



A Religio-philosophical appraisal of moral evil in relation to banditry in Nigeria

Author

**Oyebanji
Israel
Temitope**

Affiliation:

Department
of Religious
Studies and
Philosophy
Redeemers
University
Ede
Osun State
Nigeria



Abstract

One of the most lasting and vigorous issues Nigerians have ever faced is the threat to life, which is a product of a persistent phenomenon called insecurity. The problem of insecurity has therefore taken diverse forms, especially in the north-eastern part of Nigeria banditry is very rampant. Much research work has been done on the concept of banditry in Nigeria, however, little or no attention has been paid to the banditry from a philosophical perspective. It is on this ground that the researcher intends to examine the notion of moral evil in relation to banditry in Nigeria. A combination of philosophical and phenomenological approaches was used in examining available texts, which constitute the work's primary sources of data collection for this research, wherein Books, articles, journals, and online resources that are relevant to the research were consulted. The results showed that banditry is a moral evil that should be excluded from the domain of God since it is caused by man's actions and inaction in the environment. The result also shows that the prominent cause of banditry in Nigeria is a result of failed government policies and corruption. The study concluded that the loss of lives and properties as a result of banditry is purely a product of man's action and inaction in his environment. The study recommends that the Nigerian government should rise to the occasion of taming and ending banditry in the country.

Keywords: Banditry, Moral Evil, Poverty, Corruption, deprivation



Co-Authors: Joseph Omokafe Fashola: Adekoya, Samuel Olamide; Ogunbiyi, David Oluwabukunmi. Redeemer University Ede, Osun state. Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities.

Introduction

The concept of evil generates more controversial discourses amongst philosophers of different worldviews than any other issue surrounding the question of God's existence. However, contrary to the opinion of some about the existence of evil in the world, some philosophers such as Gottfried Leibnitz, Mani Augustine, and Karl Barth were believed to have written to either accept or deny the reality and existence of evil in the world since it is created by God.¹ According to St. Augustine, evil is a privation of the good rather than a negation of what is good, he posited that evil does not have its existence, St Augustine, posited that God has been good right from creation in a primary sense and that other things in the universe are only good in the secondary sense since they are created out of nothing- (*creatio-ex-nihilo*)². In Hinduism, the doctrine of Hinduism, in the teachings of Vedanta, the term evil is considered a s"Maya" which is translated to be an illusion or false belief, this view denies the existence of good and evil as monism attributes oneness to a concept, it contradicts the dualistic idea in the ancient Zoroastrianism deities, Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainya.³ Alvin Plantinga a however posited that" The world does indeed contain a great deal of evil", to buttress his argument, he referred to the countless agony and suffering man experiences through nature (natural evil) and by maleficent acts of humans towards one another (moral evil).⁴

Banditry can be categorized as moral evil since it is often caused by a person's intentional behaviour or lack of action, other forms of moral evil include murder, war, rape, and so on. Banditry is a type of organized crime committed by outlaws that usually uses or threatens violence. An individual who commits crimes of extortion, robbery, and

¹ Gabriel Oshitelu, *The Philosophy of Religion an Introduction*. (Ibadan: Hope publications. 2010), 59.

² Frederick R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrine of the fall and Original sin*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004), 11

³ William D. Halsey and Bernard Johnston, *Collier's encyclopedia: With bibliography and index*. (New York: Macmillan Educational Co, 1991), 15

⁴ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 16.



murder on their own or in groups is referred to as a bandit. In contemporary usage, the term "banditry" can be used to describe stealing, piracy, gangsterism, marauding, and brigandage.⁵ Notable in Europe in the medieval period, banditry was a very rampant crime to the extent that in the five years before his death, in 1590, Pope Sixtus V put to death about 5,000 bandits, but there were allegedly 27,000 freer throughout Central Italy.⁶ Also, in China, In Ming to be precise, (1368–1644), the Ming authorities referred to banditry as "robbery by force", punishable by death. Yet, throughout the dynasty, people started to work as bandits for a variety of transitory causes.⁷

The havoc caused by bandits cannot be overlooked, not only in Nigeria alone but in the world at large. However, considering Nigeria which is the main focus of this research. Banditry in Nigeria has caused so much havoc ranging from rape, murder, and kidnap of their victims, most especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. Research shows that a multimillion-dollar industry of kidnapping for ransom is centered in Zamfara. Only the latter three months of 2022 saw 1,090 reported abductions.⁸ When ransoms are not paid, the highly aggressive bandits murder their prisoners. The kidnappings have a long-lasting economic impact on homes in the northwest, which are already among the poorest in the nation statistically. They also place a heavy emotional weight on families. In general, more than 35,000 people had been killed in northern Nigeria since 2009, about 1.8 million displaced people (in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe), and about 10,000 unlawful pregnancies terminated since 2013 as Boko Haram fighters had abducted, forced marriage, assaulted, and brutally raped women and girls participating in the abortion program.⁹

Nigeria has become a major security concern in recent years. This criminal activity involves armed groups who engage in acts of

⁵ David Robinson, "Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525)" *Journal of Social History*. **33** (3): (2000): 528

⁶ Guido Ruggiero, *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*. (New Jersey: Wiley- Blackwell, 2006),5

⁷David Robinson "Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525)". 528–529.

⁸ The New Humanitarian, *Banditry in Nigeria*, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/01/30/Nigeria-banditry>

Zamfara#:~:text=In%20swathes%20of%20rural%20Zamfara,%2C%20loot%2C%20and%20extort%20villages. (Accessed May, 04, 2023)

⁹ The New Humanitarian, *Banditry in Nigeria* (Accessed May, 04, 2023)

violence, such as kidnapping, robbery, and cattle rustling.¹⁰ The roots of banditry can be traced back to various factors, including economic inequality, political instability, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These factors have created a fertile ground for banditry to thrive, particularly in the northern regions of Nigeria.¹¹ In addition to these factors, the lack of employment opportunities and social welfare programs in these regions has further exacerbated the problem. Many young individuals, disillusioned and desperate, are easily recruited by these armed groups, providing them with a sense of purpose and a means to survive.

Furthermore, the porous borders and vast ungoverned spaces in the northern regions make it easier for bandits to operate and evade capture. The Nigerian government, recognizing the severity of the issue, has initiated various measures to combat banditry, including increased military presence and intelligence sharing with neighbouring countries.¹² However, the root causes of this criminal activity must also be addressed to achieve long-term solutions and ensure the safety and security of the Nigerian people. Some of the root causes of banditry in Nigeria include poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education and healthcare. These factors contribute to the desperation and vulnerability of individuals, making them more susceptible to joining criminal groups.¹³

This research aims to examine banditry in Nigeria from a religio-philosophical perspective and analyse the role of religious beliefs and values in curbing banditry in Nigeria. By understanding the religious and philosophical motivations behind banditry, this research will shed light on the complex interplay between religion, poverty, and crime, ultimately guiding the development of comprehensive strategies to combat banditry in Nigeria.

¹⁰OlabanjiOlukayode and EseUrhie, "Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies*. Volume 6, (2014): 40-45

¹¹Garba U. Musa and Singh, Deepali. "The Persistence of Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: A Critical Analysis on Banditry". *The International Journal of Human Rights*. 8. (2021):12-13.

¹²John Campbell, "Kidnapping and Ransom Payments in Nigeria", *Council on Foreign Relations Blog*, 18 February 2021, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/kidnapping-and-ransom-payments-nigeria>.

¹³ObinnaUkajeje, "Forest Governance and Rural Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest Region: Interrogating the Implication for National Security" *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*: Volume 11, number 2, (2021), 332.



Theoretical Framework- Relative Deprivation Theory

The relative deprivation theory was formulated by Samuel Stouffer (Sociologist). The theory was first published in his 1949 book "The American Soldier." When researching the opinions of American troops serving in World War II about their satisfaction with their treatment, Stouffer created his idea of relative deprivation. Based on the idea that people may feel deprived of a desired object in comparison to their history, other people or groups, or another social category, is the relative deprivation theory (RD).¹⁴ Since anger caused by frustration is an inspiring force that positions men to violence regardless of its means, the frustration-aggression mechanism appears to be the main source of the human capacity for violence. Relative deprivation is the term employed to signify the strain or tension that emerges from a disagreement between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction which prompts humanity to violence.¹⁵ Walter Garry Runciman published a book in 1966 titled "Relative Deprivation and Social Justice" that also distinguished between egoistic and fraternalism relative deprivation. Runciman also identified four requirements that someone must meet to have a sense of relative deprivation: The individual lacks something (money, status, rights, etc). The person is aware of those who possess the desired item. The person yearns for what they do not already have. The Individual thinks they have a good possibility of getting the thing they want.¹⁶ The premise of this theory demonstrates how dissatisfaction and hostility, which lead to criminality and violence, are closely related to structural flaws or systemic failure in a particular society.

