Political Parties, their History and Demise of the Leadership Philosophy of Meritocracy in Nigeria: On the Need Rebranding

[1]Moko, Finian Igbede & [2]Ugwu, Dave Ude

[1]*Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria*
[2]*Institute of Public Policy and Administration,*
University of Calabar, Nigeria

A b s t r a c t

Political parties are among some of the instruments and frameworks, out of which leaders are elected or appointed into public offices through periodic elections. Hence, the importance of political parties in any political and electoral system cannot be over-emphasized. The current paper is a historic and philosophical parody of the much-expected need to rebrand activities of political parties in Nigeria. The paper aims to investigate same and to recommend that marketers should enter the streets and come up with a new brand of political parties while blaming the current brand as constituting a major obstacle to 'good governance' and meritocracy in Nigeria. The paper is a philosophical survey, which situates its arguments within the country's socio-economic and political history while adopting the method of contextual analysis to achieve its aims. The significance of the paper lies in drawing closer attention to the much desired neglect of the role of political parties in the birth of a greater Nigerian and a greater Africa.

Keywords: *Political parties, Nigeria, History, Rebranding, Meritocracy, Image of Nigerian political parties*

Corresponding Author: Moko, Finian Igbede

Background to the Study

Political parties are important political and electoral instruments in every society. They are not the only key to 'midwifing' the birth of some of the most praise-worthy societies. Political parties largely exist to promote good governance and to enhance the leadership philosophy of 'meritocracy' among nations. They do these by forming themselves into instruments and frameworks out of which 'credible leaders' are appointed or elected into public offices through periodic elections. Whatever is done outside of this motive by political parties does not form part of the motive for which the political party system as a whole was created anywhere in society (Ekundayo, 2016). The ultimate aim for creating the party-system as a whole is to enhance the path of nations to good governance. Political parties are created to ensure good governance through the democratic leadership philosophy of 'meritocracy' or what has commonly been called a 'rule by merit'. The reality of 'meritocracy' is both a leadership theory and a philosophy of good governance. The philosophy requires that rulers are appointed, selected or elected. It requires that leadership or governance must be through periodic elections. Yet, leaders are to be elected or selected not on any other criteria except on the basis of their merits. It further requires that when eventually persons have been appointed or elected into offices as leaders by means of democratic elections, they are also expected to lead and not to rule, and that, they are to lead like people who truly merited such offices and positions of power. The positive contributions of political parties in bringing about a 'meritocratic state' cannot be over-emphasized. Overall, political parties have many functions. Ade Olubaju has noted, however, that interference on the path to 'meritorious rule' is not one of the functions of political parties.

This makes it questionable that in 21st Nigeria, political parties are still taking advantage of periodic elections to impose 'mediocrity' at the detriment of 'meritocratic governance'. It is now fashionable during votive elections for Nigerian political parties and their respective party godfathers to continually impose on the Nigerian state 'weekes' and 'lackeys', namely, people who ordinarily should have no business with leadership positions in the country, as candidates of their respective political parties. This problem is not only a contemporary problem. It has also been a historical one. This unwholesome attitude of political parties and the Nigerian party system has been taking place in the country throughout the country's colonial, independence, post-independence, military and successive democratic regimes in the country. In Nigeria, contrary to global ideals, political parties together with their national leaders and party godfathers as well as their activities including those of inter-party and intra-party politics, are therefore, no longer trusted as platforms of high integrity and as platforms which can promote 'merit' in leadership unless and until political parties in the country have been re-branded or transformed into better brands.

