-known mental processes that operate over these concepts (Malle, 2005; 2008).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework applied for this study is the Cognitive Theory of Blame. Blame, according to cognitive theories of blame, is essentially a judgment or evaluation of an agent actual behaviors, mentalities, or personality. J. J. C. Smart (1961) is credited with one of the earliest cognitive theories of blame. He commences by discerning between admiration and dispraise, and then proceeded to try to analyze blame indirectly (rather than with the more natural distinction between praise and blame). To appreciate or chastise someone, according to Smart, is simply grading them as a member of a particular specie. As Smart points out, this type of grading is comparable to the kind used to determine whether one apple is preferable than the others in the grocery store (Tognazzini, 2021). Importantly, Smart points out that criticizing a young philosopher's poor writing in a letter of recommendation does not imply that you are blaming them. As a result, Smart distinguishes blame from criticism. Unlike rebuke, blame entails more than simply evaluating someone's course of action or personality (virtuously), because blame implies that the individual is accountable for their

actions or character. Therefore, blame is a deleterious overall evaluation that presumes accountability (Smart, 1961).

In a similar vein, Gary Watson (1996) has proposed that the "aretaic perspective" is associated with an evaluative form of blame. To hold someone responsible in this way implies that they have fallen short of some standard of excellence (areté). It's also to assert that the operator is responsible and accountable in the context that the action is attributable to them—it symbolizes one's interpretative point of view, pragmatic individuality, as well as what they stick up for (Watson, 1996). Watson, like Smart, understands that such a decision can be made objectively. As a result, according to Smart and Watson's grading and evaluative theories of blame, there is nothing about blame that requires a blamer to be emotionally exercised in any way. Watson, unlike Smart, who associates blame with a grading system that implies moral responsibility, does not consider aretaic blame to be a broad definition of blame. Rather, according to Watson, aretaic blame is just one of many ways we hold others accountable and responsible (Watson, 1996).

Following this theory, it's quite simple linking the politics of blame game among political parties and successive leaders in Nigeria and how that amounts to "public flatulence in self defense- as a divertionary mechanism. The heightened level of political consciousness among the citizenry has lately made the inept political leaders to be very uncomfortable and possibly for fear of outright total rejection, resorted to blame upon blame on past administrations for the rot in the system whereas they have been "voted" to correct the anomalies. This seeming divertionary mechanism is very clearly exposing even more of the current administration's incompetence. Unfortunately, instead of successively defending their public image, their strategies have unleashed a "smelly fart in faces of the citizens" who suffer the

brunt of bad governance. It will not be too early to predict that a mass protest against bad governance will erupt all over Africa if this negative trend persists.

1.8 Methodology

The research study focused mainly on secondary sources to meet the study's aims. Given the nature of the study, the researcher concentrated on the content of published articles, political party leadership communiques, keeping in mind the task of unveiling the negative impact of the politics of blame games on democratic governance.

In analyzing the secondary data, content analysis was used. Content analysis which also refers to document analysis is an observational analysis schedule used in gathering and analyzing information from written materials such as books and journals. Content analysis essentially was utilized given its usefulness in making replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual materials. In this way, it functions as a prerequisite tool for converting, through coding, qualitative data into a more meaningful content for analyses. As a tool, it enabled us evaluate literature on the activities of political parties in Nigeria discourse and identifying prevailing themes. This offers insights over time through the analysis. It also helps to summarize and describe the data for this study in a way that makes it easier to understand the characteristics, similarities, variation, trends and relationships of our variables (Obikeze, 1986: 6). Data was sourced from books, journals, academic pieces and newspaper articles.

1.9 The Discourse: Some Reasons for Blame Game Among Political Parties in Nigeria

The 2015 general elections featured two dominant political parties – the ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) and the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC). The ruling party lost in the presidential and National Assembly elections on March 28 and in the governorship and state Houses of

Assembly elections on April 11. The party's massive electoral defeat sparked a storm of internal strife, rancor, recrimination, accusations, and counter-accusations. The Presidency, PDP governors, the PDP Presidential Campaign Organization, and some party leaders were pitted against the party's National Working Committee in a visceral bout of confidence crisis and blame-game, which Olisa Metuh described as a product of Election Defeat Trauma (EDT).

