Abstract
The study analyses the activities of rural banditry in Katsina State within the context of Thomas Hobbes Social Contract Theory. The acts of banditry in form of armed robbery, kidnappings, reckless killings, rape and cattle rustling is what ravages the area of the state particularly in the front line local government areas of Kankara, Danmusa, Batsari, Sabuwa, Dandume and Jibia. Life in these areas of the state is a clear reflection of Thomas Hobbes State of nature where it is said to be solitary, nasty, brutish and short. The study is purely descriptive and therefore used secondary means of data collection which include text books, academic journals and publications, documented reports and newspapers. Thomas Hobbes Social Contract Theory remains the theoretical framework of the research. The study reveals that the insecurity of life and property in Katsina state and Nigeria in general is a result of failure of the state and state actors to adhere to the terms and conditions of the social contract provided by chapter 11 section 1(14) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended). It is therefore, recommended that the state and state actors in one hand should strictly adhere to the terms and condition of the contract by ensuring the security of life and properties of the people and the subject or citizens on the other hand must exercise their constitutional duties and obligations towards the state.

Keywords: Banditry, Social Contract Theory, Thomas Hobbes & Katsina State

Introduction
According to Olabanji (2014) the need for human security is what necessitated the formation of today’s modern state through what Thomas Hobbes called social contract. This therefore justifies how 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, specifically states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Unfortunately, government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities.

Nigeria as a nation however, is a reflection of Thomas Hobbes state of nature. The prevalence of conflict, crises, rancor, social disorder, brutality, man's inhumanity to man, and the existential fear of insecurity remain the order of the day. Nigeria is a country where things have failed to work. It is characterized with fraudsters having a fill day. Kidnapping and human trafficking has become a lucrative business in some parts of the country. It is that which fear consumes her citizens, that where human life is handled with levity. It is that in which national awards are given to criminals and fraudsters celebrated (Solomon & Julius, 2014).

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Obasanjo (2019) has rightly observed further that when people are desperate and feel that they cannot have confidence in government to provide security for their lives and properties, they will take recourse to anything and everything that can guarantee individually and collectively.

Banditry and kidnappings are among the recent security challenges that ravage the northern Nigeria. This is a region with many security problems where Boko Haram Insurgency, Herdsmen militancy, armed robbery and recently banditry and kidnappings have become the key security concern. In North western part of the country such as Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto States, banditry and kidnapping has emerged as the new bogeyman for insecurity. Gangs of armed bandits have engaged in violent acts, attacking, abducting, killing and robbing villagers and travelers as well as engaging in cattle rustling (Chidi, 2018).

Chinonye, (2006) maintains that the primary responsibility of every government based on Thomas Hobbes Social Contract Theory, is among other things, protection of lives and property of its citizens. Ironically however, in Katsina State, the security of life and property of a common man is becoming a mirage. The state is presently affected by banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping which started from July 2018 to date (Ladan, 2019). This affects mainly the eight frontline Local Government Areas (LGAs) namely Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, Dandume and Sabuwa.

International Organization for Immigration (IOM) Reports (2019) reveals that out of 66,900 estimated displaced persons in the north western states as a result of violent crimes, 16,257 are from Katsina State. This has really affects the economic activities of the local people who are predominantly famers and petty traders.

Both federal and state governments are making several efforts to end the insecurity challenges in the State and the North West geo-political zone at large. The security operations and counter and pre-emptive measures being undertaken by the Nigerian Police, the Army and the Air force to deal with banditry and kidnapping. These security operations include Operations Sharan Daji, Operation Dirar Mikiya, Operation Harbin Kunamaand the recently launched Puff Adder (Ladan, 2019).

The state government has recently approved and signed in to law, death penalty for kidnappers, bandits and cattle rustlers. The state government is also presently in dialogue with the suspected bandits as a result of which 30 kidnapped victims were released by the armed bandits in exchange for their apprehended men (Vanguard, 15th Sept, 2019).