While the theory is not directly formulated to explain moral evil or banditry, it provides insights into the underlying mechanisms that could contribute to such issues. By exploring relative deprivation in relation to banditry, potential connections between this theory and the problem of moral evil can be identified. According to Stouffer, relative deprivation occurs when individuals or groups perceive a discrepancy between their expectations or aspirations and their actual achievements or resources compared to others. This

¹⁴Richard T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups*. (New York: Pearson Education, 2008), 69

¹⁵Walker, Iain, and Heather J. Smith, eds. *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 668

¹⁶ Walter G. Runciman. "Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-century England". *Reports of the Institute of Community Studies*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).



perceived inequality can lead to feelings of frustration, resentment, and grievance. Although relative deprivation does not excuse or justify immoral behaviour, it can contribute to the emergence of such behaviour, including banditry.¹⁷

Banditry, historically and cross-culturally, is often associated with individuals or groups who feel marginalized, oppressed, or excluded from socioeconomic opportunities and resources. These individuals may perceive an unfair distribution of wealth, power, or privileges, which can intensify their sense of relative deprivation. This inequality may lead to the formation of moral justifications for engaging in banditry as a means to resolve their perceived grievances, seek revenge, or regain a sense of agency.¹⁸ Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in the Relative Deprivation Controversy. Various examples can be found in various historical contexts where social, economic, or political inequalities have fuelled insurgencies or rebellions. Such movements often arise from the collective feelings of relative deprivation among oppressed, marginalized, or disenfranchised communities. These groups resort to immoral means, including banditry, as a response to the perceived injustice they experience.¹⁹

In Nigeria, causes of banditry have been attributed to poverty, not only in Nigeria alone, poverty is one of the major factors that has contributed greatly to the growing rate of crime in the world.²⁰ Relative deprivation, particularly temporal relative deprivation, has been identified by social scientists as a potential trigger for social movements and deviance, and in extreme cases has been linked to political violence like banditry, rioting, terrorism, and civil wars as well as other social deviances like crime.²¹

It is important to note that while relative deprivation can explain the underlying motives or circumstances contributing to the emergence

¹⁷Walker, Iain, and Heather J. Smith, eds. *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11.

¹⁸Paul Godfrey, Reger K. Rhonda and Whetten A. David, "What does the concept of identity add to organization science?." *Identity in organizations: Building theory through conversations* (1998): 277-279.

¹⁹Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in the Relative Deprivation Controversy." In Staw, B. M., & Cummings, L. L. (Eds.), *Research in organizational behaviour* Vol. 20, (Emerald Group Publishing Limited) 2

²⁰ David Robinson, "Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525)" (2000): 528

²¹Rose Jerry, *Outbreaks, the sociology of collective behavior*. (New York: New York Free Press), 15

of banditry, it does not provide a comprehensive account of moral evil itself. Moral evil encompasses a broader range of immoral actions that can arise from various psychological, sociological, and philosophical factors. However, by analysing the role of relative deprivation in relation to banditry, we gain insights into the potential social and psychological conditions that may contribute to the perpetuation of immoral acts.

The Concept of Evil in Discourse

Evil is undoubtedly one of the most used words in contemporary society since it has a negative connotation and exists in the conscious mind of almost every individual. Evil is believed to be a common experience that cannot be neglected or overlooked. Evil has become a central phenomenon that is often employed in all social institutions and platforms, as its emphasis on media is alarming and scary.²² Many of the cited examples of such instances as evil are natural evil such as volcanoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, flooding et cetera. Other common examples of evil (Moral) that cannot but be mentioned in the present world include insurgency, terrorism, banditry (the main focus of this research paper) sickness, poverty, and diseases, which infuse pain, suffering, and death into many lives. It is on this wise that Singer opined that evil is the worst possible term of opprobrium imaginable.²³

Despite all the cited instances of evil in the above paragraph, there is no doubt that there exist different world views about the concept of evil, varying from cultural beliefs, religious and even philosophical approaches about what evil is, what causes evil, and what or who is responsible for evil.²⁴ For instance, Yoruba believe the concept of evil and its reality is widely held, they believe *ibi* which is translated as evil is unavoidable even though it's undesirable. To the Yoruba, evil is anything that causes pain, suffering, woe, calamities, blockage in one's progress in life, bad luck, misfortune, disappointment, and all kinds of illnesses or diseases that pose threats to human life.²⁵

However, elements that are commonly associated with evil involve unbalanced behaviour in the forms of expediency, selfishness,

²²Singer, Marcus G. "The concept of evil." *Philosophy* 79, no. 2 (2004): 185

²³Singer, Marcus G. "The concept of evil." (2004): 185-187.

²⁴Staub, Ervin. *Overcoming evil: Genocide, violent conflict, and terrorism*. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011), 5

²⁵Sunday F. Babalola. *The Yoruba Metaphysics and the concept of evil in the perspective of process philosophy*. (Akure, Ondo: Akin-Olu ventures, 2019),55



ignorance, or neglect.²⁶ In modern philosophy, philosophical questions about evil and good are categorized into three major areas of study which are often referred to as follows: meta-ethics concerning the nature of good and evil, normative ethics concerning how we ought to behave, and applied ethics concerning particular moral issues.²⁷

Generally, evil is considered to be the opposite or absence of what is considered to be good, or good turned bad in a simpler sense. According to Columbia Encyclopedia, evil is defined as the antithesis of good, this definition denotes that evil is the direct opposite of what is good.²⁸ On this stand also, St Augustine posited evil as a privation of what ought to be good,²⁹ that is, evil is something negative and does not have sole existence; it is an absence of something that ought to be there. John Hick opined that evil is physical pain, mental suffering, and moral wickedness. Similarly, Royce in his work on good and evil, opined that evil is an act which can be considered morally good.³⁰ According to Royce, an action, character or act carried out by a moral agent which is not morally acceptable or against moral standards is evil. Even though Singer posited that Royce merely glances at the topic of evil itself since many explanations of this phenomenon have already been provided.³¹

Gotshalk, in his own opinion about the concept of evil, gave an insight into what evil is which the researcher could not overlook in this study. Gotshalk opined that evil can be considered as the destruction of value in place of the definition of the concept of good he provided, which Gotshalk defined as the realization of value. According to him, evil such as murder is a prime illustration of evil and the value of destruction. Gotshalk did not stop by only explaining what good and evil are in his concept, but he further posited that no action of man can be considered pure evil. He therefore stated that:

²⁶Matthews, Caitlin, and John Matthews. *Walkers between the worlds: the western mysteries from shaman to magus*. (Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 2004, 173

²⁷ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *Ethics and Contrastivism* <https://iep.utm.edu/ethics-and-contrastivism/> (Accessed December, 12, 2023)

²⁸William H. Harris, Judith S. Levey, *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*. (Columbia University Press, 1975), 908

²⁹ Donald ACress. "Augustine's Privation Account of Evil: A Defense." *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989): 110.

³⁰ Josiah Royce, *Studies of Good and Evil* (New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1998), 241

³¹ Marcus Singer, "The Concept of Evil", *Philosophy*. Cambridge University press on behalf of Royal institute of philosophy, 2004), 186

“Yet, it seems, no human act is pure evil. Ordinarily the murderer ... aims at what he thinks is some good, such as revenge, wanton blood-letting, a 'thrill'. Moreover, what he does, indeed any evil, can be instructive of what evil is”.³²

However, scholars like Oshitelu opined that it is sometimes very difficult to separate what is considered as good from that which is viewed as evil on a logical ground. According to him, pain is a type of evil, and so also death, but we often pray to God for the death of a particular person in order to save him from continuous agonizing suffering.³³ He further stated in one of his other books titled “*Religion God and Evil*” that we mostly try to define evil as things that do not favour us.³⁴ Also, Simon (a psychiatrist) stated that: “evil is a thick rope of many complexes, twisted and intertwined stand. An effort to comprehensively define evil is an impossible task, a fool's errand”.