The reason for re-branding political parties in Nigeria could be seen from the fact that growing illegalities have now infiltrated every field and aspect of the Nigerian political party system. Growing illegalities have now infiltrated aspects of the Nigerian Party System which were originally meant to enhance good governance and to promote the rule

by 'merit'. Such an evil is one which has lasted throughout the country's pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history. Its shockers have accordingly, turned most activities of political parties in Nigeria into hindrances to 'good governance' and also made political parties into obstacle to the governing philosophy of 'meritocracy'. The position of things is not that Nigerian political parties are completely useless. There is no gainsaying that in Nigeria, political parties still perform significant electoral roles in bringing about a constituted government. Furthermore, Nigerian political parties and their so-called 'party godfathers' cannot exclusively the only obstacles to 'meritocracy'. There are other parties to this common evil. They include: the international community, religious differences in the country, ethnicity, military and colonial legacies, corruption and the fact of class differences among Nigerians. But despite numerous factors, the argument of this paper is that Nigerian political parties are for reasons adduced in this paper, some of the most profound institutions in the country, to receive the lion's share of the blame for the rapid demise and abolition of 'meritocracy' in Nigeria.

Demise of Meritocracy, its Unpleasant Crisis and the role of Nigerian Political Parties in it: A Historical and Philosophical Survey
Political parties in Nigeria have not only abdicated their political obligations to project a good image of themselves. A cursory look, even among Nigeria's other Third World countries, especially those of Africa and the rest of the world tends to reveal that political parties now prefer to surrender party structures into the hands of sitting godfathers, who use these powers belonging to an entire political party to encourage 'mediocrity' by fixing loyalists rather than 'high achievement' by imposing 'weekes' and 'lackeys' on the people rather than 'zealous' and 'competent' candidates and by continuously robbing persons of truly merited qualities of their legitimate chances and political tickets, before, during and after successive elections in the country. Political parties in Nigeria have through their negligence of role, allowed sitting 'national leader' of political parties to usurp all political powers including all the powers of their respective parties, and to use them to hinder the progress of everything which relates to good governance and the rule by 'meritocracy'. A few instances in Nigeria's political history will suffice.

Instance One: The 1962 Crisis of Meritocracy involving the Premiership race of the Western Region - Aloof role played by Political Parties
Shortly after the country's independence, during the 1962 political year, Nigeria was treated to what looks like the earliest case in the 'murder' of 'meritocracy' by political parties in the country. According to Fani Kayode, the then Premier of Western Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, among other things, took advantage of the 'weak party structure' of his political party, the Action Congress(AC) and arbitrarily replaced himself with his political godson, Chief Samuel Ladoja Akintola. He immediately picked up another appointment as a Member and as Opposition Leader representing the Western Region at the Federal House of Representatives. But something happened during that 1962 political year (Between 2). Soon after all, Chief S.L. Akintola abandoned his/the party's political godfather's 'ethnic agenda' and began to seek 'political alliance' with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's Northern People Congress (NPC) in a search for 'national integration' while also

pursuing 'political victory' both for Awolowo's Action Congress (AC) and Balewa's Northern People's Congress (NPC) ahead of the 1963 General Elections.

In the words of Oladipo Ojo, this decision, contrary to the thinking of his party godfather, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was not purely a selfish decision nor was it purely a plot to ensure political victory for the Action Congress (AG) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the fourth-coming 1963 election. It was also a decision meant to enhance political merits by encouraging the spirit of national integration in the country (The Awolowo 98). Despite also being a merit-seeking decision, the decision by Akindola did not go down well with Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Hence, instead of commendation such an attempt by Akintola to grow the country beyond 'ethnic politics', Awolowo here again, took advantage of the non-involvement of his political party the Action Congress (AG) and the 'undue powers' which this carelessly left in his hands as the party's 'national leader'. Accordingly, he violently removed Chief S. L. Akintola from office as Premier of Western Region disregarding the 'merit' in Akintola's decision to transform the country from 'ethnic politics' into 'national politics' (Diamond, 1963).