However, inadequate security apparatus, poor knowledge of the terrain by the security personnel and lack of political will by the political leaders are considered to be the factors that limit the success of the operations (Ladan, 2019). The recent attacks of Wurma and Safana villages which cost many lives and properties proved the above efforts in adequate and inefficient. Even the negotiation that is ongoing between Katsina state government and the criminals is not expected to yield a desired result; this is because for a sustainable solution to the menace a holistic approach needs to be put in place by the government, the security agencies and the people of the state. It is in this regards that the paper intends to adopt the social contract theory of Thomas Hobbes and explain the menace of banditry in Katsina State. The research is purely descriptive relying solely on secondary source of data collection which includes text books, academic journals and articles, newspapers and statistical reports.
The Concept of Banditry

Chukwuma & Francis (2014), observed that, banditry has become a major concern for public policy in contemporary Nigeria. It refers to occurrences or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. It involves the use of force or threat to intimidate a person with the intent to rob, rape or kill. According to Kyari (2015), banditry is characterized by depredation, cattle rustling, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and illegal toll collection from the innocent population. It is the result of breaking down of law and order in the society. Banditry is therefore found where government as an institution of the state failed in its primary responsibility of the protection of human lives and properties.

Uche & Chijioke (2018) have argued that the phenomenon of banditry which recently gained currency in Nigeria’s public discourses is fallout of persistence violence in rural communities within the last 10 years. The results had been traumatic. There had been massive loss of thousands of lives, forced displacement of locals and devastation of monumental proportions. Banditry also reflected in criminal escapades like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and other forms of violence, the brazen and gruesome massacre of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims threw it up to the front burner of national security.

Banditry is therefore, conceived as the criminal activities that involve traumatic killings of innocent people, kidnappings for ransom, armed robbery, rape and cattle rustling by gun men mostly in the rural communities. Kuna & Jibril (2015) observed that, in the last decade banditry and violent conflict between pastoralist and famers in Nigeria have been on the rise. It consisted of dispute over natural resources and is often presented as conflicts between settlers and nomadic people which recently developed banditry with heavy human economic cost and crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, sexual assault and cattle rustling among others.

On the causes of banditry Kuna & Jibril (2015), posit that factors such as ecological and climatic change and consistence shift in human and livestock population, expansion in nonagricultural use of land, weak state capacity and provision of security, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, rise in the criminality and insecurity in the rural areas and collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanism are considered to be the major factors that accounted for rural banditry in Nigeria.

The nature of insecurity of lives and properties that come with banditry in the country is caused by the weakness in the institutional capacity of the state to address the problems of joblessness and acute poverty among the youth population (Saleh, 2014). Dayo & Salihu (2015) argued that, banditry leads to disruption of life, displacement and loss of lives and properties. It also leads to the existence of constant fear and attacks which take away human dignity and people’s ability to organize seek and engage in livelihood.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) report 2019 reveals that, banditry and violent crimes in north western Nigerian states of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara has triggered large scale displacement and population movement within the states as well as across international boarder to Niger Republic. According to the report 66,900 people have been displaced within the states and more than 20,000 people have fled to Niger Republic and are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Landan (2019) laments that the menace of banditry in Katsina state is caused by several factors such as; lack of political will by the government to curtail and prevent it, high level of poverty, illiteracy, youth unemployment,
high rates of drug abuse, availability of forest areas and in insufficient and effective security personnel.

Shehu, Victor & Binta (2017) observed that Banditry have for many years remained the most teething problems bedeviling the people of southern part of Katsina state especially communities surrounding the dreaded Rugu forest. Rugu forest spanning over 220KM has been a hub for the bandits and no go area for any persons. The forest is also backbone for the illicit trade of animals. Kano Chronicle gathered that hundreds of lives were lost, many women raped, several persons maimed just as thousands of animals worth billions of naira were lost to the activities of such bandits who have made the forest their hideouts.

