

## CINEMA AND THE ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: INSIGHTS FROM THE TV SERIES, *SONS OF THE CALIPHATE*

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### **Abstract**

Three prominent individuals, namely, Khalifa Maiyaki, the offspring of the Emir of Kowa Emirate, Nuhu Bula, the offspring of a prominent business magnate, and Dikko Loko, the progeny of a highly influential political figure, are portrayed as a collective entity referred to as the "Sons of the Caliphate," symbolizing the ruling class in northern Nigeria. Their behaviour, characterized by recklessness, corruption, and the exploitation of both humans and the natural environment, serves as the focal point of this discussion. This article delves into the analysis of 'sticky portrayals of actors,' i.e., specific filmic shots that stand out as symbolic representations, visually depicting the three main characters as representatives of a particular social class. By drawing on Murray Bookchin's Eco-Socialism Theory (E-ST) and exploring the concept of power within these sensorial moments, the study examines how the film (*Sons of the Caliphate*) enables us to comprehend how the "Sons of the Caliphate" function as a corrupt agency that significantly contributes to the ongoing insecurity and humanitarian crises plaguing the northern region of Nigeria. The paper submits that there is a dearth of cinematic productions addressing the ecological challenges faced by northern Nigeria. Nonetheless, *Sons of the Caliphate* serves as a damning indictment of the political, traditional, and business elite in the region.

**Keywords:** Cinema, Ecology, E-ST, Northern Nigeria, *Sons of the Caliphate*.

### **Introduction**

Cinema in northern Nigeria possesses a distinct cultural and social importance, as evidenced by the TV series *Sons of the Caliphate*, which provides valuable insights into the ecological struggles of the region. The TV series *Sons of the Caliphate* functions as a potent medium through which to explore and raise awareness about the urgent environmental dilemmas confronting northern Nigeria. The show effectively underscores the interconnectedness of human activities, natural resources, and the delicate equilibrium of ecosystems in the area. Three notable individuals, specifically Khalifa Maiyaki, the descendant of the Emir of Kowa Emirate, Nuhu Bula, the offspring of a prominent business tycoon, and Dikko Loko, the progeny of an immensely influential political figure, are depicted as a unified entity known as the "Sons of the Caliphate," which is also the title of the TV series, representing the ruling elite of the northern region of Nigeria. Their actions, characterized by recklessness, corruption, and the exploitation of both human beings and nature. The advent of TV series such as *Sons of the Caliphate* signifies a burgeoning interest in employing visual

storytelling to illuminate significant ecological and environmental matters. In this article, we will delve into the manner by which cinema in Northern Nigeria, particularly as exemplified by the *Sons of the Caliphate*, contributes to the discourse on ecological challenges and the representation of environmental issues in popular media.

### **Eco Challenges in Northern Nigeria: An Overview**

According to Onuoha, Ngobiri, Ochekwu and Onuoha, the primary ecological obstacles encountered by northern Nigeria encompass desertification, land degradation, and biodiversity loss. Desertification, resulting from a combination of drought and land mismanagement, has engendered conflicts regarding grazing lands and farmlands, contamination of water sources and air, internal displacement of individuals, and destruction of human lives and properties (2). This has also precipitated the depletion of water resources and land carrying capacity, leading to migration and conflicts between farmers and pastoralists (Ikeke 7). Moreover, land use alteration, driven by climate change, invasive species, and poverty, has contributed to the decline of biodiversity in Nigeria (Olagunju, Adewoye, Adewoye and Opasola 23). Deforestation, overgrazing, and misuse of water resources are among the human activities exacerbating this problem. This has also been by **Obayelu** in his "Assessment of Land Use Dynamics and the Status of Biodiversity Exploitation and Preservation in Nigeria" (6). The ecological challenges exert substantial impact on food crop security, fish production, and hydroelectric power generation within the region.

Addressing these challenges necessitates collaborative endeavours, including afforestation, ethical consciousness-raising, and sustainable land use practices. The region also grapples with the repercussions of climate change, such as heightened frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, insurgency particularly in mining communities, lead poisoning in gold mining sites, and the emergence of militia groups. While it is undeniable that northern Nigeria is confronted by serious ecological challenges, it is imperative to acknowledge that the region has also achieved progress in tackling the issues. The government and local communities have made efforts to implement reforestation programmes and adopt sustainable agricultural practices. Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that the impact of climate change is not exclusively adverse. In certain instances, alterations in climate patterns have presented opportunities for crop diversification and economic activities in the region. These changes have engendered the development of novel livelihood strategies for communities, thereby contributing to endeavours to adapt to the evolving environment.