Instance Two: The 2nd and 4th Republic Crisis of Meritocracy involving the race for the Nigerian Presidency – Aloof role played by Nigerian political parties
In another drama, namely another instance, where political parties and party politics equally enacted the 'murder' of 'meritocracy', played out between 2nd and 4th Republic Politics. This did not only involve the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Race, it involved the doe of Major Gen. Musa Yar'Adua, President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar. Prior to the 2nd Republic (1979-1983) former president Olusegun Obasanjo and Major Gen. Musa Yar' Adua, both discovered Atiku Abubakar as their political godson, and it is this connection which eventually united former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and President Olusegun Obasanjo's during the 4th Republic Presidential Election in Nigeria's 1999 general elections. The cream of the story here is that the political administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo – Vice President Atiku's, throughout its Eight years period (1999-2007) failed to effectively address the central security challenges of their administration, namely, the 'Niger-Delta Militancy'. When Vice-President Atiku Abubakar opted out of the deal and openly declared that he was going to fix the Niger-Delta problem in the country when elected in the 2007 elections to continue as president of Nigeria, this did not only raise questions about the merits of Obasanjo's eight years in governance as President. President Obasanjo, while taking advantage of the 'non-involvement' of his party the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the 'undue powers' which this left in his hands as the 'number one citizen of the country', went all out to stop Vice-President Atiku from realizing his ambition of becoming president aware of his strong agenda to fix the Niger-Delta insecurity and insurgency problem which their common administration could not fix in eight years.

Benbella Major, has noted that in the process denying Vice-President Atiku his Presidential Mandate, President Obasanjo completely rendered asunder the tenets of democratic governance. President Obasanjo in order to achieve his evil intentions and in

the absence of Party Intervention, proceeded to impose in place of Vice-President Atiku the Late and sickly President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on the people of Nigeria. He did all these both to stop Vice-President Atiku Abubaka from further exposing the 'mediocrity' of his Obasanjo-Atiku's 1999-2007 Administration and to prevent 'meritocracy' of any form that may accrue if Vice-President Atiku eventually becomes the party's candidate in the election. When Nigerians complained that President Obasanjo's actions clearly contravened the principles of good governance while destroying the governing philosophy of 'meritocracy', especially, the aspect of imposing a 'sick president' on the people of Nigeria, President Obasanjo defended himself saying that he was not aware that President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was sick, even after slumbing twice during the party's Presidential Campaign that brought him to power (Ifreke, www.dailypostng.com/.. The seriousness of the problem is to be further seen from the fact of how President Obasanjo took advantage of the non-involvement of his People's Democratic Party (PDP) and aggressively manipulated 10 other fairly performing governors to step down for President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (BBC Africa, 2nd July, 2007).

Instance Three: The 2018 Crisis of Meritocracy involving the Brutal Denial of a Governorship Ticket to Governor Ambode of Lagos State - Aloof Role Played by Nigerian Political Parties

A third instance involving party politics in the 'murder' of meritocracy' in Nigeria, is the recent case of 2018, involving the brutal denial of a governorship ticket to the Lagos State Governor. The Lagos State Governor, Mr. Ambode George was denied his governorship ticket by his political party the All Progressive Congress (APC) through its national leader and party godfather, Chief Ahmed Bola Tinubu. This took place against the backdrop of the fact that Governor Ambode even counted among some of the best performing governors in the country seeking their re-election bid at the time (Ndiyihe, Akinrefon & Olasunkanmi, 2018). Governor Ambode did well in his first four year term as governor but his political party and party godfather judged him as a failure who needed to be replaced (Oladimeji, 2018). In the opinion of most Nigerians Ambode was a true model of good governance. But he fell short of favour from his party by becoming what his party described as a 'bad party man' (Jude Egbase, pulse.ng/). At least, this is what the defense of his political godfather against him became.

Other Crisis of Meritocracy Calling for Re-Branding of Nigerian political parties and political party system in Nigeria
Attah in Ukpong, has largely summed up a multitude of problems of political parties in Nigeria, yearning for rebranding. Due to the current lack of integrity among political parties in Nigeria, in the opinion of Attah in Ukpong, the true reality in the country is that Nigeria would be a better country without political parties. The lack of political integrity is clearly a major problem with political parties and party-politics yearning for rebranding, if political parties and the party system in Nigeria, must lead to good governance and political merits in the country. However, it is Goldpin Obah-Apkowaghaha, who seems to have captured the depths of this problematic. He has noted to this effect that in Nigeria, and in many instances,

it is money and class rather than integrity and credibility, which dictate for political parties, their choices of candidates to present for leadership positions in every votive election or political appointment in the polity.