In philosophical systems, the concept of evil is often discussed in two senses which are: the broad and narrow concept of evil.³⁵ Under the broad concept, the two most identified types of evil are often discussed, the natural and moral evil; as commonly categorized and discussed in theological context and relation to the problem of evil in philosophy,³⁶ the problem of evil is considered to generate more controversial discourses amongst philosophers of different worldviews than any other issue surrounding the question about the existence of a perfect God, since it is eventual that evil exists in the world. In the broad sense, natural evils are often believed to have natural causes, even though it may be argued that man's actions can instigate natural evils.³⁷ But in most cases, natural evil is considered to have natural causes and therefore not associated with moral agents. Examples of such are terminal diseases, earthquakes, sickness, pains,

³²DilmanGotshalk, *Patterns of Good and Evil: A Value Analysis*, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 96

³³ Gabriel Oshitelu, *Religion, God and Evil*.. (Ibadan: Hope publications, 2010), 131

³⁴ Gabriel Oshitelu, *Religion, God and Evil*, 50

³⁵ Todd Calder, “The Concept of Evil”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), retrieved August, 26, 2023 from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/concept-evil>.

³⁶ Daniel Smith, *The Revenge of Nature? On the Coronavirus and Natural Evil. In Virality of Evil: Philosophy in the Time of a Pandemic*. (Rowman& Littlefield, 2022), 139-146.

³⁷ Christopher Southgate, *God and a World of Natural Evil: Theology and Science in Hard Conversation*. *Zygon* 57 (4):1124-1128



droughts, famine, floods, and so on.³⁸ On the other hand, moral evil is considered to be a result of man's actions. Such examples include murder, suicide, and so on.

In the context of process philosophy (a view widely held by categories of philosophers often considered process philosophers), the concept of evil is believed to permit human existence as it is considered to be evident and undeniable. Process philosophers, therefore, believed that the amount of evil in the world is minimal compared to the value or worth of existence.³⁹ According to them, evil and good are phenomenal that coexist together, and cannot be separated since they define the essence of life. One such process philosopher who subscribed to this opinion is Bixler quoting Alfred North Whitehead who is considered to be one of the greatest exponents of process philosophy who stated that: "evil is the feeling of destructiveness in experiences which has its root in every nature of things the incompatibility of pretension (feelings) of actual occasions."⁴⁰

In philosophy, the opinion of whether or not the term evil should or should not be employed in discoursing contemporary phenomena, about legal discourse, morality, and politics is often debated. There are categories of philosophers who posited that the concept of evil should be abandoned, in that it will help to understand more accurately and also to describe actions, characters, and occurrences that are morally despicable, using more moral concepts such as badness and wrongdoing.⁴¹ This category of philosophers is commonly referred to as evil-sceptics.⁴² In light of this, another category of philosophers commonly referred to as evil-revivalists, believe that the concept of evil should not be abandoned but embraced, as the

³⁸John Marymzs, *The Paths of Philosophy: Truth, Wonder and Distress* (Boston, 2011), 192

³⁹ Abdullah Hosseinieskandian & Masoumeh Rajabnezhadian. "A Comparative Study of the Evil Problem in the Thoughts of St. Augustine and John Hick". *METAfizika International Journal of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies*, (2021), 156-160

⁴⁰ John Bixler. *Whitehead's Philosophy of Religion*, (La sale: Open Court Publishing Company) in Caitlin, M & John, M. (2004). *Walkers Between the Worlds: The Western Mysteries from Shaman to Magus*. Inner Traditions / Bear & Co.

⁴¹ Joshua Seigal, "Skeptical Theism, Moral Skepticism, and Divine Deception". *Forum Philosophicum: International Journal for Philosophy* 15 (2):261-263

⁴²Justin McBrayer, "Are skeptical theists really skeptics? Sometimes yes and sometimes no". *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 72 (1) 2012: 5

concept is believed to help us place important values on political, and moral thinking and discourse in our contemporary society.⁴³

Moral Evil in Perspective

Moral evil is often ascribed as the type of evil caused by a moral agent, it is considered to be intentional. Unlike natural evil which is believed to have natural causes, moral evil is the kind of evil, suffering, and pain that is inflicted upon others as a result of the operation of the human will as a moral agent. Furthermore, this type of evil is described as evil resulting from the misuse of free will or willpower. According to Augustine, God created a pure human race without any evil and He gave human beings free will to choose rationally between good and evil.⁴⁴ If a man decides to misuse the freedom given to him, he is free to do so and in doing so he is said to commit a moral evil which is accompanied by moral blame or sanction since he did it out of freedom and intentionally. Plantinga argued that this type of evil often originates as a result of humans' stupidity, arrogance, or cruelty.⁴⁵ This kind of evil is concerned with voluntary actions for which man must be accountable or held responsible since man's action instigated this kind of evil. Such actions should be free. That is, a man may choose to perform it or may choose not to perform it. Example of such evil includes suicide, murder, rape, and so on.

Philosophical Interpretation of moral evil

Philosophical viewpoints on moral evil have been investigated by numerous philosophers throughout history. Moral evil refers to deliberate injustice or injury committed by people or groups, frequently in violation of ethical standards. Various philosophical traditions provide different viewpoints on the nature, causes, and consequences of moral evil. Existentialist thinkers, like Sartre, regarded moral evil from an atheistic perspective.⁴⁶ Sartre argued that existence precedes essence, implying that people define their essence by their acts. In "Being and Nothingness," Sartre maintained that moral evil occurs when people behave inauthentically, denying their freedom

⁴³ Paul Russell. *The Oxford hand book of Hume*. (England: oxford university press, 2016).

⁴⁴Rist, John M. "Augustine on free will and predestination." *The Journal of Theological Studies* (1969): 427

⁴⁵Alvin Plantinga. *God, freedom, and Evil*. (Grand rapids, Michigan :Eerdmans publishing , 1977), 8

⁴⁶Daniel J. Smith. *The Revenge of Nature? On the Coronavirus and Natural Evil. In Virality of Evil: Philosophy in the Time of a Pandemic*. (Rowman& Littlefield., 2022),145.

and responsibility. Individuals who evade their responsibilities and adhere to cultural expectations are said to be acting in "bad faith," which leads to moral misconduct.⁴⁷

Utilitarianism assesses moral actions based on their outcomes and strives to maximise total happiness or pleasure. Bentham and Mill, two famous utilitarian philosophers, contended that moral evil stems from behaviours that cause more pain or suffering than pleasure. Utilitarianism takes a consequentialist approach to morality, emphasising the results of acts and their influence on persons' well-being.⁴⁸ Kant's deontological ethics maintains that moral standards are based on reason and obligation. Kant maintained in "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" that moral evil is the result of breaching the categorical imperative, a universal moral law determined via rational contemplation. Actions that violate the categorical imperative principles, such as lying or causing harm to others for selfish benefit, are deemed ethically reprehensible.⁴⁹ These philosophical approaches offer a wide range of insights into the existence and consequences of moral evil, representing many cultural, theological, and ethical frameworks. The continuous discussion of moral philosophy continues to deal with these viewpoints and incorporates fresh ideas from modern philosophers.⁵⁰

From a philosophical standpoint, banditry can be seen as morally evil as it involves actions that go against the principles of the categorical imperative. Bandits, who engage in robbery and violence for personal gain, are acting in a way that disregards the moral law determined through rational contemplation. This behaviour is considered ethically reprehensible as it causes harm to others for selfish benefit, which goes against the fundamental principles of morality.⁵¹ Therefore, banditry can be seen as a form of moral evil within the philosophical framework discussed.

⁴⁷Atherton, Susan C., Mark S. Blodgett, and Charles A. Atherton. "Fiduciary principles: corporate Responsibilities to Stakeholders." *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 5.

⁴⁸Bentham, Jeremy. "An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789), ed. by J." *H Burns and HLA Hart, London* (1970).

⁴⁹Kant Immanuel. "Critique of pure reason. 1781." *Modern Classical Philosophers, Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin* (1908): 385.