### **Conceptual/Discourse Exploration**

The relationship between humans and the environment appears to be a narrative of devastation, as the process of urbanization and the adoption of a monetary-based economy have led detrimental consequences such as deforestation, mining, overpopulation, and pollution. Klain argues that "initial data indicates that global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by 61 per cent since 1990, which marked the commencement of significant climate treaty negotiations" (11). Regrettably, this

situation shows no signs of improvement. On the contrary, emissions continue to escalate. The United Nations, seemingly, struggles to maintain control, as no significant measures have been implemented since the highly publicized 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen. Intriguingly, discussions concerning economic and political dominance, as well as the production of weapons and atomic energy, often overshadow environmental concerns. As a result, Sakellari's analysis of three widely recognized climate change films, namely, *The Day after Tomorrow*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and *The Age of Stupid*, posits that the intricate nature of the climate change matter impedes the comprehension and modification of public behaviour (827). It contends that popular climate change films have the capacity to influence public perception and prompt action (Sakellari 828). Nonetheless, "cultural elements, encompassing historical, religious, and social aspects, possess the potential to shape the manner in which the audience responds to initiatives aimed at communicating climate change. The responses to films may diverge from one nation to another owing to the presence of these factors" (Sakellari 829).

The World Bank's report in 2021 reveals a noticeable increase in the population of Nigeria, which stands at 213,401,322. Nigeria, being Africa's most populous black nation, holds significant relevance, particularly when considering its impact on environmental issues and climate change. This is due to the pursuit of essential necessities such as food, shelter, recreation, and infrastructural facilities by its people. Consequently, nature bears the brunt of these pursuits in various ways. A prime example is the conflict that arises between communities and oil merchants due to the activities of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This conflict is compounded by the emergence of militia groups opposing the government, while the local community remains impoverished despite the discovery of oil. Moreover, the pollution and damage inflicted upon both humans and the water bodies in the Niger Delta continue to persist without any apparent solutions in sight. Grant asserts that Nigeria possesses one of the most elevated rates of deforestation (3.3 per cent) across the globe. Over the course of the past three decades, the country has experienced the depletion of approximately 6.1 million hectares or 35.7 per cent of its forested areas (23). Nigeria encompasses remarkable biological diversity, serving as a habitat for gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons, and elephants, while also boasting a total of 899 bird species, 274 mammal species, 154 reptile species, and 53 amphibian species (Grant 24). The repercussions of this destruction are two-fold, adversely impacting both human and animal populations, thereby projecting an ominous trajectory towards the complete extinction of various avian and animal species.

Agina's submission regarding the Niger Delta provides us with a comprehensive understanding of the historiography of exploitation in the region. Agina claims that during the mid-1950s, the Nigerian state made a significant discovery of oil in the southern areas of the nation, known as the Niger Delta region. This discovery prompted the commencement of crude oil exportation. Through a partnership between Shell Petroleum and the Nigerian government, most of the government revenue became dependent on the profits generated from the oil industry (56). Unfortunately, the exploration of oil had detrimental effects on the land and its inhabitants in the Niger

Delta. Ogoniland suffered greatly from these consequences. William Boyd, a British writer, and a close associate of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a prominent Nigerian writer and advocate for minority rights, aptly describes the situation, stating, "what was once a tranquil rural community thriving with prosperous farmers and fishermen has now transformed into an ecological wasteland emanating a sulfuric stench. The creeks and water holes have become contaminated due to uncontrolled oil spillage, while the ominous glow of gas flares illuminates the night sky with an orange hue" (Boyd 2).

The Nigerian film industry has made significant investments in exploring the themes of ecology, human exploitation, and environmental exploitation in the Niger-Delta region. Noteworthy examples of these films include *Across the Niger* (directed by Izu Ojukwu and Kingsley Ogoro, 2007), *Amazing Grace* (directed by Jeta Amata, 2005), *Anini 1 & 2* (directed by Fred Amata, 2005), *Black November* (directed by Jeta Amata, 2012), *Blood and Oil* (directed by David Attwood, 2011), *Crude War 1 & 2* (directed by Ugezu J. Ugezu, 2011), *Delta Force* (directed by Glenn Ellis, 1995), *Heat of the Moment* (directed by Glenn Ellis, 1992), *King of Crude 1 & 2* (directed by Ugezu J. Ugezu, 2007), *Militants 1 & 2* (directed by Moses Inwang, 2007), *Oil Village 1 & 2* (directed by Kalu Anya, 2001), *Stubborn Grasshopper 1 & 2* (directed by Simisola Opeoluwa, 2001), *Sweet Crude* (directed by Sandy Cioffi, 2009), *The Drilling Fields* (directed by Glenn Ellis, 1994), and *The Liquid Black Gold 1 & 2* (directed by Ikenna E. Aniekwe, 2008).