The problematic of political parties and partisan politics in Nigeria, clearly transcends the problem of political integrity that of godfatherism and the non-involvement of political parties. Lapolambara and Weiner, have added to this list, three other problems for rebranding unto meritorious rule in Nigeria, the legitimacy question of political parties, deficiency in ensuring national integration, and the chronic disconnect between political parties and the welfare of Nigerian citizens. A further problem calling for rebranding of political parties is that of the chronic lack of inter-party and intra-party democracy. In the words of Akpawoghaha, most research study on the problems of political parties in Nigeria, have largely been myopic by focusing only narrowly on the demand to imbibe genuinely a reposity of democratic values that would ensure good governance. But the question is this: how can this take place without reference to the rudimentary problem of the absence of inter-party and intra-party democracy, being the foundation for most forms of illegalities and instabilities among political parties among Third World Nations.

The next set of problems of political parties calling for re-branding have been those of 'ethnic self-realization', 'religion' and 'tribalism'. In particular, the question of how political parties, which have emerged at different times in the history of Nigeria have put up positive attitudes towards nation-building and how they have strove to meet the needs of the people, have been crucial ones. First Republic Political Parties (1960-1966), were not only the earliest set of political parties to raise questions of 'religion' and 'tribalism' in the country's democratic history. They were simply interested in the age-old question of 'ethnic self-realization' and in pure quest for political power, instead of being interested in the growth of democratic institutions. Since the existence of First Republic Political Parties, things have not changed much, if at all they have. Even to this day, the question of how political parties have failed to discourage ethnicity, religious differences, tribalism and nepotism; and how they have failed to encourage leadership integrity, political accountability and national unity, have been crucial questions encouraging reforms of political parties.

Odigwu, Momudu and Gambo (2015), believe that any transformational strategy or rebranding procedure, clearly needs to consider among other things, the following problems in the country; ethnicity, religion, class structure, military and colonial heritage, corruption, tribalism and the minoritarian problems in the Nigerian politics (Odigwu, Momudu & Gambo, 2015). Besides, the question of whose duty it is to fund political parties and that of the mechanism for sharing or rotating power within the political party is extremely crucial. It has serious implications for contemporary debates on rebranding of political parties.

The Critical Politics of Re-Branding Political Parties in Nigeria - Suggestions as Measures for Rebranding

The current paper has strongly suggested the following remedies as measures for rebranding political parties and party-politics in Nigeria and other Third World countries of the 21st century:

1. Conscious effort is to be made towards converting Nigeria's Multi-Party System into a two party system: This means streamlining and modifying all past, present and future existence of a multi-party system into a 'two-party state' and to sticky by it, despite political pressures. This measure will not only reduce cost and encourage healthy competition among political parties in the country; more than these, it will narrow party-politics into the right platform required to produce the best as candidates for public offices

2. Compulsory Monthly Town Hall Meeting is to be enshrined into Nigeria's constitution as a constitutional requirement for functioning as a political party in Nigeria. The proposed Town Hall meeting between party chieftains and electorates would create the requisite synergy and discourage pranks among political parties and their respective godfathers.

3. In-depth or total review of Section 40 of Nigeria's 1999 constitution dealing with the freedom of association which guarantees 'poor performing leaders' to continue their stay in office through political defection and political carpet-crossing. The section allows political parties to condone illegalities among its representatives and its respective party godfathers aware of the assurance to continue in power through re-grouping under a new name as a political party even when discountenanced by the people.

Historicity and Development of Political Parties in Nigeria through Nigeria's Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods

During the pre-independence year of 1959 the current party system in Nigeria came into full functioning following the formal inauguration of three political parties ahead of independent's government in 1960. Martin Meredith has noted that, on the contrary, the 1959 political year, was not the origin of political party system in Nigeria. During colonial rule, several indigenous political parties intermittently sprung up including Herbert Macaulay's Nigeria's National Democratic Party (NNDP) which he founded in 1923 (196). Even at that, prior to colonial rule, pre-colonial communities which now make up modern day Nigeria had their respective political parties or platforms for appointing people into public offices. They did these in an unsuspecting anticipation of colonial and post-colonial rule which have, henceforth, modified pre-colonial efforts into the current political parties in their contemporary nature.