⁵⁰Anastasia Berg, *Evil or Only Immature? Kant and the Complexity of Moral Evil*. In Edgar Valdez (ed.), *Rethinking Kant* Volume 6. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), 183

⁵¹Jane Dryden. "Evil and Moral Responsibility in The Vocation of Man". In Daniel Breazeale & Tom Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte's Vocation of Man: New Interpretive and Critical Essays*. (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 2013), 190-193



Religious Interpretation of moral evil

Different philosophical perspectives on moral evil offer various explanations and theories regarding its nature and origins. Some philosophers argue that moral evil stems from the inherent flaws of human nature, while others believe it results from the misuse of free will.⁵² Understanding these perspectives can provide valuable insights into the motivations behind banditry and the underlying moral depravity that fuels criminal behaviour. The religious interpretation of moral evil often attributes it to the presence of a malevolent force or entity, such as Satan or the concept of original sin.⁵³ From a religious standpoint, banditry can be seen as a manifestation of human beings succumbing to temptation or being influenced by evil forces.

In Christian theology, moral evil is often associated with the concept of sin, which is the violation of God's commandments and the distortion of the moral order established by God. The doctrine of original sin posits that humanity inherited a sinful nature from Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, leading to a propensity for evil and morality.⁵⁴ The Bible portrays various acts of moral evil, ranging from murder and theft to deceit and immorality, and presents them as antithetical to God's moral standards. The Christian perspective emphasizes the need for repentance, forgiveness, and moral transformation through faith in Jesus Christ and adherence to ethical teachings found in the Scriptures.⁵⁵

Within Islam, moral evil is understood in the context of Sharia, which encompasses divine laws and ethical principles governing human conduct. The Quran, the central religious text of Islam, delineates moral injunctions and prohibitions, guiding virtuous behaviour and moral rectitude. In Islamic teachings, acts of moral evil are seen as leading to spiritual and moral degradation, and they are considered transgressions against the divine order. The concept of repentance (Tawbah) and the emphasis on personal accountability underscore

⁵²Peterson, Brandon. "Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination." *i: Theology* 5 (2006): 5-7

⁵³Peterson, Brandon. "Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination." *i: Theology* 5 (2006): 10

⁵⁴Peterson, Brandon. "Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination." *i: Theology* 5 (2006): 10-15

⁵⁵Alvin Plantinga. *God, freedom, and Evil*. (Grand rapids, Michigan :Eerdmans publishing , 1977), 11

the Islamic understanding of moral evil, with an emphasis on seeking forgiveness and rectifying wrongful actions.⁵⁶

Banditry in Nigeria; the Contributing Factors

Banditry in Nigeria has become a pervasive issue, causing significant social, economic, and political disruptions. The country has witnessed a surge in banditry activities in recent years, particularly in the northern-western region (majorly Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, and Zamfara States). This phenomenon has not only resulted in the loss of lives and property but has also created a climate of fear and insecurity among the populace. Understanding the prevalence and impact of banditry in Nigeria is crucial in formulating effective strategies to combat this menace and restore peace and stability to the affected areas.⁵⁷

Banditry in Nigeria has its roots in the persistent herder-farmer clashes in Nigeria. Communities competed ferociously for the few available resources as a result of the declining environment and the lack of water and fertile land. A constant flow of desperate individuals turning to criminal activities to make a livelihood has been made possible by unemployment, widespread poverty, and a lack of effective local administration.⁵⁸

Banditry became apparent in 2014 when there was an increase in cattle rustling activity, largely unrelated to the terrorist actions in the Northeast. Bandits began murdering people in their target states in 2016, the situation has gotten steadily worse. Thousands of people have been displaced, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian crisis in the country. The constant attacks on villages and communities have forced many to flee their homes, seeking refuge in overcrowded camps or neighbouring countries.⁵⁹ The socio-economic consequences of this displacement are devastating, as it disrupts agricultural activities, hampers access to education and healthcare,

⁵⁶Maria De Cillis, *Free will and predestination in Islamic thought: Theoretical compromises in the works of Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Ibn'Arabi*. (Routledge, 2013), 5

⁵⁷ ACAPS Nigeria: *Banditry and Displacement in the Northwest*, 2020. https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200723_acaps_short_note_northwest_banditry_crisis_nwbc_nigeria.pdf. (Accessed 23 July 2021).

⁵⁸ Sunday Ojo. "Governing "ungoverned spaces" in the foliage of conspiracy: Toward (re) ordering terrorism, from Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani militancy to banditry in northern Nigeria." *African Security* 13, no. 1 (2020): 77.

⁵⁹BarauAbdulrahman Yusuf. "Banditry and Its Threat to Rural Economic Development of Faskari." *Yamtara-Wala Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (YaJAMSS)* 2, no. 2 (2022):4-5

and creates a cycle of poverty and dependency. These issues undoubtedly affect socio-political stability and economic growth not just in Nigeria but also in the West African region as a whole, because many lives and properties and foreign investors have been driven away.⁶⁰

In Nigeria, bandits have been known to enter communities on motorbikes to rob and abduct the locals, murdering anyone who tries to fight them. Northwest Nigeria is an extremely lucrative region for kidnapping. Nigerians spent at least billions of naira setting their kidnapped families and friends free from 2011 to the present day. Bandits killed about 1,527 individuals in 2020, more than the 1,508 people who were allegedly killed by terrorist organizations in the Northeast over the same year.⁶¹ By the end of 2020, Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina had over 279,000 displaced people, and by 2021, more than 2.6 million people in those three states will be food insecure.⁶² Armed groups in Kaduna state killed 323 individuals between January and March 2021 (down from 628 in 2020) and abducted 949 others. Several villages in the focus states were the targets of banditry assaults in July 2021, which resulted in the murder of 459 people and the kidnapping of 390 more.⁶³ In Zamfara alone, the state government reported over 6,319 murders and 3,672 kidnapped cases between 2011 and 2019.⁶⁴

Over 200 persons were slain by bandits in Zamfara State, Nigeria, from January 4 to January 6, 2022. In recent Nigerian history, this terrorist strike was the bloodiest. Over 50 people were slain by a bandit group in Dankade, Kebbi State, Nigeria, in the middle of January 2022. Over 80 persons were killed in two simultaneous killings on March 8, 2022, by bandit bands in Kebbi State, northwest Nigeria. A 200-person bandit

⁶⁰Mohammed Abdullahi, "Banditry: Nigerian Government's Response and Military Engagement in Zamfara State". *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 2021: 199-208.

⁶¹ Crisis Group, *Halting the Deepening Turmoil in Nigeria's North West*, 2021. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/halting-deepening-turmoil-nigerias-north-west> Accessed jne, 8, 2023

⁶²Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, *Terrorism and Banditry In Nigeria: The Nexus*. 2021, 10

⁶³Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, *Terrorism and Banditry In Nigeria: The Nexus*. 2021, 10-11

⁶⁴ Tope Adeyanju, *Nigeria's Buhari Warns Rising Banditry a Threat to Food Security*, *Bloomberg*, 2021. (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-13/nigeria-s-buhariwarns-rising-banditry-a-threat-to-foodsecurity>) accessed march 13, 2023



group struck Kaduna International Airport on March 26.⁶⁵ Despite the death of a security guard, the military was able to drive back the thieves. Attack on an Abuja-to-Kaduna train on March 28 resulted in the deaths of 60 people when the train was assaulted in Katari, Kaduna state. Over 150 people were slain in a string of attacks on April 10, 2022, in Plateau State, Nigeria, by a band of bandits. The attacks have anything to do with the current bandit war in Nigeria. The attacks also resulted in the kidnapping of almost 70 persons.⁶⁶ Insecurity has been allowed to expand and intensify due to the government's ongoing incapacity to address the issue properly. In 2023, 3,841 people were killed by bandits in Nigeria, with 4,243 kidnapped. The data comes from incidents published by the National Security Tracker (NST), a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) programme, and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Statistics Project (ACLED) between January and December 2023. The study does not include unreported murder and kidnapping incidents, as many in Nigeria often go unnoticed by the media. The data project focuses on the actions of non-state actors, highlighting the need for increased awareness and action against these groups.⁶⁷

Political instability, corruption, and poor administration are all factors that contribute to the emergence of banditry in Nigeria.⁶⁸ These conditions have produced an environment conducive to criminal activity, allowing armed organisations to capitalise on marginalised people's complaints and frustrations. Furthermore, the proliferation of small guns and light weapons in the region has aggravated the issue by making it simpler for bandits to launch attacks and avoid arrest.⁶⁹ The absence of competent law enforcement and judicial processes has also contributed to these criminal gangs' impunity, fostering a

⁶⁵ Vanguard News. *Combating Banditry in Nigeria are we winning?* <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/combating-banditry-in-nigeria-are-we-winning/> Accessed January, 24, 2024

⁶⁶ Chinedu Asadu, "Gunmen kill more than 100 in Nigeria's north, say survivors". AP NEWS, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/business-nigeria-africa-dd42365974da5e66aacfc7a461869b50> Accessed February 20, 2024.

