

**THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF BIRNIN-KUDU
SETTLEMENT PATTERNS: AN ETHNO-ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

In this paper, we study from an ethno-archaeological perspective of Birnin-Kudu settlement pattern. The study is concerned with the explanation of socio-political and economic structures among the other relevant structures that made Birnin-Kudu settlement pattern using the present structures to explain the past. Birnin-Kudu is an ancient settlement with both old and new settlements that has an ethnographic parallel which indicates a linkage between the past and the present such as Palace, Mosque, Prison Yard, Market Square and Defensive wall among many structures. This paper is a result of an ethno-archaeological investigation of Birnin-Kudu settlement from the 2019 field work research carried out by research team from Department of Archaeology, ABU, Zaria. This paper therefore, highlights and interprets the structures related to socio-political and economic activities among the people of Birnin-Kudu.

Keywords: Ethnoarchaeology, Settlement Pattern, Socio-Political, Economy and Birnin-Kudu.

Introduction

The study of settlement pattern in archaeology is a verse aspect of the discipline that seek to build up from the static spatial distribution of material culture and anthropogenic modifications visible in the contemporary landscape to an understanding of the dynamic cultural and environmental processes of human settlement system (Bevan and Conolly, 2006). Many scholars have attempted the explanations and analysis of settlement pattern in different dimensions depending on what is situated on the landscape of the settlement and the area of interest to researcher(s). The case of Birnin-Kudu's settlement pattern can be viewed in different angles as researchers were provided with multiple case studies and interest from the settlement based on the nature, uniqueness and several important structures on the surface of the settlement. Unequivocally, this paper however, explored the causes and occurrence of modern socio-political and economic structures in the present Birnin-Kudu settlement pattern so as to explain and interpret the past settlement pattern of Birnin-Kudu, as stated by Stone (1991) that today archaeologist explore the causes behind modern phenomenon that have also occurred in the past, so as to explain the how it happened in the past.

Description of the sites

Birnin-Kudu is an ancient settlement, situated at Birnin-Kudu Local Government Area of Jigawa state, the settlement is bordered by Dutse to the North, Banji to the East, Ningi to the South and Sumaila to the West. This settlement lies between lat $11^{\circ} 21' - 11^{\circ} 31' N$ and $9^{\circ} 19' - 9^{\circ} 29' E$ (See Fig I). Birnin-Kudu settlement is characterized by both old and the new settlements. The Birnin-Kudu old settlement was then referred to as Birnin-Bordan which was occupied by the present people of Birnin-Kudu in the past.

