

Urban Infrastructural Developments in Birnin Kebbi Town, 1960-1991

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Abstract: This study has examined the 'urban infrastructural development in Birnin Kebbi town, 1960-1991'. The study discussed both social and economic infrastructure in Birnin Kebbi town, to fill the inherent gaps left by previous scholars of urban history. It's evident that, demographic and spatial expansion of Birnin Kebbi town during the period of study was largely due to government bias policies on developmental projects allocated to administrative centers in Nigeria, such as Birnin Kebbi town. The environmental factors, Local Government Reform of 1976, State creation, and natural population growth, among others, contributed greatly to infrastructural development in the town. The urbanization of Birnin Kebbi town is largely owed to government influence through developmental projects, such as the emergence of new wards, employment opportunities, among others. Methodologically, the study largely relies on the synthesis of primary and secondary sources of historical data collection and interpretation, which includes oral interviews, government documents, as well as textbooks and journals.

Keywords: Birnin Kebbi, Infrastructural Development, Social Infrastructure, Economic Infrastructure.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been the general intent and aspiration of the government and citizens to extend the frontiers of governance by making amenable infrastructural projects achievable, essentially to improve on good standard of living of its subjects. This called for relentless efforts to provide flourishing and affordable infrastructural developments that meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Apart from this, the World over, through its number of sustainable developmental goals, clamour for and well strides for the creation of global interconnectivity that will make every area habitable for settlement and peaceful existence. Based on the number of issues, the need for infrastructural development remains indispensable, and hence the

relentless bid by local, State, and international as is the case in Nigeria. It is apposite to note that the clarion calls for infrastructural development in Birnin Kebbi revolve around a number of synthesized factors. Primarily to serve and as well improving on citizens' needs, for qualitative face-value, provision of a good life, strengthening security mechanisms against crimes and criminalities, and lastly to attract domestic and foreign investors for accretion to the socio-economic, cultural, and political status of Birnin Kebbi town.

Incontrovertibly, the creation of a State is *sin qua non* towards the development of a country as it invariably influences the extension of government benefits to the grassroots areas and communities

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within any form of governance, be it military or democratic practices of a territoriality. The Federal government of Nigeria, on the 27th August 1991, created more States in Nigeria, with Kebbi State as one of the newly created states from the defunct Sokoto State [1]. It could be reiterated that after Nigeria's independence in the 1960s and following the State creations, the area was first part of the North-western State between 1967 and 1976, and in Sokoto State from 1976 to 1991. With the creation of Kebbi state in 1991, Birnin Kebbi was made the State capital [2].

The period 1960 was a landmark development in the history of Birnin Kebbi, which ultimately became what is federally referred to as Kebbi State in 1991 as an offshoot of the defunct North-western State. Nigerian independence created an immediate strategy for infrastructural development in the country. Birnin Kebbi, as a part of North-western State and subsequently Sokoto State by extension benefited from the efforts of both federal and state governments. The British Colonial infrastructural development in Birnin Kebbi town spawned a new face-look as it systemically became a cosmopolitan city sharing borders with the Niger and Benin Republics. The 1976 Local Government reforms initiated the identification of Birnin Kebbi as a Local Government Area Council with the bid to fast-track developmental projects, firstly, by bringing government nearest to the people at the grass-roots level and an effective administrative system. Secondly, to feel the impact of governance through accelerated infrastructural development projects whose lingering impacts are evident in road connectivity or networks, provision of health facilities, water and electricity supplies, and educational advancement, among others.

The phase of infrastructural development changed from its traditional form with the State efforts in the establishment of modern markets, local road networks that linked the various communities, hospitals, Local Education Authority (LEA), etc., as well as favourable policies that informed and influenced the peaceful and harmonious relations among varied ethnic groups within and beyond. Besides, the Federal government did not rest on its oars as infrastructural projects were paramount, such included the provision of rural electricity, telecommunication (NITEL), Post-Office, veterinary

hospital, Nigeria Police Post, just to mention a few. It should be noted that the Federal Government development plans initiated facilitated the good moves toward the growth of infrastructural development, whose impacts were spread to the study area.