⁶⁷ The Cable, <https://www.thecable.ng/in-detail-nigerias-security-falters-as-non-state-actors-killed-3841-persons-abducted-4243-in-2023>, accessed February 11, 2024.

⁶⁸ Olapeju R. Musharafa, and Peter O. Adeniyi "The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of Nigeria's Northwest." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 2, no. 1 (2021):7.

⁶⁹ Usman Tar and Safana Yusuf Ibrahim. "Forests, ungoverned spaces and the challenge of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Africa." *The Palgrave Handbook of Small Arms and Conflicts in Africa* (2021): 225-227.

culture of violence and lawlessness.⁷⁰ Other variables include unemployment and poverty, which drive people to join or assist criminal organisations to survive.⁷¹ Nigeria's unemployment rate was 23.1% in 2019, with young unemployment at 55.4%. The Northwest region has a poverty index of 77.7%. Nigerian universities graduate students with higher career prospects, leading to an increase in annual numbers. However, concerns, dissatisfaction, and animosity towards the government have increased bandit assaults and security risks in the country.⁷² The lack of economic prospects and basic amenities exacerbates these communities' sense of hopelessness and desperation, fostering a climate conducive to criminal activity. Furthermore, corruption inside the government and security services affects not just crime-fighting efforts, but also public trust, making law and order even more difficult to build.⁷³

Banditry and Evil

As previously stated, evil is considered to be the opposite or absence of what is considered to be good, or good turned bad, evil is defined as the antithesis of good.⁷⁴ Banditry is a form of moral evil since it is caused by intentional action or inaction of man. Banditry leads to all forms of consequences that are detrimental to man's well-being in society. Criminal activities like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug use, arson, rape, and the blatant and horrifying massacre of members of rural communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected are all the aftermath of banditry activities in Nigeria.⁷⁵ Can these be considered as something good? No, hence, it

⁷⁰Adamaagashilzuchukwu. "Analyzing the Effects of Political Power on Criminal Behavior among Political Elites in Nigeria."

⁷¹Enwuchola John and AdekunleMorufu. "Unemployment and poverty: Implications for national security and good governance in Nigeria." *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research* 2, no. 1 (2013): 5-7

⁷²AbdulkabirOlaiya Suleiman. "The impulsive upsurge of yahoo-yahoo in the 21st century in Nigeria: Islamic perspective." *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019): 16.

⁷³Olusegun J. Ajayi. "Public perception of the police and crime prevention in Nigeria." *International journal of criminology and sociological theory* 7, no. 3 (2014): 5

⁷⁴William H. Harris, Judith S. Levey, *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*. (Columbia University Press, 1975), 908

⁷⁵Olapeju R. Musharafa, and Peter O. Adeniyi "The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of Nigeria's Northwest." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 2, no. 1 (2021):3



is evil. Any activity that poses a threat to human lives and properties can only be seen as evil.⁷⁶

Research has shown that the extent of armed banditry operations has resulted in a high rate of fatalities, injuries, and population relocation. Additionally, the problem of internal instability had driven many who were impacted to relocate or go to other locations they believed to be secure to dwell in. Thus, the abrupt and unexpected change has an impact on their well-being, particularly in terms of politics, psychology, social interaction, and, most importantly.⁷⁷ This has destabilized many individuals and has altered their well-being and their sense of interaction within the environment. Not just the loss of properties, many people have lost people that are very dear to their soul, this has cost a loss of trauma and other form of emotional distress that are irrecoverable as far as they are concerned.

Moral evil such as banditry is very serious when it leads to other forms of evil such as natural or metaphysical evil.⁷⁸ The sudden emigration of people from their geographical location can be considered a natural evil. The relationship of humans with the environment plays a major role in preserving the universe at large. Humans and other organisms such as plants and animals are part of society hence the sudden emigrant of people will create a vacuum in that environment and may lead to natural evil since the vacuum is void and unfilled (Plant needs carbon dioxide which is largely produced by man; it is necessary to preserve the nature).⁷⁹

Moral Evil in Banditry

The moral implications of banditry in Nigeria cannot be overlooked. The act of supporting criminal groups as a means of survival may seem understandable in the face of economic hardships, but it perpetuates a cycle of violence and lawlessness. This not only harms the immediate victims of these crimes but also has a wider societal

⁷⁶Warren Quinn, "The right to threaten and the right to punish." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1985): 327

⁷⁷NsirimovuOkwuwada, "The modern day consequences, causes, and nature of kidnapping, terrorism, banditry, and violent crime in Nigeria: A comprehensive analysis." (2023): 25.

⁷⁸ Gabriel Oshitelu, *Religion, God and Evil*. (Ibadan: Hope publications, 2010), 131

⁷⁹Richard Routley, "Is there a need for a new, an environmental ethic." In *Proceedings of the XVth world congress of philosophy*, vol. 1, (1973): 205-210.



impact, eroding the moral fabric of communities.⁸⁰ The corruption within the government and security forces only exacerbates the problem, as it sends a message that those in power can act with impunity, further undermining the values of justice and accountability.⁸¹

Banditry is the use of force and coercion to intimidate, harm, or take advantage of individuals and groups. It involves violent acts like kidnapping, murder, and robbery, causing physical harm and instilling fear in the community.⁸² This constant threat disrupts daily life, prevents travel, and stifles economic activity, reducing social cohesion and economic advancement. Bandits' use of coercion also breeds dread and distrust, eroding society's moral compass.⁸³

Also, bandits engage in exploitative practices, such as extortion and theft, targeting vulnerable populations for personal gain. These actions inflict harm and suffering on innocent people, reflecting a profound moral evil and an utter disregard for the well-being of others. The victims of these exploitative practices often find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty and despair, unable to escape the clutches of banditry.⁸⁴ This perpetuates a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness within the community, exacerbating the already dire social and economic consequences. As a result, the fabric of society becomes further torn, and the path towards progress and development becomes increasingly elusive.⁸⁵

Furthermore, banditry breaches cultural norms and social order, resulting in a loss of confidence and stability within communities. The persistent fear of banditry typically causes people to choose personal

⁸⁰AbdulyakeenAbdulrasheed, "The Menace of Legitimacy Crisis and Insecurity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Discourse Using Thomas Hobbes Social Contract Theory." Available at SSRN 3881657 (2021).

⁸¹Chris Nwagboso, "Nigeria and the Challenges of Internal Security in the 21st Century." *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 2 (2018): 17-20.

⁸²Pat O'malley "Social bandits, modern capitalism and the traditional peasantry. a critique of Hobsbawm." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 6, no. 4 (1979): 495-501.

⁸³Rabi'u, Usman, and HapsatHamidu Muhammad. "An Assessment of the Causes and Effects of Cattle Rustling and Banditry in Zamfara State, North-Western Nigeria." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 3, no. 3 (2022): 14.