Blame games according to Markus (2020) are significant political events because they are one of the most common ways for democratic political systems to resolve policy disagreements. Nonetheless, the study of blame games accomplishes more than simply informing readers about how democracies deal with policy issues (Markus, 2020). Fearful leaders will never hide behind success' glory and accolades. However, they will always, try to hide their responsibility in inadequacies by blaming someone else. A healthy leader is one who accepts responsibility for his or her own decisions and actions, as well as learning from and growing from mistakes. The blame is readily accepted by the healthy leader who only waggles one finger in one direction and returns his gaze to himself so to correct his errors (Mintle, 2020). Economic crisis, terrorism poverty are reasons for blame game in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the blame game has turned into a vicious cycle in Nigerian society, with the government always on the receiving end. Doctors blame the government for the lack of prescription medications and facilities in both private and government-owned hospitals, traders blame the government for the increase in food prices, including crayfish and pepper, and pastors blame the government's economic policy for low church offerings. Even the political elite that makes up the government blames the government for everything that goes wrong (The Tide, 2016). The fact remains that Nigeria, like every other developed country today, has gone through difficult times at one point or

another. Their ability to accept responsibility for their misfortunes and their drive to succeed was the key to their success and as Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey once said, "To err is human. To blame someone else is politics."

1.9.1 The Politics of Blame-Game among Political Parties in Nigeria: A Case of Public Flatulence in Self Defense

Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), the APC Presidential candidate in 2015, earned 264,851 votes to defeat PDP President Goodluck Jonathan, who received 149,987 votes. In addition, the APC did win all three Senate seats and six of the nine House of Representatives seats, while the PDP only got three. The dismal result of the March 28 elections was a reversal of the state's election trend since 2003, when the PDP dominated, having won senatorial seats and nearly all nine House of Representatives seats with the exception of one in 2003 and two federal seats in 2011. And in the twenty-first century, Buhari and his APC have redefined the blame game and enhanced it to a governance principle. Rather than incorporating optimized and efficient initiatives to keep driving their change agenda, Buhari and the APC have reverted back to blaming their troubles on the previous administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan. Our economic crisis, the full-fledged process of Islamisation of the country, the spiraling of the naira, the ethnic and religious cleansing sweeping Nigeria, the unparalleled resurgence of corruption, the government's incapability to bring back the Chibok girls, the ever-scorching operations of Boko Haram, and the total breakdown of our public institutions must all be blamed on the Goodluck administration (Onye, 2017). Following the APC's election in 2015, the opposition party advised President Muhammadu Buhari to stop blaming the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, and start working. According to the PDP, the President was wrong to continue blaming the PDP 11 months after

taking office. The PDP was held responsible for the nation's economic difficulties, and the PDP National Chairman, Ali Modu Sheriff, said the APC claimed to have solutions to the country's problems, which is why Nigerians elected it over the PDP.

Surprisingly, even among same political parties, blame game exist. In February 2020, two factions of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State involved in a blame game over violent attacks on opponents. The attack came a week after the house of a party chieftain, Francis Inegbeneki, was bombed in Benin with suspected explosive devices. Joseph Osagiede, the state chapter's APC factional Publicity Secretary who is loyal to Governor Godwin Obaski, accused the National Chairman, Adams Oshiomhole, of being the mastermind behind the conflict that has engulfed the state and the party. As he addressed the media, Osagiede went on to say that the national chairman was known for causing and instigating violence even when he was the state governor. He also claimed that Oshiomhole, who allegedly hired mercenaries to carry out his heinous acts, would be the first to raise the alarm in order to gain public sympathy and favor, while he (Oshiomhole) is the mastermind behind the crime (Tony & Ighomuaye 2020). Blame game has diverted valuable attention and resources away from addressing the original problem.

1.9.2 The Impact of Blame Game on Nigeria's Democracy

Christopher Hood (2002) first highlights the variety of blame avoidance strategies that politicians can employ (particularly persuasive strategies, policy positions, and delegation of responsibility to arm's-length agencies); second, it contextualizes the use of these techniques by emphasizing public attitudes; and third, it emphasizes that blame-shifting can end up backfiring if those to whom responsibility is directed push back (thus the emphasis on blame) (Christopher 2022). Rivers State was a recent example of blame

game tactics. There was a soot crisis early in 2022, and many Nigerians took to social media to complain about how the soot had ruined the air in Port Harcourt, and how residents, including children, were developing respiratory disease and nasal obstructions as a result. Unfortunately, Rivers state residents have been complaining about soot pollution since 2017. For a time, the soot had hung over the city like a cloud of death. Rather than dealing with the issue once and for all, the government has always played the blame game whenever it has been brought up. This blatant finger-pointing is always directed at other government agencies or state actors (Omole 2022). While the National Assembly investigates the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the navy, and the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON), Buhari insists that importers be punished. Not only is the blame being passed around for fuel scarcity, but also for a product that has the potential to destroy people's cars (Omole, 2022).