In 1980, an attempt at the expansion of Birnin Kebbi town was fostered from the 1978 Land Use Act, which took away land from the local community to be controlled and brokered by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This was swiftly adopted by the then Sokoto State government between 1980 and 1991. During these periods, Birnin Kebbi's Master Plan was projected to constitute various meaningful projects compartmentalization for Residential Areas, Commercial centres, institutional zone (ministries, schools, etc.), and building free zone (BFZ), among others. These developments had tremendously influenced the growth of the town and the outlying towns, communities, and villages, hence the interrogation of major infrastructures in Birnin Kebbi town, 1960-1976. Most significantly, the precision for the choice of 1960 and 1991 for this study is are markedly historic period inundated by lots of indelible phenomenal events. The period 1960 was synonymous with the attainment of Nigerian independence, which demonstrated a serious departure from British colonial control and exploitation to self-rule by Nigerian aborigines.

1991 is a landmark period significantly denoting carving, creation of the State, and establishment of pristine governance in what is invariably referred to as Kebbi State, encompassing a number of towns, villages, communities, and principalities. Based on the foregoing prism, this study interrogated developments in Birnin Kebbi town vis-à-vis infrastructural advancement, specifically from 1960 to 1991. These constituted both State and Federal infrastructural benefits and some inherent challenges.

The Concepts and Nexus between Development and Infrastructures

The term development is a dynamic concept that has continued to receive diverse interpretations and explanations among scholars and researchers, particularly in the less developed countries. Stiglitz [3], contends that development is basically an

1. T. Aminu, "Historicizing Yoruba Factor in Ethnic Relations and Integration in Contemporary Kebbi State," *Zamfara International Journal of Humanities (ZIJOH)*, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State, 2022.

2. Kebbi state has twenty-one (21) Local Government Areas which include Alieru, Argungu, Arewa, Augie,

Birnin Kebbi, Bagudo, Bunza, Dandi, Danko/Wasagu, Fakai, Gwandu, Kalgo, Ngaski, Sakaba, Shanga, Suru, Jega, Koko-Besse, Yauri, Maiyama and Zuru Local Governments.

³ J.E Stiglitz, *Making Globalisation Work*, W.W, Norton, 2006.

economic concept that has positive connotations. It involves the application of certain economic and technical measures to utilise available resources to instigate economic growth and improve people's quality of life [4]. In a modern sense, development is purely an economic phenomenon, but rather a multidimensional process involving re-organisation and reorientation of the entire economic system. It deals with the process of improving the quality of all human lives. In other words, Rabis [5], affirms that development is a human process in the sense that human beings, not material factor, drives development. It is the energy and aspiration of people who seek development that form the motive force that drives development. Though people's awareness and consciousness may decide the direction of development in their States. There are three basic principles commonly attributed to the concept of development: efficiency, equity, and liberty.

Infrastructure is generally defined as the physical framework of facilities through which goods and services are provided to the public. Its linkages to the economy are multiple and complex because it affects production and consumption directly, creates positive and negative spillover effects, and involves a large inflow of expenditure [6]. The World Development Report divides infrastructure stock into economic or physical infrastructure and social infrastructure. The former includes services such as electricity, transport, roads, water system, communications, irrigation, etc, while the latter includes education and health facilities. Other forms of infrastructure may be identified as institutional infrastructure as banking and civil administration [7].

Nevertheless, infrastructure provision enhances the production and distribution network of key formal and informal sectors in the economy and also promotes overall economic growth. In this process, they also tend to affect the cost structure and productivity in these sectors, thereby promoting growth and development in each of these sectors [8]. Infrastructure has been used as a tool to stimulate the

growth of human settlements in many urban areas, and Birnin Kebbi town is not an exception. Policy makers and planners have used infrastructure systems to attract private investments for housing and economic development. Despite this, the link between infrastructure and urban growth remains understudied, and infrastructure research has developed in isolation from the large literature on urban growth. It is commonly agreed that infrastructure plays an important role in stimulating urban land development and private economic activity [9].