⁸⁴Odia, Lucky Osarefin. "Kidnapping, Banditry: Security Confidence Building and Nigeria's Progress." *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* (2023): 5-8

⁸⁵Chinedu O. Valentine, "Effect of Banditry On Socio-Economic Development Of North-West Geopolitical Zone Of Nigeria." *International Journal of Public Administration Studies* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1

protection over group well-being, instilling a feeling of individuality and distrust.⁸⁶ This deterioration of social cohesiveness impedes collective action and collaboration, undermining efforts to address the core causes of banditry and restore communal peace. The absence of a robust social order allows bandits to operate freely, maintaining their terror.⁸⁷

Corruption and immorality are often enhanced through banditry since criminal organisations engage in illegal operations that violate ethical norms and contribute to social degradation. These behaviours degrade social moral underpinnings, resulting in broken trust and disrespect for the well-being of others. When these concerns are pervasive, people are more prone to participate in criminal behaviour, prolonging the cycle of lawlessness and instability.⁸⁸ This erodes the social fabric, making it harder to address the underlying causes of banditry and restore community peace. Corruption and immorality feed banditry while simultaneously undermining efforts to construct a safer, more affluent community.⁸⁹

The deprivation of fundamental freedoms, rights, and dignity is one of the human rights abuses caused by banditry. This is a moral evil when bandits disrespect persons' intrinsic value and worth by subjecting them to violence, exploitation, and dehumanisation. Human rights crimes committed by bandits contribute to a culture of fear and instability in communities since people live in continual fear of being targeted or suffering collateral damage. Furthermore, these infractions impede the formation of a just and equitable society by disrupting the social order and undermining confidence between citizens and the government. As a result, eliminating banditry entails not only addressing its core causes but also assuring the preservation and promotion of all persons' human rights. (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

⁸⁶Olapeju R. Musharafa, and Peter O. Adeniyi "The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of Nigeria's Northwest." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 2, no. 1 (2021):4

⁸⁷Adewale, L. Quadri, and OladejoAjobola. "A Threat to the Existence of Contemporary Multinational Nigeria: Bad Governance, The Zeitgeist Of Terrorism, Banditry, And Secessionism." *AkdenizHavzasiveAfrikaMedeniyetleriDergisi* 3, no. 2 (2021): 92.

⁸⁸EtannibiAlemika, "Youth Banditry in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges". *African Security Review*, 21(3),55.

⁸⁹Maduka D. Abalogu and Okolo A. Ekenedilichukwu "Insecurity Challenges: Bane to National Development, the Nigeria Experience." *Dialogue on Society and Development in Africa* (2022): 77.



Religious Perspectives on Moral Evil and Banditry

Moral evil and banditry are viewed as behaviours that contradict the teachings and ideals of a certain religion. In Christianity, for example, moral evil and banditry are regarded as sins and transgressions of the Ten Commandments, which are God's fundamental moral precepts that regulate human conduct. The Bible condemns moral evil and banditry in several passages, including Exodus 20:15, which states, "You shall not steal," (Exodus 20: 15 New International Version) and Ephesians 4:28, which states, "Anyone who has been stealing must no longer steal, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. These teachings emphasise the value of honesty, respect for other people's property, and hard effort while criticising those who bring damage or injustice to their fellow humans (Ephesians 4:28 New International Version).

In the Islamic Perspective, immorality and banditry are both considered sinful and disobedient to Allah in Islam. The Quran addresses moral evil and banditry in several verses, such as Surah Al-Baqarah (2:188), which states, "And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it (in bribery) to the rulers so that (they might aid) you (to) consume a portion of the people's wealth in sin, while you know (it is unlawful)." The text emphasises the prohibition of unfairly stealing or exploiting another person's property, as well as the condemnation of corrupt and immoral behaviour. Moral evil and banditry, according to religion, are destructive and damaging to the well-being of people and communities and must be avoided and condemned.⁹⁰ The teachings and texts of numerous faiths emphasise the value of moral behaviour, respect for others, and the avoidance of behaviours that cause pain or injustice, supporting a good and virtuous way of life. Individuals are therefore urged to follow moral norms and principles in their acts and relationships with others, to promote peace, fairness, and harmony across the world.

Banditry has long plagued Nigeria, producing widespread fear and instability in many locations. Religious groups have not remained mute in their response to this threat, since they strongly believe in the ideals of compassion, fairness, and the well-being of all people. Several religious leaders and organisations have condemned banditry, calling

⁹⁰Comfort, Onifade, Imhonopi David, and UrimUgochukwu Moses. "Addressing the insecurity challenge in Nigeria: The imperative of moral values and virtue ethics." *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 13, no. 2 (2013): 5-7.

it a breach of their faiths' teachings and principles.⁹¹ They have emphasised the significance of tackling the core causes of banditry, such as poverty, inequality, and a lack of education, to successfully confront the issue.⁹²

Combating Banditry in Nigeria

The Nigerian government has a responsibility to provide security and protect its citizens from criminal activities, including banditry. In response to the increasing threats posed by banditry, the Nigerian government has implemented various measures to combat this menace. One of the primary roles of the government in addressing banditry is the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies aimed at tackling the root causes of insecurity and addressing the grievances that often fuel banditry.⁹³ Additionally, law enforcement agencies play a crucial role in the fight against banditry by enforcing these policies and strategies on the ground. They are tasked with investigating criminal activities, apprehending suspects, and bringing them to justice. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies also work to enhance community policing initiatives to build trust and cooperation between the police and the local communities, which is essential in effectively combating banditry. Ultimately, a collaborative effort between the government and law enforcement is necessary to successfully eradicate banditry and ensure the safety and security of Nigerian citizens.⁹⁴

The Nigerian law enforcement agencies, including the police, military, and other security forces, play a crucial role in the fight against banditry. These agencies are responsible for maintaining law and order, preventing and investigating criminal activities, and apprehending individuals involved in banditry.⁹⁵ Law enforcement

⁹¹ChinemeOkeke, "Theological Reflections on Banditry in Nigeria: A Challenge to the Church". *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 5(1) (2013): 136.

⁹²Ahmad S. Abdullahi, and Jamilu I. Mukhtar. "Armed Banditry as a Security Challenge in Northwestern Nigeria." *African Journal of Sociological and Psychological Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 45.

⁹³ChukwumaOkoli, "Combating banditry in Nigeria: The role of government and law enforcement agencies". *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development* 25, (2019): 115

⁹⁴ Vanguard News. *Combating Banditry in Nigeria are we winning?* <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/combating-banditry-in-nigeria-are-we-winning/> Accessed January, 24, 2024

⁹⁵Mohammed Abdullahi, "Banditry: Nigerian Government's Response and Military Engagement in Zamfara State". *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 2021: 199-200



agencies are also tasked with conducting intelligence gathering, surveillance, and operations to identify and dismantle criminal networks engaged in banditry.⁹⁶ In recent years, the Nigerian government has initiated various security operations to address the challenges of banditry in the country. For example, the Nigerian military has launched operations such as Operation Sahel Sanity and Operation Accord to combat banditry and other criminal activities in the northwest and north-central regions. These operations have involved the deployment of troops, air surveillance, and ground patrols to track and neutralize bandit groups.⁹⁷

Furthermore, the government has also sought to address the underlying social and economic factors contributing to banditry by implementing programs aimed at promoting development, and job creation, and addressing poverty and marginalization in affected communities. These efforts are aimed at addressing the grievances and social conditions that often drive individuals to engage in criminal activities, including banditry.⁹⁸ Additionally, the government has worked to improve intelligence gathering and information sharing among security agencies to better anticipate and respond to bandit activities. This includes coordinating with neighbouring countries to prevent bandits from crossing borders and evading capture.⁹⁹ The government has also engaged in diplomatic efforts to address the root causes of banditry, such as cross-border criminal networks and arms trafficking. By taking a comprehensive approach to tackling banditry, the government aims to create a safer and more secure environment for all citizens.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶Mohammed Abdullahi, . "Banditry: Nigerian Government's Response and Military Engagement in Zamfara State". *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 2021: 201-204

⁹⁷Mohammed Abdullahi, . "Banditry: Nigerian Government's Response and Military Engagement in Zamfara State". *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 2021: 205-208

⁹⁸ChinemeOkeke, "Theological Reflections on Banditry in Nigeria: A Challenge to the Church". *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 5(1) (2013): 136.