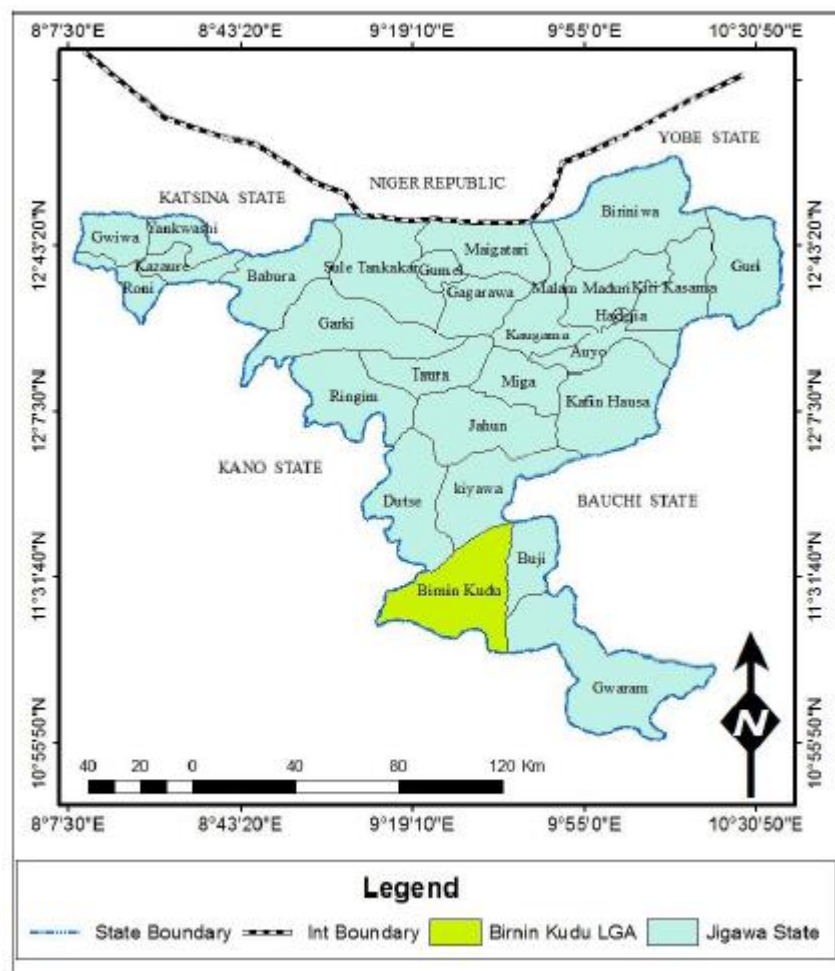


Figure I: Map of Bimin Kudu in Jigawa State Source: ARGHIS 10.3 software

The settlement is characterized by plain surface with loamy type of soils suitable for agriculture and moisture in nature because of the availability of clay which is yellowish in colour on the settlement, these characteristics made it easy for both habitation and domestic activities in the past. The old settlement of Birnin-Kudu is characterized by presence of material remains that indicated the past settlement layout of the area which include defensive walls with gates; clusters of collapsed Palace, Mosque and Prison; Industrial areas; clan demarcations; market square among many others. While, the present day settlement is where the people occupy presently, which is linear and nucleated in nature, their houses are arranged in a straight line, facing each other with an easement/pathway for the movement of people and mobility across the settlement. The settlement has presence of different clans as observed at the old settlement and presence of market square. Some of their houses were built with mud and roofed with zinc, while some were built with modern day blocks. There was an observation of social stratification in their architectural buildings, because their houses were built according to their respective classes. There were presence of Sarkin's Palace, Mosque and Prison yard at clustered both in the present and the past settlements.

Settlement pattern

Settlement Pattern in archaeology, "tries to examine how traces of human activity-all buildings, large and small, associated habitation debris, and land form modifications attributable to man"- are distributed over the landscape through time with the aim of shedding light on the nature of the past interactions among humans, as well as between humans and the environment (Volta, 2007; Ashmore and Willey 1981:3-4). The study of settlement pattern addresses broader and more basic cultural problems, by analyzing

human adaptations to the environment, because culture in every given society rested on adaptation. These would make 'explicit the kind of villages in an area, evidence of clustering or lack of clustering of structures, number and distribution of villages in an area, and interferences about population density and stability', among many others (Volta, 2007; and Steward and Setzler, 1938).

Settlement pattern depicts the social relation, which forms the framework of a society; it consists of the location and use of resource present in the environment. Settlement patterns are determined by a certain range of environmental, socio-cultural and historical factors which with one another produce the spatial configuration of the social group (Aliyu and Okpoko 2006:171). The idea of studying how past peoples disposed themselves upon the land in order to understand the nature of their social, political, and economic structure is aptly referred to as "Sociology of Architectural remains" (Parsons, 1972: 128). The area of interest in this perspective at Birnin-Kudu is the nature of both ancient and present settlement and as well as the degree of social stratification among the people of the settlement.

Considering the presence of defensive walls with several gates at the ancient settlement indicated the extent of the site with the distributions of material remains on the surface of the settlement such as ruined building of Palace, Prison yard, Mosque, Ponds, Mound, Industrial locations, Market square and other physical features on the settlement indicating the settlement to have been occupied by immense populations over time. Stephen (1841) championed this view in the study of Maya city that the presence of ruins structures and several other physical features distributed on Maya site indicated an immense extent of the city covered. Although, the Maya city had evidence of no

defensive wall from his presentation, but the defensive walls at Birnin-Kudu indicates the site extent and could have given an overview of the entire settlement.