Historically, the pre-colonial and colonial consciousness of political party systems did no more than last their own age. Aisha Nnamani has observed that the three earliest Nigerian political parties in modern times which were founded in 1959 began a New and an Independence Era in the historical development of political parties in Nigeria. The parties were those of the following: the Nnamdi Azikiwe-led National Council of Nigeria and

Cameroon (NCNC) a political party which she described as a Pan-African political party. Formed side-by-side were also the Sir Ahmadu Bello or Saduana of Sokoto's Northern People's Congress (NPC), which was, for the most part, an ethnic Fulani Northern Party, and the third was Chief Obafemi Awolowo- led Action Congress (AC), a Yoruba ethnic political party. Apart from the Pan-African NCNC, the order two according to Nnamani Aisha, the Northern people's Congress (NPC) and the Action Congress (AC), were both of them regional parties which were like the first also driven by ethic interests (2). According to this test:

> The precise time of election came in 1959 and none of these political parties were able to win majority seats as a requirement. Both the NCNC and the NPC decided to form a coalition which produced Tafawa Balewa as Nigeria's First Prime Minister and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as First Governor General of Nigeria at Independence date of 1960 (3).

Three years later in 1963, Nigeria became a Republic, and what was latent as opposition to 'meritocracy' and good governance, immediately came to the fore as one of its manifestations, corruption, became rife. Uche Maduawuchi has explained accordingly that the census which was conducted that year in 1963, greatly inflated figures in favour of Balewa's Northern People's Congress. Hence this introduced so much of acrimony within the political cycle. This eventually led to the split between Azikiwe's NCNC and Balewa's NPC, due to factors, such as mistrust and mutual political suspicion. One of the major consequences of this split was that it gave birth to two new political parties, thereby; it raised the number of political parties at Independence era from three to a new figure of five political parties.

What happened was that Azikiwe's faction of the NCNC formed a meager with a faction of Awolowo's own faction of the Action Congress (AC) proceeding to gave birth to a new and fourth political party, the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) under the National Chairmanship of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The other faction of the NCNC and the main bulk of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) joined forces with the second faction of Awolowo's Action Congress (AC), a faction which was loyal to Chief S. L. Akintola, to produce a fifth political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). According to Martin Meredith, this fifth political party was a revived version of Herbert Macaulay's 1923 efforts at producing the Nigerian National Democratic Party (197).

During Nigeria's years of Civil War (1966-1969) political parties went underground in total surrender to military politics. But after the war, a lot of things change hands, including among other things the creation of more political parties. The effort the 'war' and 'post-war' Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, was not only limited to repair of Post-War Nigeria from its ruins. It created a favourable soil for emergence of contemporary democratic activities, an activity which included the creation of more political parties. Gowon did what he did during his 9-year (1966-1975) administration and was succeeded by another Military Head of State, Major General Murtala Mohammed, following a bloodless coup d'tare which austed out of power General Yakubu Gowon. Lieutenant

Colonel Buka Suka Dimka assassinated Murtala Muhammed in 1976 and his Deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo, took over the reins of power in 1976 and in 1979 he successfully handed over to a democratically elected civilian president Alhaji Shehu Shagari in General Election which featured six new political parties in addition to the six existing political parties during the country's First Republic. In it, Shagari's National Party of Nigeria (NPN) defeated Obafemi Awolowo's Nigerian People's Party (NPP) and the other four political parties to produce the 1979 president. According to Duke Oreva;

> A new constitution, the Nigerian 1979 constitution, was drafted, and an American-style Presidential system of government was introduced that year…. in addition, the new [1979] constitution mandated all political parties to ensure that they were duly registered in at least two-third of the states, and each state was required to produce at least one cabinet member (Free to air, *Online*).