⁹⁹ Channels Television. Buhari Seeks Cooperation With Niger, Chad To Combat Cross-Border Banditry. (2021). <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/04/12/buhari-seeks-cooperation-with-niger-chad-to-combat-cross-border-banditry/> Accessed November, 13, 2023

¹⁰⁰ Channels Television. Buhari Seeks Cooperation With Niger, Chad To Combat Cross-Border Banditry. (2021). <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/04/12/buhari-seeks-cooperation-with-niger-chad-to-combat-cross-border-banditry/> Accessed November, 13, 2023



Despite these efforts, banditry continues to pose a significant security threat in Nigeria. The government has been criticized for its handling of the situation, with calls for more proactive and effective strategies to combat banditry.¹⁰¹ The government needs to continue to prioritize the security and safety of its citizens and work towards lasting solutions to the problem of banditry in the country. Issues such as poverty, lack of education, and unemployment often act as drivers for individuals to turn to banditry as a means of survival. By implementing targeted development programs and creating job opportunities in vulnerable communities, the government can help address these underlying issues and reduce the likelihood of individuals resorting to criminal activities. In doing so, the government can further strengthen its efforts in combating banditry and creating a more stable and prosperous society for all.¹⁰²

Also, investing in education and vocational training can equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to pursue legitimate employment opportunities, reducing their reliance on illicit activities. Additionally, addressing systemic issues such as corruption and inadequate law enforcement can help create a more conducive environment for economic growth and social stability. By taking a holistic approach to addressing the root causes of banditry, the government can effectively curb criminal activities and promote sustainable development in the long run.¹⁰³

Moreover, implementing social welfare programs and providing support for marginalized communities can help address the underlying issues of poverty and inequality that often drive individuals to engage in banditry. By creating opportunities for economic advancement and social inclusion, the government can empower individuals to break free from cycles of violence and criminal behaviour.¹⁰⁴ In addition, fostering community engagement and promoting dialogue between different stakeholders can help build trust and cooperation, ultimately

¹⁰¹ African Arguments, *Nigeria's Government is Enabling Banditry* (2021). <https://africanarguments.org/2021/02/nigerias-government-is-enabling-banditry/> Accessed November, 9, 2023

¹⁰² Blessing Akinterinwa, *Insecurity and Banditry in Nigeria: Perspectives and Solutions*. *The Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, 43(1), (2020): 77-95.

¹⁰³ Bello, Ayodele, Samuel Chukwudi Agunyci, and Lere Amusan. "Armed non-state actors, insecurity, and government response to banditry in Nigeria." *IKENGA: International Journal of Institute of African Studies* 23, no. 3 (2022): 4

¹⁰⁴ Voelwoen V. Danaan, "Analysing poverty in Nigeria through theoretical lenses." *Journal of Sustainable development* 11, no. 1 (2018).

leading to a more cohesive and peaceful society. Ultimately, by addressing the root causes of banditry and promoting social cohesion, the government can work towards creating a safer and more prosperous society for all its citizens.¹⁰⁵

Government and religious institutions in Nigeria must work together to address these issues to create a lasting impact. By collaborating on initiatives that focus on education, job training, and mental health support, they can provide individuals with the tools they need to succeed and thrive. Together, they can also promote values of tolerance, respect, and understanding, which are essential in building a strong and united community. Through their joint efforts, they can create a more stable and peaceful environment for all Nigerians to live and prosper in. Religious institutions in Nigeria can play a crucial role in fostering unity and cooperation among different faith communities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose. By coming together to address common social challenges, they can serve as powerful catalysts for positive change and transformation within the country. Ultimately, their collaboration can help to build a more inclusive and harmonious society where all individuals can fulfil their potential and contribute to the common good.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the paper has noted that banditry in Nigeria has created a wide range of evil, especially in the northern part of Nigeria. Death, displacement, loss of properties, and other economic-related problems. These issues, as highlighted above, have generally harmed the general well-being resulting in great hardship and occasionally even fatalities for the displaced people. Notably, the paper submits that banditry is a moral instigated by man's actions and inaction in society. The paper, therefore, recommends that the Nigerian government should rise to the occasion of taming and ending banditry in the country. This recommendation is based on the aforementioned considerations. Also, the Government should endeavour to provide social amenities including access to a good road network, medical facilities, educational institutions, job opportunities, and empowerment that would engage youths in other to save them from joining bad companies that would influence their lives negatively and put the country in a state of jeopardy.

¹⁰⁵MichealNwokedi, "Curbing the Activities of Banditry in Nigeria: The Role of Community Policing". *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 12(3), (2020)85-89



Bibliography

- Abalogu D.Maduka and Ekenediichukwu A.Okolo "Insecurity Challenges: Bane to National Development, the Nigeria Experience." *Dialogue on Society and Development in Africa* (2022): 77.
- Abdullahi, Mohammed. "Banditry: Nigerian Government's Response and Military Engagement in Zamfara State". *Journal of Politics and Law*, 6(2), 2021: 199-208.
- AbdulrasheedAbdulyakeen. *The Menace of Legitimacy Crisis and Insecurity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Discourse Using Thomas Hobbes Social Contract Theory*. Available at SSRN 3881657 (2021).
- ACAPS *Nigeria: Banditry and Displacement in the Northwest*, 2020. https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200723_acaps_short_note_northwest_banditry_crisis_nwbc_nigeria.pdf. (Accessed 23 July 2021).
- Adeyanju Tope. *Nigeria's Buhari Warns Rising Banditry a Threat to Food Security*. Bloomberg, 2021.
- African Arguments, Nigeria's Government is Enabling Banditry (2021). <https://africanarguments.org/2021/02/nigerias-government-is-enabling-banditry/> Accessed November 9, 2023
- Ahmad S. Abdullahi and Jamilu I. Mukhtar "Armed Banditry as a Security Challenge in Northwestern Nigeria." *African Journal of Sociological and Psychological Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 45.
- AkinterinwaBlessing. "Insecurity and Banditry in Nigeria: Perspectives and Solutions". *The Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, 43(1), (2020): 77-95.
- AlemikaEtannibi. "Youth Banditry in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges". *African Security Review*, 21(3), 55.
- AsaduChinedu. *Gunmen kill more than 100 in Nigeria's north, say survivors*. AP NEWS, 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/business-nigeria-africa-dd42365974da5e66aacfc7a461869b50> Accessed February 20, 2024.
- AyodeleBello, Agunyai C. Samuel and AmusanLere. "Armed non-state actors, insecurity, and government response to banditry in Nigeria." *IKENGA: International Journal of Institute of African Studies* 23, no. 3 (2022):4
- Babalola. F. Sunday. *The Yoruba metaphysics and the concept of evil in the perspective of process philosophy*. Akure, Ondo: Akin-OluVentures, 2019.

-
- Berg Anastasia. *Evil or Only Immature? Kant and the Complexity of Moral Evil*. In Edgar Valdez (ed.), *Rethinking Kant Volume 6*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022.
- Bixler John. "Whitehead's Philosophy of Religion" (La sale: Open Court Publishing Company) in Caitlin, M & John, M. (2004). *Walkers Between the Worlds: The Western Mysteries from Shaman to Magus*. Inner Traditions / Bear & Co.
- Brandon Peterson. "Augustine: Advocate of Free Will, Defender of Predestination." i: *Theology* 5 (2006): 10-15
- Caitlin Matthews and Matthews John. *Walkers between the worlds: the western mysteries from shaman to magus*. Inner Traditions. Bear & Co, 2004.
- Calder Todd. "The Concept of Evil", *the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Fall 2018
- Campbell John. "Kidnapping and Ransom Payments in Nigeria", Council on Foreign Relations Blog, 18 February 2021, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/kidnapping-and-ransom-payments-nigeria>.
- Channels Television. *Buhari Seeks Cooperation with Niger, Chad to Combat Cross-Border Banditry*. (2021). <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/04/12/buhari-seeks-cooperation-with-niger-chad-to-combat-cross-border-banditry/> Accessed November 13, 2023
- Cress Donald A. "Augustine's Privation Account of Evil: A Defense." *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989): 110.
- Crisis Group, *Halting the Deepening Turmoil in Nigeria's North West*, 2021. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/halting-deepening-turmoil-nigerias-north-west> Accessed June 8, 2023
- Danaan V. Voelwoen. "Analysing poverty in Nigeria through theoretical lenses." *Journal of Sustainable Development* 11, no. 1 (2018).
- De Cillis Maria. *Free will and predestination in Islamic thought: Theoretical compromises in the works of Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Ibn'Arabi*. Routledge, 2013.
- Ervin Staub. *Overcoming evil: Genocide, violent conflict, and terrorism*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011
- Godfrey, Paul C., Rhonda K. Reger, and David A. Whetten. "What does the concept of identity add to organization science?" *Identity in organizations: Building theory through conversations* (1998): 277-279.
- Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, *Terrorism and Banditry in Nigeria: The Nexus*. 2021, 10-11
- Gotshalk Dilman. *Patterns of Good and Evil: A Value Analysis*. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