The narratives of ecology in northern Nigeria, particularly in the mainstream Nollywood or Nigeria's film industry, have received very little attention. This issue is critically examined in McCain's influential chapter titled "*Nollywood and Its Others: Questioning English Language Hegemony in Nollywood Studies.*" While the focus in this paper revolves around the cinema narratives in northern Nigeria concerning ecological issues, it is important to note that the film under scrutiny, *Sons of the Caliphate*, is primarily set in northern Nigeria and employs multiple languages, predominantly English and Hausa. As a result, it may not fit into the conventional definition of mainstream "Nollywood" films, which are typically of Yoruba/Igbo/Benin origin or produced in English or its pidgin variant. Similarly, it may not exclusively align with the category of Kannywood films, which are of Hausa origin and mainly produced in Kano State. Instead, it could be classified as part of the emerging "New Nollywood" movement, as described by scholars, or what John Illah refers to as the "Nigerian film industry" denoting an industry that transcends linguistic boundaries, as highlighted by McCain. In fact, the film's director, Kenneth Gyang, expresses a similar sentiment, stating, "I would like to view my productions as representative of Nigerian cinema," echoing Illah's perspective.

Historically, the region known as northern Nigeria has existed as a separate entity within the larger country of Nigeria. This division has been marked by distinct customs, foreign relations, and security structures. In 1962, northern Nigeria expanded its territory by incorporating the British northern Cameroons, which chose to align itself as a province within northern Nigeria. The proclamation of the protectorate of northern Nigeria took place at Ida on January 1, 1897, under the leadership of Frederick Lugard. It was on the 15th of March in 1957 that Northern Nigeria achieved self-

government, with Sir Ahmadu Bello assuming the role of its first premier. Presently, the region encompasses the states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau States, Federal Capital Territory FCT Abuja, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe, as well as Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. Northern Nigeria is currently bedevilled by various militia groups, such as Boko Haram, herdsmen, bandits, and kidnappers, which have contributed to the human catastrophe and precarity in the region.

Simultaneously, there are numerous mining ponds spanning from the tin city of Jos in Plateau State to the gold mines in Zamfara. In a documentary (*Lunar Landscape*) directed by Kenneth Gyang and produced by a German organization, Heinrich Boll, Nnimmo Bassey of the Health of Mother Earth, an NGO, aptly describes the situation. Bassey highlights that in many regions around the world where there has been extensive extraction of solid minerals, significant environmental challenges have arisen. These include the contamination of water bodies with toxic chemicals and the emergence of various diseases, ultimately leading to widespread poverty in these areas (Gyang *Lunar Landscape*). Historical records indicate that in 1904, the British colonial government established a mineral survey team, which led to the discovery of a tin deposit in the Jos-Plateau area, now known as Plateau State. The trend continued until the indigenization policy replaced the involvement of foreign experts in the mining sector. As reported by the *Daily Trust*:

In 1972, the federal government of Nigeria, seeking to break the dominance that expatriates had in tin mining, designed a nationalisation policy that placed Nigerians in charge of the sector. The government's indigenisation decree achieved the compulsory acquisition of controlling shares in foreign companies. But this policy created a problem because the few foreigners still in it lost interest. The Nigerian Mining Corporation (NMC), coming with the new policy the same year, did not help the situation as the activities of the tin mining companies declined steadily until the early eighties when a merger of existing companies became inevitable. (<https://dailytrust.com/plateau-bears-scars-of-tin-mining/> )