Arising from the analysis, development, and infrastructure are inseparable phenomena, and the duo has been attributable to the physical advancement evident in both mini and mega societies. This is because development is an accretion of the growth of physical structure towards an urbanising society, and such could only be achieved when meaningful infrastructure is put in place. It is worth noting that infrastructure is the positive outcome of a developmental project(s) either initiated by the government, individuals, or groups with the bid to change the face-look or allocation of projects to serve the needs and aspirations of the citizens. Therefore, development and infrastructure are two indispensables as well as two sides of the same coin that cannot be achieved without the other.

Major Infrastructures in Birnin Kebbi Town, 1960-1976

As stated in the introduction, the period 1960 was a landmark in the historical development of Birnin Kebbi with the government's bid and strides to ensure flourishing and equal infrastructural development. Though between 1966 and late 1969, the socio-political imbroglios created the setbacks which ultimately hampered the attainment of serious, meaningful projects in the country as a result of the Nigerian civil war. This, however, impacted the speedy needs for initialization of infrastructural development to improve the citizens' needs and aspirations, fundamentally to accelerate their

⁴ A. Ibrahim & A-U. Sani, *Urbanization and developmental challenges in Birnin Kebbi, 1991-2019*. Middle East Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5(5), pp. 167-176. <https://doi.org/10.36348/merjhss.2025.v05i05.004>

⁵ M. Rabis, *Meaning of Development: A Theory of Sustainable Socio-Cultural and Economic Development*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016.

⁶ Deepika Goel, "Impact of Infrastructure on Productivity: Case Study Indian Registered Manufacturing," *M. Phil Dissertation*, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, 2002, P.2.

⁷ World Bank, "Infrastructure for Development," in *World Development Indicators*, New York, Oxford

University Press, 2004. Also see Canning, D., "A Database of World Infrastructure Stocks, 1950-95" Working Paper, Harvard University Institute of International Development, Cambridge, 1998.

⁸ Deepika Goel, "Impact of Infrastructure on Productivity: Case Study Indian Registered Manufacturing,"... 2002, P.3

⁹ S. Demurger, "Infrastructure development and Economic Growth: An Explanation for regional Disparities in China," in *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 29(1), 2001, PP. 95-100. And the work of Granlich, E. M., "Infrastructure Investment: A Review Essay," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 32(2), 1177-79, 1994.

standard of living after the war. This is positively driven toward the advancement of the country socially and economically. To actually address and actualize such a situation, a series of developmental plans were entrenched with their peculiar functions that were highly interwoven.

Subsequently, after the Nigerian civil war in 1970, the Second National Development Plan (1970-74) was launched, representing a slight departure from the first development plan, which was largely concerned with economic growth [10]. The huge investments in the various sectors of urban development were still largely uncoordinated, with only about seven per cent of the total revenue allocated to town and the country's planning (including housing, water, and sewage) [11]. Presumably, the plan still considered towns and country planning as social overheads and, as such, was not bothered with any machinery for promoting or planning an orderly urban development.

The Third National Development Plan (1975-1980) was the first to produce the most thoughtful and coherently conceptualized urban development policy. Its five chapters dwelt on urban and regional development (water, sewage, housing, town and country planning, co-operatives, and community development), allocated 12.6 per cent of the total revenue to the various activities. As a matter of fact, the development plan also came up with a better definition of the national urban development strategy [12]. It provided for integration of urban-rural development, urban infrastructure, correction of physical planning inadequacies, reformation of local government machinery for efficient management of towns and cities' responsibilities, and better involvement of States in urban matters. The creation of a Federal Ministry responsible for housing and urban development and coordinating urban policy was also put in place [13].

Arising from the foregoing, it is apposite to construe infrastructure as the basic physical and organizational structures which constitute water and

power supply, sanitation, efficient transportation, and communication technology, among others, that are needed for operationalisation of a society. By this, the infrastructures in Birnin Kebbi from the period under review can be grouped into social and economic infrastructures. The economic infrastructure includes five sectors, namely electricity, banking, irrigation, transport, and communications, while the social infrastructure includes two sectors, education and health. Both economic and social infrastructure indices are combined to construct an aggregate index of infrastructure [14].