1.9.3 Blame Game on Terrorism

Nigeria is in a critical security situation, with the country needing to ensure that democracy is maintained in a secure environment free of atrocities such as kidnapping and banditry. Obasanjo stated that solving the country's security breaches should not be left to one person, and that it is not something that one man can handle alone. He believes that collective efforts, rather than "passing of blame" here and there, can lead to solutions. He stated that West African countries are concerned about Nigeria's security challenges, highlighting that if Nigeria, whom they regard as a big brother, is unable to deal with her security issues, where will they turn for help if their own security issues arise? The Federal Government's assurances are no longer sufficient, and they must back up their words with visible action if citizens are to have faith in their efforts to protect lives and property. Nigerians are desperate to see that they are winning the war on terror, and define success as the

absence of kidnappings and deaths, the disruption of financial flows, and the capture and prosecution of terrorists, particularly before they strike.

1.9.4 Negative Impact of Blame Game on the Country's Economy and Democracy

The current level of decline in democratic dividends is the result of a number of forces at work over the last few decades, one of which is the blame game played by both opposition and ruling political parties including each party's perception that the other is using unfair political tactics; the resulting culture of blame, with each party blaming the other for the dysfunction; a decline in political norms, leading to childish behavior by politicians and political candidates; and a culture of payback, in which the opposition claims that their opponents are to blame for the decline. The goal of governance at any level and in any society is to provide people with high-quality services. Democratic governance follows this pattern, but goes one step further by guaranteeing that the people are not only provided with such services, but are also carried along in the process of service delivery; this is the very basis of democracy. As a result, the primary goal of democracy should be for the government to be responsible to the public and responsive to their needs and expectations (Kingsley 2015). Political parties and governments that are supposed to represent the interests of the people and formulate policies for their betterment are busy blaming each other and avoiding responsibility.

Blame game has also affected the country's economy. According to reports, contrary to an earlier IMF/World Economic Outlook report released in July 2018, which predicted that the Nigerian economy would grow by 2.1 percent in 2018, the growth rate has been reduced to 1.9 percent due to unfavorable economic developments. It's surprising that the President could claim that the economic system has been in such horrible condition for over three and a half years under his watch. He even advised Nigerians

to “still tighten their belts and prepare for tougher times ahead.” The administration's most common excuse for not performing as expected, which now appears to be a 2019 campaign slogan, is the "rot left behind by 16 years of misrule" prior to 2015 Nigeria experienced a remarkable debt relief during the 16 years of "rot," reducing budget deficit from around \$36 billion to manageable levels, among other upsides that could be developed. Though there have been significant holes in public administration in the delivery of public goods to the population, as well as widespread corruption, Nigeria's difficulties cannot be entirely blamed on the events of that time frame. Even during one of the vice-presidential debates, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo kept harping on "16 years of rot," as if that were the administration's main selling point for re-election. The country's balance of payments situation shifted from a surplus of \$505.9 million in the prior quarter to a shortfall of about \$4.5 billion in the third quarter of 2018. As shown in a report by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), this is the case. Similarly, the account balance as at 2019, which was \$4.45 billion in surplus in the second quarter, was \$3.105 billion in deficit in the third quarter. In comparison to receipts from exports, these figures clearly show an increase in payments for imports over time. According to the CBN report, crude oil and gas earnings account for 94 percent of total export earnings, while non-oil export receipts have decreased by nearly 50 percent (The Guardian Newspaper, 2019).

The truth is that former President Goodluck Jonathan delivered over to Muhammadu Buhari a Nigerian State with the largest economy in Africa (Onye 2017); a Nigerian economy with a GDP that flourished from \$270.5 billion in 2009 to \$574 billion in 2015 to become Africa's largest economy and the world's 24th largest economy. Whereas Jonathan inherited a country where the train system was broken, he handed over to Buhari a Nigeria where citizens journeyed by

train; Jonathan inherited a country where cement was a net importer and handed over a country where cement is a net exporter. Jonathan handed over a Nigeria to Buhari in which the US dollar was worth N198 to the dollar (Onye, 2017).