This policy has also facilitated the opportunity for illicit mining activities to be carried out by the local population and their foreign counterparts, resulting in severe consequences characterized by heightened insecurity in the regions. Similarly, there has been a noticeable increase in acts of banditry in many areas in Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, and other northern states. The phenomenon of climate change holds significant implications for the mining industry and the issue of insecurity. The mining sector's impact on water resources and its capacity to adapt to climate change can potentially influence water security within the communities that host these mining activities (Leonard 2). In general, the issue of climate change exacerbates the problem of insecurity and presents challenges across various sectors, including mining and food security. As articulated in Brzoska's article titled "Climate Change as a Driver of Security Policy," it is emphasized that "climate change has rapidly emerged as a significant concern on the security agenda of states and international organizations" (11). This article examines the crises above as a convergence of the natural and cultural

realms, and the ways in which the mediums of cinema, theatre, and drama can portray and question certain aspects of these profound existential issues.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Eco-Socialism within the realm of film has been an area of investigation conducted through various methods. Some scholars argue that films of all genres, ranging from mainstream Hollywood blockbusters to independent art-house productions, possess the capability, whether consciously or unconsciously, to approach ecological issues and raise public consciousness. However, the 21st century has observed a significant transformation with the emergence of ‘green movies’ in India, which effectively illuminate ecological concerns such as water contamination and scarcity, with the aim of sensitizing viewers to the necessity of water conservation. While these summaries provide valuable insights into the broader paths of eco-cinema and its ability to address ecological matters, the specific notion of eco-socialism within the realm of film remains unexplored.

Eco-Socialism, also referred to as green socialism, socialist ecology, ecological materialism, or revolutionary ecology, is an ideological amalgamation that encompasses elements of socialism, green politics, ecology, and alter-globalization or anti-globalization. Within the realm of eco-socialism, it is generally posited that the expansion of the capitalist system is the root of social exclusion, poverty, warfare, and environmental deterioration through the processes of globalization and imperialism. These occurrences transpire under the watchful ‘eyes’ of repressive states and transnational structures. The originator of the Eco-Socialism Theory (E-ST) is Murray Bookchin. E-ST asserts that the capitalist economic system is fundamentally incongruous with the ecological and social prerequisites of sustainability (Magdoff and Foster 20).

Magdoff and Foster, placing economic priority on meeting human needs within the ecological boundaries, as required by sustainable development, question the inherent mechanisms of capitalism. Eco-socialists advocate for the replacement of capitalism with eco-socialism, a socio-economic and political structure that embodies equality and aims to reconcile human society with the non-human environment, ultimately addressing the current ecological crisis and paving the way for sustainability. In her book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, Klein sheds light on the capitalist frameworks and the misconceptions that obscure the climate discourse when she submits that:

Communal forests around the world are being turned into privatized tree farms and preserve so their owners can collect something called “carbon credits” a lucrative scam...there is a booming trade in “weather as if deadly disasters were a game on a Vegas craps table (between 2005 and 2006 the weather derivatives market jumped nearly fivefold, from \$9.7 billion to \$45.2 billion). Global insurance companies are making billions in profits, in part by selling new kinds of protection schemes to developing countries that have done almost nothing to create the climate crises, but whose infrastructure is intensely vulnerable to its impact. (8-9)

Against the backdrop of capitalism, which is a system rooted in profit, there is a desire to privatize and profit even from disastrous events. Thus, eco-sociologists assume that the expansion of the capitalist system leads to social exclusion, poverty, war, and environmental degradation due to globalization and imperialism. This expansion occurs under the supervision of repressive states and transnational structures. From this theoretical perspective, we investigate the aesthetics and employ formal strategies to examine the relationship between cinema/film and the world in which it exists as both ontology and discourse.

### ***Sons of the Caliphate: A Synopsis***

*Sons of the Caliphate* is a television series that is situated in the northern region of Nigeria. The narrative unfolds in the fictitious Kowa State in northern Nigeria, focusing on three influential individuals. Khalifa Maiyaki, Nuhu Bula, and Dikko Loko, who cultivated a close friendship. Nuhu Bula and Dikko Loko become entangled in a romantic entanglement with the remarkably beautiful Binta Kutigi, who seeks retribution for the death of her father during her childhood. The inception of political machinations arises when Kalifah Maiyaki, who coincidentally is the prince and offspring of the Emir of Kowa, expresses his intention to vie for the position of Governor in Kowa State. Consequently, his father and the emirate council endeavour to obstruct Khalifah, the rightful heir, from entering the realm of politics. Concurrently, his stepmother intensifies her scheme to orchestrate his candidacy for the sake of her son, Hamza, who stands next in line for the throne. Alhaji Sani Bula, an affluent individual, seeks to insert his son Nuhu into the race for his personal gain, namely the misappropriation of Kowa State's ecological funds. While the interplay of love and revenge persists throughout the thirteen (13) episodes in season one, the subsequent thirteen episodes in season two revolve around the motive of the competition and the reality faced by the populace, as the violence for control of mining sites, particularly in rural areas, unfolds due to the underlying desire to profit from the sites while the people continue to suffer untold hardship.