The definition of Settlement pattern by Willey can be a suitable approach to the study of Birnin-Kudu settlement pattern. He defined settlement pattern as the way in which man disposed himself over the landscape on which he lived. It refers to dwellings, to their arrangement, and to the nature and disposition of other buildings pertaining to community life. These settlements reflect the natural environment, the level of technology on which the builders operated, and the various institutions of social interaction and control which the culture maintained (Willey, 1953:1). Thus, from the definition of the settlement pattern by Willey, it could be observed that settlement patterns are concerned about the relationship between human and the environment and also their relationship with other humans in the past environment as it was found in the settlement pattern of Birnin-Kudu. The nature of the soil (mold) used for the constructions of several monumental architectures at the settlement as found at the settlement; presence of well with several ponds at different parts of the settlement; the presence of stones to have used as foundations and padding while constructing; and the presence of arable land for agriculture over the settlement could all suggest the interaction between the human and the environment occupied. On the second hand, based on the description of what settlement pattern denotes, the presence of defensive walls, big market and industrial practices also suggested the interaction between the people and other humans over the settlement.

Socio-Political Organization

It was very easy to attempt the definition of essential elements of ancient Birnin-Kudu socio-political organization by drawing parallels with modern Birnin-Kudu community. The old Birnin-Kudu community comprises different clans based on demarcations and distributions at the old settlement, and in the present settlement, the group of people that occupied the settlement still represent their forefathers' clan at the present settlement. The demarcation of different clans at both settlements might suggest the social stratifications among the people of Birnin-Kudu settlement as different clans were known for different responsibilities in the community.

At the old settlement, there were identifications of ruined Palace at western direction of collapsed mosque with an interval of 7.2m and remnant of prison yard at the close proximity of 9.8m southwest of the Palace, all situated at the centre of the settlement. In the present day settlement, there were also presence of these structures in close proximity as found at the old settlement, but more complex and modern. The mosque situated at 15.6m direct opposite (western direction) of the present Palace while the Prison yard situated at 21.4m southwest of the Palace, also at the center of the settlement. The changes in the distance between the present and old settlements and as well as structures might be as a result of population increases and technological changes over time. The Palace over the settlement signifies the place of authority and political power in the community and that there are different classes among the dwellers of the settlement. Alongside with the presence of prison yard indicated that the settlement has divine laws and if there is any breach of such law(s) could warrant a sanction at the demarcated location. Religion house at the settlements represents the religion practices

among the people in the community, and this might also influence the settlement layout at the settlement.

From the study of several scholars such as (Ojo 1967 and Aniakor, 1985) viewed that the unifying symbols of town such as Palace, market, important deities, religion houses and playground are usually situated at the center of the community. Thus, the giant defensive wall at the old settlement which surrounded the entire settlement could have served as defensive mechanism to the political and economic considerations of the settlement. The defensive wall was also characterized by 5 different gates that could have suggested the populations of the settlement, security concerns and the site extent. The absence of the defensive wall at the new settlement could point out the safety of the present location as it is located on the main road of Kano-Bauchi and how populations have increased their buildings and settlement extent in the present day.

Economic Organization

Birnin-Kudu settlement patterns also made it easier to draw an analogy from the economic activities of the people both in the past and present settlements of Birnin- Kudu. The demarcated clans at both areas is subjected to the production of different goods and products at the settlement as the clan for blacksmith, pottery production, wood carving, fishing, dyeing among others, differs over the settlement. The old settlement of Birnin-Kudu has an evidence of several artificial ponds that are believed to have served as a source of fishing with presence of River Birnin-Kudu and this could also be found in the present day settlement. The old settlement also accounted for the presence of KukaSundu (Baobab tree of Sundu) at the settlement that served as the market square at the old settlement close to the ruined Palace and in the present day, the location of the

market square is also situated at a close proximity to the present Palace, Mosque and prison. This also supports the argument of Okpoko and Ekechukwu (1999) among many scholars that market is usually situated at a close proximity to the Palace and at the center of most Nigerian communities.

There were presences of different mounds at the old settlement of Birnin-Kudu and two of these mounds were observed to be dyeing mounds based on the presence of other material culture at these locations. The presence of these dyeing mounds signifies the industrial practices among the people of Birnin-Kudu in the past and as it is also found in the present day settlement. Over the old settlement, there were record of several stone anvils distributed alongside with other material culture that suggested the locations as workshops in the past, and the present day workshops in the new settlement account for uses of stone anvils for their products working accordingly.