1.9.5 The Way Out: The Role of Opposition Parties in a Democracy

Without a doubt, a multi-party or at least two-party system is required for a democracy to succeed. In a country with a one-party system and a lack of vigilant and effective opposition, the party in power has every chance of becoming totalitarian and intimidating. Most of the time, a one-party system can easily devolve into dictatorship. When there is a one-party system, the opposition is usually stymied and stampeded, and the single-party tyrant is established (Arif, 2021). The incumbent party's despotism is checked by the opposing party. When there are elements in the form of informed critics for good causes, a healthy condemnation that can hold the government accountable for its actions, the government is more attentive to its responsibilities. Julius Kiiza (2005) highlighted several roles of an opposition party in a democracy in his paper presented at the Regional Conference on Political Parties and Democratization in East Africa;

- Interest aggregation: Political parties are important organs for bringing the political community's interests together. The articulation/forecast of certain preferences, values, and ideologies into the policy and lawmaking process (e.g. in Parliament) and the government's budget is a common outcome of interest aggregation.
- Championing rational and responsible debate. This encourages "national conversation" and tries to push democratic debate to a higher level of political maturity and development.
- Sustaining contact with voters and demonstrating the importance of politics to common citizens, i.e. the victimized, stigmatized, and disenfranchised.

- By developing alternative ideas, principles, and policies for governing society, parties present a viable alternative to the incumbent government. Should the ruling party disappoint the electorate, the "government-in-waiting" takes power through free and fair elections?
- Future leaders are groomed in political parties. In their assigned portfolios, shadow cabinet ministers, for example, typically conduct serious party business.
- Parties promote democratic values within the party and in the political community at large (for example, by encouraging informed dialogue at delegates' conferences, boosting intra-party democratic elections, and ensuring that party funds are used responsibly).
- Parties collaborate with the Electoral Commission, the media, and civil society organizations to improve voter registration, civic education, and voting transparency.
- Opposition parties serve as the government's unpaid but dedicated principal researchers. In the rush to the "middle ground" that has characterized post-Cold War political party dynamics, incumbent regimes have routinely imitated opposition party manifestos and adopted their relevant research ideas, policies, and programs without recognition. Following that, incumbent parties (such as Uganda's NRM) have frequently accused the opposition of having "no political agenda other than ours (Julius, 2005).

The importance of an orderly pattern of relationship between the ruling and opposition parties, characterized by consensus and participation, is emphasized in democracy. Despite the fact that opposition parties do not retain executive positions, they keep the governing government in check. The resistance can criticize the president and suggest different policy measures in a democratic system. On the one hand, if opposition is required to recognize the

authority of the government, it is also required to exercise a check on the administration (Arif, 2021). Opposition parties should engage in constructive criticism rather than destructive criticism to properly birth the dividends of democracy.

1.10 Conclusion

From the discussion thus far, the research concluded that opposition parties should focus on providing solutions rather than playing unnecessary blame games in delivering democracy's dividends. Blaming the PDP for failure and gross inability and the lack of political will in addressing the challenges amounts to a "smelly flatulence in public in self exoneration". Even the same parties should avoid playing blame games. From 2015 till now, the blame game with reference to the APC and PDP in particular has done little or nothing to move the country forward. Rather, as a nation that should be beaming with hope and a future, we are regressing and stuck in a deep economic mess and crises. To deal with this mess, we need to draw a distinction between constructive and destructive criticisms. The following suggestions are made in order to properly address this issue:

- The country needs strategic thinking, realistic development plans and concomitant sound management of the economy.
- Political parties should refocus goals from destructive criticism to constructive criticism.
- Concrete, measurable steps must be taken, and genuine failures must be celebrated rather than bemoaned. To break the negative feedback loop of procrastination and blaming others for our own failings, a national environment conducive to learning must be fostered.
- Political leaders should be held accountable where there's gross failure in delivering electioneering promises without sentiments.
- A "Too Old To Run" law should be enacted. Anyone above Sixty-five years of age should not

contest election for the House of Representatives, Senate, Governorship or Presidential.

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