After Nigeria's independence, Birnin Kebbi town remains the headquarters of Gwandu Native Authority (NA), and a centre for scholarship as well as the socio-economic nerve centre of Gwandu Emirate. In 1963, a Native Authority Council election resulted in the making of Birnin Kebbi town as the NA Headquarters, and it was preoccupied with all political activities of the time [15]. This development consequently made the town a more complex environment administratively and economically.

From 1960 to 1976, the Provincial Government established various offices that led to the growth of the town. A post office and telecommunication office were established in Birnin Kebbi town. Mails were dispatched from the post office with private mail bag numbers (PMB). Ministries as well as individuals enjoyed the services of the post office; it also became a revenue-generating agency for the government [16]. These infrastructural developments facilitated a communication system by telephone and as well posting of letters among others. Essentially, telephone landlines were made available for ministries, corporate bodies, and individuals for easy communication. As early as 1960, Birnin Kebbi town served as a center for effective communication, popularly called in Hausa local parlance as *Gidan Waya* [17]. With the local government reforms of 1976, the extension of the frontier of the communication system became wider in scope.

¹⁰ F. K. Omole, and O. B. Akinbamijo, "Land Development and Planning Laws in Nigeria: The Historical Account," in *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, Vol. 8, 2012, P. 27.

¹¹ F. K. Omole, and O. B. Akinbamijo, "Land Development and Planning Laws in Nigeria...", 2012, P. 27

¹² F. K. Omole, and O. B. Akinbamijo, "Land Development and Planning Laws in Nigeria...", 2012, P. 27

¹³ H. A. Makuku, "Urbanization in Zuru 1919-1991, *M. A. History*, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2005, P.

¹⁴ Deepika Goel, "Impact of Infrastructure on Productivity: Casa of Indian Register Registered

Manufacturing," in *JEL Classification, No. C32, H54*, Delhi, University of Delhi, ND, P. 4.

¹⁵ H. A. C. Main, "Time-Space Study of Daily Activity in Urban Sokoto," *PhD Thesis*, Department of Geography, Bayero University Kano, 1981, also see H. A. Makuku, "Urbanization in Zuru, ... 2005, P. 68.

¹⁶ Waziru Junaidu History and Cultural Bureau Sokoto (WJHCBS), Birnin Local Government, Inf. 2, Telecommunication Development, 1960-1973.

¹⁷ Waziru Junaidu History and Cultural Bureau Sokoto (WJHCBS), No MLG 1082 S.1 228, Telephone Accounts Native Administrations, P. 87.

The Making of Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area, 1976

In 1962, the Northern Nigeria House of Assembly enacted the Provincial Administrative Law to curtail the power and influence of the Native Authorities created by the British colonial government. Some reasons adduced for such administrative re-arrangement were to radically condemn the system that seems to be hereditary in nature, as some members of the Native Authority assumed. This informed serious efforts to broker control, management, and coordination over some of the vestiges of British colonialism. It should be reiterated that the Native Authority system was developed in Northern Nigeria by the British colonialists to facilitate an easy administrative system and efficiency. This was administratively operated and ran smoothly in the Provincial and Divisional governments in Northern Nigeria, as the Native Chiefs had clearly defined duties and their status was recognized by the British officials. Such examples are found in the submission of A.D. Yahaya as follows:

...Native Authority, as the units of local government, was supported by a bureaucratic organization known as the Native Administration. Since the N. A was constituted under a chief; the legal authority for local government in the emirates during British rule vested in the office of the emirs, and the emirs thus became recognized as the authorities responsible for local government [18].

Arising from the above quotation, the 1962 Provincial Administrative Law, unlike Native Authority (NA) administration, encouraged greater participation of people in local administration. By this development, the local authorities were responsible for all developmental projects of the area council. The Law mandated the local authority to take over the control of the police, judiciary, and the prison from the Native Authority [19]. Within its years of existence, the Local authority administration bore much resemblance to the Native Authority system in terms of power delegation to subordinate councils, revenue generation, and expenditure. With political wrangling and instabilities in the country, administrative and

political transformation were instituted in Nigeria; the military government of 1967 dissolved the four 4 Regions. This was supplanted with the creation of twelve States, and also in 1970, the Area Development Board (ADB) system of local administration replaced the local administration system of 1962 [20]. During these periods, Birnin Kebbi town had the privileges of being the headquarters of Gwandu Division and the Birnin Kebbi local area council. This bold step taken by the Nigerian government was the culmination of numerous infrastructural developments evident in the study area.