According to Bashir, (2017) the activities banditry has had major impact on Pastoral livelihoods in Katsina State. It has resulted to conflict related deaths according to 26.7% of the responses. It has also led to immigration (22.6%), internally displaced persons (17.2%), intolerance between communities (12.8%), high number of police patrol and military personnel (9.1%). Incidences of human rights abuse, sexual assault and rape (6.1%) have also increased, arrest and detention of the common people without probable cause or warrant (5.4%).

The above scholarly discourse signifies that banditry is a result of the inability of government and its security agencies to maintain law and order in the state particularly in the rural areas, making the rural communities to look more like Thomas Hobbes state of nature where life was based on the survival of the fittest with no single authority to regulates the life of the people in the society.

**Social Contract Theory**

According to Shapeera (2015) the concept of social contract theory traced the origin of government as the subject of agreement or contract by the people to form one single authority with a view to guarantee and safeguard their security of lives and property in the society and the general welfare of its citizens. Rufus & Eyo (2017) observed that, the social contract theory was developed to explain how society came into being. A hypothetical state of nature was used to explain how society was used to explain the conditions that necessitated the social contract. The major argument of the social contract theory is that in the state of nature, (the state that before the social contract came into being) the life of man was not guaranteed since there was no established system to regulate human behavior and as such it was all man for himself.

Shaapera (2015), noted that social contract theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau have not agreed on how the state came to be; they however, commonly agreed that it was a contract based on experiences from the state of nature where the main problem was the security of lives and property.

Social contract is therefore a subject of an agreement and decision of the people that came from experiences of the state of nature, to live in a civil society where security of lives and property is guaranteed, with civil laws that regulate the conducts of humans in the society.

**Hobbes State of Nature**

Social contract theory as advocated by Thomas Hobbes posits that in the beginning, man lived in what he called state of nature. This was the period where people had no government or laws to regulate them, there was hardship and oppression; people lived in anarchy; in this type of state, there is no morality, no justice, no industry and no civilization. In other words, the state of nature for Hobbes is a state of war without end; survival of the fittest and the elimination of the unfit (Laskar, 2013).
According to Hobbes (1988), Man by nature was born equal, selfish and domineering; when two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless cannot both enjoy they become enemies and begin to destroy one another. In his famous work Leviathan Thomas Hobbes was quoted saying:

So that in the nature of man, we find three principally causes of quarrel; competition, diffidence and glory. For the first maketh men invade for gain, the second for safety and the third for reputation. They use violence to make themselves masters of other mens persons, wives, children and cattle. Men live without a common power to keep them all in awe; they are in that condition which is called warre. Every man is against every man; there is continually feared and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poorer, nasty, brutish and short (Hobbes, 1988, p. 65).

Also in the state of nature Hobbes believed that men were born with natural freedom or liberty, and liberty according him is the ability to act according to one’s will without chain or hindrance.

A free man is he that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to (Hobbes, 1988, p.110).

The anarchical nature of Hobbes state of nature where men lived in constant fear of danger and violent death was what necessitated the formation of social contract or what he called the commonwealth or civil society (government) where people surrender their natural rights and have in return their lives and properties guaranteed and safeguarded by the commonwealth.


As a result of the social disorder that characterized Hobbes state of nature, people decided to come together and form a common wealth that would promulgate laws and have an impartial authority of one man or group of persons to enforce laws. Indeed, all people decided to surrender sovereignty to that impartial authority that is regarded as the sovereign; since man wanted stability, security and social life, progress and removal of fear (Ajom, 2006).

A common wealth is said to be instituted, when a multitude of men do agree, and covenant, every one, with every one, that to whatsoever man, or assembly of men, shall be given by the major part, the right to present the person of them all, (that is to say, to be their representative;) every one, as well he that voted for it, as he that voted against it shall authorize all the actions and Judgments, of that man or assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own, to the end to live peaceably among them among themselves, and be protected against other men. A Common wealth is that where the sovereign power is acquired by force, when men singly, or many together by plurality of voices, for fear of death or bonds, do authorize all the actions of that man, or assembly, that hath their lives and liberty in his power (Hobbes, 1988, p.90).