Accordingly, the political and party-system transformation which accompanied Nigeria's Second Republic politics and its 1979 General Election was not simply a constitutional transformation and a party-system transformation of a First Republic or Independence 'ethnic interests' of political parties into Second Republic 1979 'national interests' of political parties as mandated by the 1979 Nigerian Constitution; this time, Second Republic politics witnessed the creation of a total of six new political parties with nation-wide spread. Unlike the 1959 and 1963 General Elections, during the Second Republic 1979 elections, six national parties contested to produce the president. These political parties included the follows: - Greater Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria's Advanced Party (NAP), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP), and the United Party of Nigeria (UPN). In it Shagari's National Party of Nigeria (NPN) defeated Awolowo's Nigerian People's Party (NPP) to produce Second Republic President amidst violence, widespread intimidation and mass rigging. The situation which proceeded the end of the Second Republic was for the most part, a precarious one. According to Duke Oreva on this:

> Second Republic politics eventually came to an abrupt end as a result of a successful military coup d' tare which was led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari on August 1st 1983…..this was followed by another successful one Coup d'tare by Major General Badamasi Babangida in 1984. The Babangida's administration promised to return the county to civilian rule in 1989 and in what was to become the country's Third Republic….In 1989 the constitution for the Third Republic was drafted by the then Military Head of State General Ibrahim Babangida, who with it promised to put an end to a military rule by 1990. But this did not happen in the promised years as Babangida subsequently shifted date from 1990 to the 1993 date (Free to air, *Online*).

The one good thing which the Babangida's regime did was that it lifted a ban on political parties, which was before him slammed on the country by the then Buhari's adminstration. Furthermore, the Babangada's government for the first time in the country's history and

development of political parties, introduced a 'Two-Party System into the country. The Babangida's administration created and featured two political parties, namely, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which had Chief MKO Abiola as its presidential candidate and the National Republican Convention (NRC) during the 1993 General Elections. In the circumstances, Chief M.K.O Abiola of the (SDP) defeated Chief Ahmed Tofa of the in the June 12 1993 Presidential Election to emerge as winner. But the Banangida's government annulled the election despite being one of the freest and fairest elections in the history of Nigeria a nation. According to Nnamani Aisha:

> It did not take long before General Sani Abachi's Coup d' tare ousted out of power the administration of Chief Ernest Shonekan whom Babangida's government appointed as Interim President following tensions and political upheavals which trailed the annulment of the June 12 1993 General Elections (4).

General Sani Abacha tried to make Babangida's attempt at ensuring a Third Republic become a success. General Abacha did this by creating and introducing five political parties which became known as 'Abacha's five evil fingers'. The reason was that his overall motive was tailored towards adopting him as a consensus candidate by all the political parties ahead of the Presidential Election which his administration was billed to conduct. Abacha's over all motive was to install himself as a Civilian President by using his five political parties as a tool for this purpose. The contribution of Abacha's administration to the development of political parties in Nigeria was its replacement of General Babangida's 'two-party' system with a 'five-party' system in the country However, Abacha's untimely death on August 8th 1998, gave way to his successor, General Abdulsalami's Abubakar, to commence the rise beyond Babangida and Abacha's failed attempts at establishing a Third Republic into establishing the current Fourth Republic on May 29th 1999. Abdulsalami's 8-months administration created three new political parties, namely, the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), in view of producing Fourth Republic leaders on May 29th 1999. The 1999 General Elections which featured among others things, the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), produced Genaral Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as president. According to Duke Oreva:

> Since 1999 till date (1019) the number of political parties formed ahead of any election, has been outrageous. At a point, it was as if any Dick and Harry could wake one morning and registers a dozen people as a political party (Free to air, *Online*).