Results and Interpretation

The approaches to the study of settlement by archaeologists varies as there is no single settlement pattern approach to archaeologist (Willey,1953), because archaeologists view approaches of settlement pattern based on the question then tend to be addressed from the study. Although several scholars have come-up with different approaches in trying to explain what settlement pattern denote in archaeology and how it could be studied, but since the nature of settlement differs, and the environment that influences the existence of settlement also differs, these could not allow a general approach of the study of settlement pattern in archaeology. Volta (2007) sees settlement pattern as being synonymous with procession research questions, just like another line of archaeological evidence, it can be used to address a wide range of issues from subsistence to cosmology, as such cannot be governed or addressed by a single approach. Take for instance, Trigger (1967)'s approach on the settlement pattern was structured on three levels of analysis which include individual structure; the local settlement; and the regional settlement distribution. While, Volta (2007) approach has three levels of analysis and includes: community; political

organization and ideology. Thus, this paper presents an explanation of socio-political and economic organizations at both the past and the present through the study of settlement pattern of Birnin-Kudu.

One could agree that Birnin-Kudu settlement pattern belongs to the typical form of Hausa Northern Nigerian settlement pattern and the analysis and explanations of the Defensive Wall with gates, Palace, Mosque, Prison Yard, and many other structures could attest that community administration is vested on the ruler of the settlement from the influence of what were constructed. Fabiyi (2006) agrees that the city administration is simple and overall governed in the Northern Nigeria compared to other part of the country, because their settlements basically submit to traditional rulers or religious leaders; which Birnin-Kudu is not an exception.

The structures and patterns of Birnin-Kudu settlement could also give an insight of demography and level of development of Birnin-Kudu people according to the prevailing culture and the heritage bequeathed by the previous generations in the settlement. The landscape and size of the settlement with structures such as market square, industrial locations, ward demarcations with respective indicates the economic development of the inhabitants of the settlement over time. Oluseyi and Joseph (2018) also attest that the size, shape, pattern and nature of settlement suggest level of economic development and population density over a demarcated landscape.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the close proximity observations from both the old and new settlements of Birnin-Kudu area, the Birinin-Kudu settlement will be agreed to be linear and nucleated in nature, as also found among other Hausa/Fulani northern Nigeria's Settlement types. Aniakor (1995:29) in his study of Northern Nigeria settlement type observed that their settlements area nucleated and settlement units follow the street style orientation. Okpoko and Ekechukwu (1999) also supported that the Hausa settlements have a linear spatial orientation to Mecca. One could also agree that the factors that oriented the settlement patterns of Biurnin-Kudu include: geographical landscape, demography, defense to political and economic considerations, religions and social activities among many others as pointed by Okpoko and Ekechukwu (1999). The defensive wall in the old settlement and varieties of structures in the present day settlement could suggest the place of social stratification among the people of Birnin- Kudu, as people constructed their buildings according to their status in society and also the wall could have been constructed as community labor which could have also indicated the authority of labour force between the rulers and the masses in the community. The presence of prison yards at both settlements indicates that the community is based on certain customs and traditions with rules and these also supported the political stability in the community.

However, the socio-political and economic structures of Birnin-Kudu accounted for the suitable interpretations of what might be the factors that attracted the settlement in the first instance and how the resources have been used over the surface of the settlement. The place of mold for the construction of Palace, Mosque, Prison yard, defensive wall and other remnant structures on the sites supports the availability of the resources. Also,

the arable land over the surface of the settlement supports the agricultural practices among the people of the area. Zivkovic (2019) supported that the settlement, growth and development of human settlements are closely influenced by the available soil, water, forest and mineral resources. Also, ponds, well, and other water source (River Birnin-Kudu which has been present before the settlement) indicates that there was availability of Water for their survival over the settlement. The giant defensive wall which surrounded the settlement with 5 gates could have also suggested the defensive mechanism to the settlement and this could also be seen as most attractive measure to populations at the settlement. Yang, et-al (2018) postulated that religions, military and political stabilities are the factors responsible for settlement establishment.

Lastly, the situated structures on the present settlement of Birnin-Kudu have a link to the remnant structures identified at the old settlement of Birnin-kudu. This analogy and ethnographic parallel made it easier to conclude that the group of people that occupied the settlement in the past have lineage and are also responsible for the formation of the structures on the present settlement of Birnin-Kudu, and that the socio-political and economic activities of the present people could be traced to what was obtainable in the past.

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