Hobbes (1988) maintained further that, in this social contract, the power of the sovereign was absolute and therefore not a party to the social contract and that was why he was not to be questioned. He was absolute and therefore no checks and balance, especially as the sovereign does the will of the universal sovereign God.
Banditry in Katsina State and Thomas Hobbes Social Contract

The state of affairs in Nigeria and Katsina State in particular can be clearly analyzed from Hobbes’ social contract theoretical perspective owing largely to the failure of Nigerian state and its actors whose constitutional obligations remain the protection of lives and property of the citizens including the provision of welfare services. Contrary to the extant provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended) which clearly captures Nigerian state’s social contract with the people, there is consistent and flagrant abuse of these provisions by successive state actors while the people helplessly watch with ignorance (Kenneth & Joseph, 2019).

Ajom (2006) believes that in the social contract theory, the state was created by a number of individuals voluntarily entering into a contract, the terms of which provided a political authority. In Nigeria been a democratic state with federal system of government the political leaders come to power through general election. Therefore, the president, the governors and other political office holders of the state are elected by the people as one part of the contract, the other part is for those elected leaders to guarantee and safeguard the security of life and property of the people as well as their welfare (Odo, 2015).

The contract in Nigeria is found in Chapter 11 section 1 (14) number 2a of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, where it was clearly stated that sovereignty belongs to people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derived all its powers and authority; and number 2b further stated that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government.

However, in Katsina State while people have fulfilled their own part of the contract by electing the political leaders, the elected authority has failed to serve its primary purpose as enshrined by the constitution of the country, in terms of safeguarding and protection of the lives and property of the people. Life in Katsina state is full of constant fear of kidnappings, banditry, armed robbery and cattle rustling especially in some local government areas such as Batsari, Kankara, Danmusa, Faskari, Jibia, Sabuwa, Safana and Dandume (Ladan, 2019). For instance: about 50 people were killed with many sustaining life threatening injuries and many houses, shops and vehicles were said to have been destroyed in some villages of Kankara and Jibia Local Government Areas of the State between August and September 2019 (Habibu, 2019).

Even the security operatives have not been able to guarantee their safety against the banditry activities that are very rampant across the Local Government Areas of the State. Bello (2019) observed that it has been recently reported that Arm Bandits numbering about 300 on motorcycle ambushed Police Armored Personnel Vehicle PAPV injuring many of the security operatives on duty in Safana Local Government. On the same date also attack was launched in Kirtawa Village of the same Local government by Bandits where more than 10 people were killed and many injured. There was also a report of the death of 2 persons and displacement of no fewer than 2000 persons after bandits attacked and sacked 10 villages of Batsari Local Government Area of the State.

From the above submission one can be made to understand that the people of Katsina State are highly unsafe, people are living in constant fear just like the case of Hobes State of nature. Recently the state governor himself was quoted to have said:

The citizens are on daily basis being harassed by bandits and kidnappers that are on rampage in the state. Our state is currently under serious siege by armed robbers,
kidnappers and armed bandits who arrest rural people at will and demand ransom, which if not paid results in killing their victims. The people of 34 local government of the state now sleep with one eye closed and the other one open. Our state is dangerous situation where nobody is safe not even myself. Travelers are afraid of being stopped on the high way and arrested by kidnappers who demand ransom (Masari 2019, p. 3).

With the above situation in the state one can simply argue that the authority of which was formed out of the quests for people’s welfare and security of lives and property has failed in its primary purpose. The state as lamented by the state governor is a clear reflection of Thomas Hobbes state of nature where life was solitary, nasty, and brutish and short. It is therefore evident that the Katsina State Government that is built on the principles of democracy and justice as espoused in the extent provisions of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended) has not lived up to the ideals of Thomas Hobbes social contract instead it is a clear reflection of state of nature where there were no laws, no government no justice, no morality but only life on the basis of survival of the fittest.