It is actually annoying that the current dispensation in the 2019 Nigeria's General Elections is currently featuring Ninety-One Registered Political Parties ahead of the 2019 General Elections. Even more surprising is the fact that out of this ninety-nine political parties, only two of these political parties, are functional. The Opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the incumbent All Progressive Congress (APC) are the only truly functional parties out of the ninety-one registered political parties in the current 2019 General

Elections. The question is this: where are the rest? Does the country actually deserve such colossal waste of resources? Hence, the central question in the current paper: How can political parties in Nigeria be adequately reformed, re-branded and re-positioned for them to bring about an alternative political order in the country. In other words, to what extent can political parties as major stakeholders and other stakeholders in the country be made to withdraw from destroying structures that should exist to turn Nigeria into the kind of 'meritorious societies' which Britain, the United States of America and other G8 counterparts have become?

Meaning and Definition of the Governing Philosophy of Meritocracy
Meritocracy is the philosophy of governance or of system of holding power by people selected, appointed or voted into public offices according to their merits (Collins Online Dictionary). The earliest documented account of 'meritocracy' dates back to Ancient Greek political treatise, namely, Plato's *Republic*. In it, Plato taught that the best and the most qualified candidates are the ones who should rule (The Republic, 1955). According to Google Online Dictionary of English words, 'meritocracy' connotes rulership by educated and influential class of capable people who are not selected or voted into power because of their race, colour, tribe, political class, gender or strength of their material possession or economic achievements of any kind (www.google.com/online/dictioanry/..).

Seeking to establish good governance in a nation like Nigeria, where political parties are only willing to impose on the country; lackeys, political touts and school dropouts as party candidates in elections, raises serious questions for any attempt to establish a 'meritocratic government' in Nigeria. There is no gainsaying that several factors are responsible for the progressive disappearance of meritorious politics among most Third World Countries including Nigeria. In Nigeria, progress towards meritocracy has been extremely slow if not completely non-existent. One thing that cannot escape blame is the level of recklessness and the non-involvement political parties in the gruesome denial of tickets to 'merit-ridden' candidates by the doe of the so-called 'party godfathers'.

Implications of Meritocracy for Nigerian Politics, Political Party System in Nigeria and the Global Community
British and American societies are among some on the contemporary examples of meritorious states. The leadership of most G8 Countries is based on the principles of meritocracy. The leadership of the so-called G8 Nations of the world is dominated by people with the right skills and capacity for socio-economic and political transformation. Chris Ngwodo, has noted accordingly that 'meritocracy' and 'good governance' only permit into public offices people who are willing to innovate. It only embodies people who have the 'passion' and the 'fire' to transform the *status quo*. It relates only to parsons with the 'passion' for the welfare of the state rather than 'personal' and 'political party-agenda'. It excludes all parsons who run away from national questions when elected into public offices or appointed into positions of power.

The term 'meritocracy' itself is a historical and philosophical description of what a true and democratic leadership connotes. The term was first used in 1958 by a British politician and sociologist, Michael Young (4). By the term rulership or leadership on 'merit', Young conceptualized 'merit' in terms of tested 'competence' and abilities for 'optimal results' of an individual, which can be seen and proved within or in a related administrative system. In Nigeria, most leadership decisions have been as a result of an after-thought. It is common to see among political parties in any votive elections a scenario where candidates who have a better capability for top political offices are constantly stepped-down and forced to run as deputies, not out of any lack of capabilities but out of doubts over their loyalties to either the political party in question or their so-called party godfather. This is contrary to Young who call for proofs of competence from previous or related appointment from the same political community where the individual seeking such an office is well known.

Political parties in Nigeria, when searching for the best possible candidates for leadership position, have historically not been disposed to demanding for proofs of competence from communities where such individuals have lived and served. Instead, it has been common to see political parties appeal to such criteria as; loyalty to national leaders of political parties, respect for the sitting godfather of the said political party, ethnicity, tribalism, religion, bank account and assets of the candidate in question. Implicitly, their demands have been on the readiness of the candidate in question to promote individual and party-agenda over and above the collective interests of the state. In a scenario of this kind, 'meritocracy' or 'good governance' can only be seen as a stumbling block to be eliminated. Oftentimes, the means and methods of covering up for such a political evil have been that of a constant resort to political rhetoric. The general attitude has been that of propaganda and mudslinging in self-praises against the obvious knowledge of voters and citizens that such a political party activity is going to run contrary to 'good governance'.