### **Power and Ecological Discourse in Northern Nigeria**

The Eco-Socialism Theory (E-ST) generally assumes that the expansion of the capitalist system is the cause of social exclusion, poverty, war and environmental degradation through globalization and imperialism, under the supervision of repressive states and transnational structures. In this analysis, we define power within the text and context of the film because as Agina argued on what she calls "methodological discussion and debate" in the study of Nollywood or the "Nigerian film Industry" giving credence to the submission of Jackie Stacey's term "methodological questions." She states that, "methodological questions need to be debated in film studies because without such a debate the politics of knowledge remain hidden and mystified" (2). Agina further submits that:

Among scholars, only Haynes wrote brief commentaries alluding to the films as political critiques (Haynes, 2006); and among journalists, Steve Ayorinde and Shaibu Husseini produced newspaper articles that by 2014 were irretrievably lost in the archives of The Guardian (personal communication). Absent from existing scholarship

was the reception of films made in the past. This revealed the limits of the methods of enquiry, particularly those of textual analyses which currently dominate the literature. (1)

Without undermining the existing frameworks of ideas found in scholarly journals and other written works, Agina asserts that the critical examination of research methods is crucial in the contemporary empirical scholarship of the arts and humanities. Arguably, the study of film in Nigeria is still in its developing stages, with a significant emphasis on literature and theories of theatre. This further contributes to the ongoing discussion while narrowing the knowledge gap in the pursuit of addressing the question of "why? Barnett and Duvall offer a definition of power as "the production, within social relationships, of consequences that influence the abilities of individuals to determine their circumstances and destiny" (Agina 13). This definition modifies Scott's perspective of the "functioning of power within social relationships."

Overall, their conceptual framework can be summarized by the following quotation: this concept has two dimensions at its core: 1. the kinds of social relations through which actors' capacities are affected and affected and, 2. the specificity of those social relations. Conventionally for social theorists, social relations can be viewed as being broadly of two kinds: relations of interaction among previously constituted social actors; or relations of constitution of actors as particular kinds of social beings. For the second dimension, the crucial distinction is whether the social relations of interaction or constitution through which power works are direct and specific, or indirect and socially diffuse (45). With this theory in mind, we set out to define power structures in the text and context. The actors in the film are drivers of the story and what they say about 'each other' and 'a thing' describe the meaning and function of that material or idea. Binta Kutigi the antagonist paints a good picture of the personalities of the three friends when she said bitterly.

Binta Kutigi:...Just because their fathers are rich. Just because they are sons of the caliphate.



*Plate 1: Binta Kutigi is angry while telling Loti about the Sons of the Caliphate*



In this scene, Binta directs our attention towards the location of power, as she delineates their social relationship as one that can be described as 'rich vs. poor' and 'offender and victim.' She herself stands as a victim, subjected to both structural and forceful circumstances, evident through her tender age and her poignant tears as she bears witness to her father's demise due to the heedless actions of the 'sons of the caliphate'. This act of reckless driving serves as a symbolic representation of a leadership that lacks compassion towards the destitute members of society. A leadership that remains indifferent to the well-being and sustenance of the impoverished, while persisting in governing the state despite the countless challenges posed by inequality and the exploitation of both human and natural resources within the environment. It is within this context that we perceive the manifestation of power, as symbolized by the enigmatic characterization of the 'sons of the caliphate.' The subsequent dialogue meticulously elaborates upon the intricate power dynamics that exist.

### ***Sons of the Caliphate's Representation of Northern Nigeria's Environment and Power Structure***

#### **I. Traditional Institution**

The Emir of Kowa holds both constitutional and structural authority in the northern region. The Nigerian constitution acknowledges the significance of the throne, and he is the temporal and spiritual leader of the people. The institution commands a great deal of respect. Thus, Khalifa Maiyaki, the son of the Emir of Kowa, embodies a form of power that aligns with Barnett and Duvall's concept of "structural power." This type of power functions as the constitutive relations of a direct and specific nature, thus mutually shaping and defining the productive power that operates through diffuse constitutive relations. These relations are responsible for generating the social capabilities of individuals in their respective contexts.