Katsina state and its actors in power have continued to silence this side of their bargain with the people due largely to their selfish desires to remain in the corridors of power. There has been flagrant abuse of democratic and justice process against the provisions of the social contract with high sense of impunity (Kenneth & Joseph, 2019). No wonder all these perpetual killings, Kidnappings and armed robbery in Katsina state is hardly reported in Katsina state official media plat forms and where reported the lives lost and the casualities are tempered and manipulated by the media to serve the interest of the state actors.

Kenneth & Joseph (2019) have rightly observe that the state actors continue to take undue advantage of the weakness and docility of the people to utilize their freely given sovereignty to question the level of injustice meted out to them as they have continued to suffer political and socio-economic difficulties with little or no hope of survival in terms of security and welfare against the motives of Thomas Hobbes for an ideal state.

Conclusion

Nigeria since independence has been facing so many socio-economic and political challenges among which the most recent and popular is the menace of insecurity of lives and property across the 36 states of the federation including Katsina State. The insecurity all over the nation in terms of Niger-Delta Militancy, Boko Haram insurgency, armed robbery, kidnapping, Banditry, farmers and Herds men clash and other related ethno and religious clash is no doubt a clear and total reflection of Thomas Hobbes state of nature where life was solitary, nasty, brutish and short. In other words, security of lives and property of the people being the major factor that necessitated the formation of the commonwealth according to Thomas Hobbes seems to be unrealistic as far as Katsina state and Nigeria in general is concern. This is because the modern state actors lack the political will to abide by the contracts, of which provision of security of lives and property is the primary responsibility.

Katsina State is one the states of the federation that is recently known with problem of rural banditry and kidnappings especially in the Local Government Areas of Batsari, Safana, Jibia, Sabuwa, Dandume, Kankara and Danmusa where many are killed, raped, robbed and kidnapped on daily basis, and thousands of people have been displaced. The problem has rich an alarming stage to the extent that the state governor has recently lamented that nobody is safe across the 34 Local government areas of the state, not even himself. This
therefore shows that Katsina State government and Nigerian government by extension have failed to deliver their own part of the contract stated in Chapter 11 section 1 (14) number 2a and b of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. According to the constitution just like Thomas Hobbes social contract sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria and the primary function of the state is to provide security of lives and property as well as their welfare.

The failure of the state and its actors to adhere to the terms and conditions of the social contract both at the federal and state levels is central to the problem of insecurity in not only Katsina State but Nigeria at large. It is also important to note that entering in to dialogue with mass murderers and kidnappers by Katsina and some other north western states of the federation in the guise of seeking for peace is an insult to Nigerian constitution and amount to rewarding to criminality in the society. Unless the contractors at all levels adhere and respect the contract provided in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in which the sovereignty belongs to the people and security of lives and property of the people remains the primary duties of the state, tackling insecurity situation of the country and citizens' welfare will remain a mirage in the country and the ideal state dreamed by Thomas Hobbes where people live a good life will remain an illusion in Nigeria. Adherence to the contract by the state actors means commitment towards its responsibilities according to the contract in terms of political will to combat insecurity, providing effective education and employment opportunities for the timing youth, restriction or banning of light weapons proliferation, ensuring effective and sufficient security apparatus to be able to contain and combat the insurgency and provision of good and effective leadership at all the levels of the federation.

**Recommendations**

1. It is therefore recommended that the best way to ensure security of lives and property of the people of Katsina State and Nigeria in general is through sincere and strict adherence to terms and conditions of the social contracts as enshrined in chapter 11 section 1(14) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended). That is, the people on one hand must be honest on their constitutional duties and obligations towards the state by electing the desired leadership that would guarantee and safeguard their security of lives and property irrespective of the region, religion, tribe or party affiliation.

2. The political leaders on the other hand must not abuse the powers given to them by their subject and ensure that the purpose of which brought them to office is effectively and efficiently served. Hence mutual respect and adherence to the social contract is the best way to solving the problem of banditry in Katsina State.

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