Conclusion
The current paper discourages what has been presented here in as the historical demise of 'meritorious rule' in Nigeria by Nigerian political parties. However, since on their own Nigerian political parties and the party system in the country is helpless, the paper has proceeded to suggest interventionary procedures for re-branding the party system in the country into a meritorious state. These interventionary measures have been listed out in the body of the essay and argued accordingly as being a major constituent of the politics of rebranding party politics in Nigeria.

References

Ade, O. (2002). The idea of a political party in Nigeria. Aworawo, D., Akinjide, O. and Masajuwa, F. Eds., *History and Culture of Nigeria up to AD 2000*. Lagos: Citizen's Press.

Attah, V. (2018). Forming political parties in Nigeria by Ukpong, C.. *Premium Times*. November 23, 2018 pp 35.

Benbella, M. (2018). What is the relationship between Obasanjo and Yar'Adua? A Free to air article, accessed on 1st August, 2018 via www.dailypostng.com/... Online.

Diamond, L. (1963). Class, ethnicity and democracy in Nigeria. Cyracus: Cyracus University Press.

Duke, O. (2018). History of Nigeria's political parties and the culture of cross carpeting. Free to air article. Accessed via www.pulse.ng/news/....., 26th August, 2018. Online.

Egbase, J. (2018). Tinubu explains why he fell out with Lagos governor. Free to air article. Accessed July 14th 2018 via www.pulse.ng/... Online.

Ekundayo, W. J. (2016). Political parties, party system and leadership recruitment in Nigeria since independence in 1960. *Journal of Public Policy and administrative Research, 6*(6), 39-44.

Kayode, F. (2013). Between Samuel Ladoja Akintola and Obafemi Awolowo. Premium Times, December 1st, 2013. Accessed on August 8, 2018 via www.premiumtimesng.com/... Online.

Lapolambara, J. & Myron, W. (2006). *The origin and development of political parties in Nigeria*. New York: Princeton University Press.

Maduabuchi, U. (2018). *History and development of political parties in Nigeria*. Lagos: Infopedia Nigeria Ltd.

Meredith, M. (2005). *The fate of Africa. History of fifty years of independence*. New York: Public Affairs Publishers.

Momudu, J. A. & Gambo, I. (2013). The implications of intra-party conflicts on Nigeria's democratization. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, *13*(6), 36-40.

Ndiyihe, C., Dapo, A. & Olasunkanmi, A. (2018). Lagos state governorship war: Ambode attacks as Tinubu backs Samwo-Olu. *Vanguard Nigeria plc*. October 1st, 2018 pp 4-5.

Nnamani, A. (2017). History of political parties in Nigeria since 1960. *LEGIT.NIG,* 2017. accessed 17th August, 2018 via www.naij.com/media..... Online.

Ngwodo, C. (2018). Meritocracy in Nigeria. *Premium times*, September 10th 2015. Accessed on August 18th 2018 via http://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/... Online.

Obah-Akpowoghaha, G. N. (2013). Party politics and the challenges of democratic consolidation. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(16): 64-75.

Odigwu, A. (2015). Nigerian political parties and international democracy. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, *4*(2), 48-65.

Oladimeji, R. (2018). Ambode did well in office but is not a good party man. *Punch Nigeria plc*. October 2nd 2018, pp 4.

Oladipo, E. O. (2007). The Awolowo-Akintola leadership tussle. *Journal of Arts and Humanities, 5*(1), 94-109.

Olusegun, O. (2007). Imposition of Yar'Adua's Candidacy. *BBC Africa*, July 2nd, 2007.

Plato, N. (1955). *The republic*. Harmondswood: Penguin Books, 1955

Young, M. (1958). *The rise of meritocracy 1870-2033: An essay on education and inequality*. London: Thomas Hudson, 1958.