***Plate 2: Kowa Emirate Palace in Council. Seating arrangement alone locates the place of power.***

## II. The Political Class

Dikko Loko, the offspring of Alhaji Loko, the influential figure in the realm of politics, embodies an alternative manifestation of authority. As posited by Barnett and Duvall, "compulsory ~and, (to a lesser degree, institutional) power accentuates agency to the extent that structure assumes the role of a backdrop within which As endeavours and Bs responses are situated and restricted, thus heavily relying on agency and treating structure as a constraint" (49). Within this context, Alhaji Loko personifies an establishment for the political potency he wields, dictating who attains political positions and reaping the benefits through the use of coercion or other intimidating methods. He epitomizes a political dominion that is both immediate (compulsory) and institutional (diffuse) due to the democratic principle that mandates regular elections in Nigeria every four years, thereby encompassing aspects of both direct and institutional authority. The political Godfather concurrently assumes such authority.

## III. The Business Class

Nuhu Bula, the offspring of Sani Bula, is a prosperous young individual who received his upbringing in a foreign land. In this context, power manifests itself in a structural and productive manner, with its direct allies being of a political nature. The political entities establish laws and regulations that serve to benefit the business class. The key aspect lies in the desire of A to prompt B to modify its behaviour in a specific direction. Within this framework, the central focus of the film revolves around the discourse of ecology. We witness Sani Bula engaged in a conversation with Jinjiri, contemplating the potential influence on the outcome of the upcoming Kowa state general elections, specifically targeting "A" (the political class). The Bula Group of companies, an indigenous establishment, possesses a substantial stake in a multinational mining corporation that has been operating in the Kowa Local communities for approximately six decades, without considering the health of the local residents or providing compensation.

Bula: Jinjiri, I have been thinking, you see having Nuhu becomes governor is not a bad idea.

Jinjiri: it is a brilliant idea; we need to work on *Loko* (political Godfather) to lick his wounds.

**Bula:** trust me *Jinjire Loko* is the least of my worries right now and especially with all that is happening in the company ...having access to that eighty billion ecological trust funds ...



## **Sons of the Caliphate S01E02 Episode 2**

*Plate 3: Action of Bula and Jinjiri discussing the ecological funds and the prospects of looting by using political power*

The intention of this shot was to capture the beauty of the garden and emphasize the importance of environmental appreciation. The scene was filmed outdoors in a serene location where only the trees and grass could hear the characters. This paper recognizes the significance of this setting as it serves as a metaphor for the relationship between humans and nature, particularly in the context of capitalist production, where humans often seek to exploit and destroy the natural environment. The relationship between culture and nature is complex, as cultural practices can have a significant impact on the natural environment. For instance, corruption within a culture can lead to a variety of negative environmental consequences, including poor management of natural resources, degradation of wildlife habitats, and indiscriminate tree-felling for personal gain. Additionally, cultural practices such as hunting can contribute to the depletion of wildlife populations, while a lack of proper environmental education can exacerbate these issues.

As Olorode noted while referencing Mohammed: the effect of climate change in far northern Nigeria has assumed such magnitude that the minimum vegetation cover in Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, Yobe, Maiduguri, Taraba, and Adamawa states respectively have already fallen below 10% as against the ideal requirement of 25% ecological cover recommended by UNEP to support Fulani man and his herds. The predominant Fulani herder of the lower Sahel and Sudan savannah and the northwest and northeast Nigeria are now migrating and gradually becoming natives in the middle-belt region to find greener pasture for their herds... the farmer has fears that the Fulani herds will destroy his farmlands. The natural result is a clash over land rights (6).

Culturally, land is synonymous with birthright. With a rising population in northern Nigeria, the crises over the environment seem to be on the threshold as the

ruling political elites as depicted in the *sons of the caliphate* continue to take environmental issues with levity by looting and mismanaging the ecological intervention funds. Here we underscore a point that a film is a cultural material and does not exist in a void. The writer and director of this film seem to stand in the gap, we see this action as a form of power call it direct structural and proactively diffuse because it reminds the viewer of how he/she has failed to replace the ruling hegemony in the state. The narrative is a graphic reminder of cases already proved beyond a reasonable doubt in the Nigerian courts to cite one, the former Governor of Plateau state According to the anti-graft agency, EFCC through its website <http://www.efcnigeria.org>:

His trial before Justice Adebukola Banjoko of a Federal Capital Territory, FCT, High Court, Gudu, Abuja had commenced on January 25, 2016, with the EFCC presenting exhibits, including the statement, as part of documents to prosecute him for allegedly diverting N1.162 billion Ecological Fund meant for the state, to private companies and individuals. In the statement, Dariye had acknowledged instructing all States Trust Bank, (now defunct), on the disbursement of the said N1.162 billion Fund, which had been released by the Office of the Ecological Fund and credited to the bank.