-
- Halsey D. William and Johnston Bernard. *Collier's encyclopedia: With bibliography and index*. New York: Macmillan Educational Co, 1991.
- Harris H. William and Levey S. Judith. *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*. Columbia University Press, 1975
- Hosseini Eskandian Abdullah & Rajabnezhadian Masoumeh. "A Comparative Study of the Evil Problem in the Thoughts of St. Augustine and John Hick". *METAFIZIKA International Journal of Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies*, (2021), 156-160
- Iain Walker and Smith Heather. *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in the Relative Deprivation Controversy." In Staw, B. M., & Cummings, L. L. (Eds.), *Research in organizational behaviour* Vol. 20, (Emerald Group Publishing Limited) 2
- Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason. 1781." *Modern Classical Philosophers*, Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin (1908): 385.
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *Ethics and Contrastivism* <https://iep.utm.edu/ethics-and-contrastivism/>. Accessed December 12, 2023.
- Jane Dryden. "Evil and Moral Responsibility in the Vocation of Man". In Daniel Breazeale & Tom Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte's Vocation of Man: New Interpretive and Critical Essays*. (Albany, NY, USA: State University of New York Press, 2013), 190-193
- Jerry Rose. *Outbreaks, the sociology of collective behaviour*. New York: New York Free Press
- John Enwuchola and Morufu Adekunle. "Unemployment and poverty: Implications for national security and good governance in Nigeria." *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research* 2, no. 1 (2013): 5-7
- John Rist. "Augustine on free will and predestination." *The Journal of Theological Studies* (1969): 427
- Marcus G. Singer. "The concept of evil." *Philosophy* 79, no. 2 (2004): 185
- Marymzs John. *The Paths of Philosophy: Truth, Wonder and Distress*. Boston, 2011.
- McBryer Justin. "Are sceptical theists sceptics? Sometimes yes and sometimes no". *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 72 (1) 2012: 5
- Musa U. Garba and Deepali Singh "The Persistence of Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: A Critical Analysis on Banditry". *The International Journal of Human Rights*. 8. (2021): 12-13.
- Musharafa R. Olapeju and Adeniyi O. Peter. "The impact of banditry on Nigeria's security in the Fourth Republic: An evaluation of

-
- Nigeria's Northwest." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 2, no. 1 (2021):4-7
- Nwagboso Chris. "Nigeria and the Challenges of Internal Security in the 21st Century." *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 2 (2018): 17-20.
- Nwokedi Micheal. "Curbing the Activities of Banditry in Nigeria: The Role of Community Policing". *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*. 12(3), (2020)85-89
- Ojo Sunday. "Governing "ungoverned spaces" in the foliage of conspiracy: Toward (re) ordering terrorism, from Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani militancy to banditry in northern Nigeria." *African Security* 13, no. 1 (2020): 77.
- Okeke Chineme. "Theological Reflections on Banditry in Nigeria: A Challenge to the Church". *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 5(1) (2013): 136.
- Okoli, Chukwuma. "Combating banditry in Nigeria: The role of government and law enforcement agencies". *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, 25 (2019): 115
- Okwuwada Nsirimov. "The modern-day consequences, causes, and nature of kidnapping, terrorism, banditry, and violent crime in Nigeria: A comprehensive analysis." (2023): 25.
- Olabanji Olukayode and Ese Urhie, "Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies*. Volume 6, (2014): 40-45
- Olusegun J. Ajayi. "Public perception of the police and crime prevention in Nigeria." *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory* 7, no. 3 (2014): 5
- O'Malley Pat "Social bandits, modern capitalism and the traditional peasantry. A critique of Hobsbawm." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 6, no. 4 (1979): 495-501.
- Onifade Comfort, David Imhonopi and Moses Ugochukwu Urim. "Addressing the insecurity challenge in Nigeria: The imperative of moral values and virtue ethics." *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 13, no. 2 (2013): 5-7.
- Osaretin L. Odi. "Kidnapping, Banditry: Security Confidence Building and Nigeria's Progress." *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* (2023): 5-8
- Oshitelu Gabriel. *Religion, God and Evil*. Ibadan: Hope publications, 2010.
- Oshitelu Gabriel. *The Philosophy of Religion an Introduction*. Ibadan: Hope publications, 2008.
- Plantinga Alvin. *God, freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977.
- Quadri L. Adewale and Ajibola Oladejo "A Threat to the Existence of Contemporary Multinational Nigeria: Bad Governance, the

-
- Zeitgeist of Terrorism, Banditry, and Secessionism." *AkdenizHavzasiveAfrikaMedeniyetleriDergisi* 3, no. 2 (2021): 92.
- Quinn Warren. "The right to threaten and the right to punish." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*(1985): 327
- RenceAllvin, Katarina Berg, Ewaldvail and Ulrica Nilsson, "Postoperative recovery: aconcept analysis". *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 57 (5), (2007), 552
- Robinson David "Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525)" (2000): 528
- Robinson David. "Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: the Capital Region during the Middle Ming Period. *Journal of Social History*. **33** (3): (2000): 528 (1450-1525)". 528–529.
- Routley Richard "Is there a need for a new, environmental ethic." *In Proceedings of the XVthWorld Congress of philosophy*, vol. 1, (1973): 205-210.
- RoyceJosiah. *Studies of Good and Evil*. New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1998.
- Ruggiero Guido. *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance*. New Jersey: Wiley- Blackwell, 2006.
- RuncimanG. Walter. "Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-century England". *Reports of the Institute of Community Studies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Russell Paul. *The Oxford handbook of Hume*. England: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Schaefer T.Richard.*Racial and Ethnic Groups*. New York: Pearson Education, 2008.
- Seigal Joshua "Skeptical Theism, Moral Skepticism, and Divine Deception". *Forum Philosophicum: International Journal for Philosophy* 15 (2):261-263
- Singer Marcus. "The Concept of Evil", *Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press on behalf of Royal Institute of philosophy, 2004.
- Smith Daniel. *The Revenge of Nature? On the Coronavirus and Natural Evil*. *In Virality of Evil: Philosophy in the Time of a Pandemic*. Rowman& Littlefield, 2022.
- Southgate Christopher. "God and a World of Natural Evil: Theology and Science in Hard Conversation@. *Zygon* 57 (4):1124-1128
- Suleiman O. Abdulkabir "The impulsive upsurge of yahoo-yahoo in the 21st century in Nigeria: Islamic perspective." *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019): 16.
- Susan C. Atherton, BlodgettSMark. And AthertonA. Charles "Fiduciary principles: corporate Responsibilities to Stakeholders." *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 2, no. 2 (2011): 5.

-
- Tar Usman and Yusuf IbrahimSafana. "Forests, ungoverned spaces and the challenge of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Africa." *The Palgrave Handbook of Small Arms and Conflicts in Africa* (2021): 225-227.
- Tennant R. Frederick. *The Sources of the Doctrine of the fall and Original sin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004.
- The New Humanitarian, *Banditry in Nigeria*.
<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news>-Accessed May, 04, 2023
- TheCable, <https://www.thecable.ng/in-detail-nigerias-security-falters-as-non-state-actors-killed-3841-persons-abducted-4243-in-2023>, accessed February 11, 2024.
- UkaejeObinna "Forest Governance and Rural Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest Region: Interrogating the Implication for National Security" *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*: Volume 11, number 2, (2021), 332.
- Usman Rabi'u and Muhammad H.Hamidu "An Assessment of the Causes and Effects of Cattle Rustling and Banditry in Zamfara State, North-Western Nigeria." *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development* 3, no. 3 (2022): 14.
- Valentine O.Chinedu. "Effect of Banditry on Socio-Economic Development of North-West Geopolitical Zone Of Nigeria." *International Journal of Public Administration Studies* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1
- Van Loon Anne. *One another Care*. Wayville South Australia: Baptist Care, 2008.
- Vanguard News. Combating Banditry in Nigeria are we winning?
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/combating-banditry-in-nigeria-are-we-winning/> Accessed January, 24, 2024
- YusufA. Barau. "Banditry and Its Threat to Rural Economic Development of Faskari." *Yamtara-Wala Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (YaJAMSS)* 2, no. 2 (2022):4-5