He was granted a presidential pardon on April 14, 2023, despite facing charges. The question remains whether justice was served in this case. In a documentary film titled "*Lunar Landscape*," Kenneth Gyang described the environment as a barren landscape with stepped-sided mounds and multi-coloured ponds or lakes. This is available for viewing at <https://ng.boell.org/en/resource-politics>. Additionally, there have been cases of lead poisoning in Zamfara State. The root cause of this crisis is unsafe mining and ore processing. It is crucial to provide those involved in mining and ore processing with access to safe facilities and programs to prevent further exposure to toxic lead. A report from MSF states that in March 2010, an estimated four hundred children died in Zamfara state due to prominent levels of lead in their blood.”

### **Insights from the TV Series *Sons of the Caliphate***

Insights obtained from the television series, *Sons of the Caliphate*, reveal several valuable lessons. Firstly, it highlights the conflict in the northern region of Nigeria, which can be seen as a manifestation of the struggle between mankind and the natural world. This conflict is fuelled by a pervasive culture that exploits both the environment and fellow human beings, perpetuated by capitalist tendencies within the ruling class. It is imperative to review the efficacy of the federal government's creation of ecological funds intervention. This initiative, established in 1981 based on the recommendations of the Okigbo Commission, requires careful evaluation to ensure its optimal functionality and alignment with the needs and aspirations of the people. Moreover, the Northern region of Nigeria is currently experiencing a class war. This conflict arises from the impoverishment of Northerners, orchestrated by collusion between the traditional, political, and business elite. Considering these insights, it is essential to launch a comprehensive and extensive campaign to raise awareness and knowledge among the general populace. This grassroots movement should focus on countering the detrimental effects of informal mining activities prevalent in Northern Nigeria. The

proliferation of illegal and informal mining, lacking modern equipment and techniques, must be effectively monitored, and regulated.

The wrath exhibited by the youthful Binta Kutigi in the film serves as a symbolic gesture, gradually maturing from adolescence to adulthood in pursuit of justice. However, the narrative fails to elucidate the economic transformation of the impoverished Binta. Instead, it highlights her allure and femininity to connect and socialize with the ruling elites. To attain justice, she must assimilate into the same social class as the *Sons of the Caliphate*, thus shedding light on the issue of social stratification and inequality in northern Nigeria. Despite the increasing prevalence of banditry, kidnapping, and the killing of innocent civilians, the media narrative neglects to address the underlying class conflict, opting instead for superficial coverage. Olorode argues that this is due to the fear of a potential class war, leading both the ruling class and the media to emphasize ethnicity and religion rather than class dynamics in the conflict between herdsmen and farmers.

Echoing Olorode's viewpoint, the release of corrupt politicians through presidential pardons, while accidental inmates and petty criminals languish in prisons without receiving justice or opportunities for rehabilitation, exemplifies the influence of social class. In this context, power is wielded and enforced through control and silence. Every day, informal miners lose their lives in the ponds of Jos, Plateau, yet these incidents are not reported by the media. For instance, on September 3rd, 2018, a retired army general who had been declared missing was discovered three months later in one of the mining ponds in Dura-Du, Jos South LGA of Plateau. Interestingly, the narrative surrounding this incident took on an ethnoreligious dimension, deflecting attention from the issue of mismanagement of ecological funds allocated to the state for the maintenance of such ponds, due to the collusion of the ruling class in the Northern Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis, the continued fragmentation of the masses along ethnic and religious lines, pervasive corruption at various levels, the commercialization of elective positions, excessive costs associated with governance, and the persistent state of public insecurity are often cited as the root causes of conflict in northern Nigeria. However, the film's counter-narrative deserves commendation, as it challenges the prevailing discourse and accuses the northern ruling elites, referred to as the *Sons of the Caliphate*, of instigating the human and environmental crises faced in the region. These crises are a direct consequence of exploitative practices aimed at generating wealth and exerting dominance, deeply entrenched within the framework of capitalism.

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