Again, as a strategy towards ensuring equitable infrastructural development, on 29th July 1975, seven more States were created by splitting some of the larger ones. By this arrangement, the then North-western State was divided into Sokoto State with its headquarters at Sokoto and Niger State with Minna as its capital, making the total number of nineteen (19) States in Nigeria. The military government also divided the 19 States into distinct Local Government Areas (LGA), and automatically made them the third tier of government after the States and Federal governments [21]. Besides, the newly created Sokoto State was divided into nineteen (19) Local Government Areas, one of which was Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area with Birnin Kebbi town as its headquarters. This development provided the LGA with the leverage to administer its people by bolstering considerable power and financial backing from the Federal government of Nigeria. This stride in no small measure brings government nearer to the people, and fundamentally to benefit from the governmental developmental projects which were unevenly distributed in the British colonial administration.

As a matter of fact, the existence of Local government Areas in Nigeria is premised on the need to bring government closer to the people, especially to enhance administrative convenience, effective resource mobilisation, as well as the preservation of the heritage and common interest of the people. It was also meant to avoid minority syndrome, threatening national unity. It could be retrospect that the Willink's Commission bolstered considerable

¹⁸ A. D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria 1950-1970*, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1974, P. 3.

¹⁹ A. D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria 1950-1970*, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1974, P. 63. Also see A. Ibrahim, "History of Native Authority Police Force in Gwandu Emirate, 1903-1960," *M. A. History*, Department of History, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, 2014.

²⁰ I. U. Isah, *Metropolitan Sokoto, Issues in History and Urban Development Since 1960....*, 2013, P. 62.

²¹ P. o. Okolo and C. Osimerah, "Politics of Local Government Creation: Implications for National Development in Nigeria," *South East Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 2017, Pp. 285-287. Also see details in G. Wilson, "The Politics of Local Government Reforms and Democratic Governance in Nigeria Local Governments," *International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE)*,

support for such action with the sole objective to allay the fear of the minority group whose relationship to the majority has been conflictive. It is quintessential to construe the establishment of Local Government Areas in Nigeria, coupled with its reforms in 1976, as a strategy to extend the frontiers of infrastructural development.

State Infrastructural Development in Birnin Kebbi Town during the Second Republic, 1979-1983

According to Démurger [22], and Gramlich, [23], infrastructure plays an important role in stimulating urban land development and private economic activity. The adequacy of infrastructure in a society contributes to diversifying production, expanding trade, coping with population growth, reducing poverty, and improving environmental conditions, which helps to determine a country's success [24], by accommodating economic and urban growth [25]. Infrastructure services, which include power, transportation, and telecommunications, the provision of water and sanitation, and safe disposal of waste, are central to economic production and urban growth.

It is worthy of note that Birnin Kebbi was rapidly emerging as one of the major urban settlements as a part of the defunct Sokoto State and

was one of the main growing centres in the southwest of the State. In addition to the hospital, there were a post office, a branch of Union Bank, and the State Polytechnic. Added to these developments were an electricity supply station connected to the national grid, a major urban water supply, four (4) secondary schools and two (2) teachers' colleges, and fifteen (15) primary schools. Moreover, Birnin Kebbi had health centres and a dispensary in addition to its leprosy clinic established in Zauro. Again, Birnin Kebbi had the most important market that attracted quite a number of people from close and long-distance places, especially from the Niger Republic. It was observed that Birnin Kebbi market, due to its proximity and cosmopolitan value, had been serving the needs of people within the social milieu and beyond, fundamentally in meeting the market mechanism of demand and supply. In the regulation of the citizens' behavioural system against crimes and criminalities, the town has a police station and police posts strategically located at Ambursa, Makera, and Gwandu, respectively [26]. It is sufficient to understand that further growth of Birnin Kebbi is inevitable and desirable from a geographical perspective. As mentioned in the preceding, the town is ideally suited to become the main growing centre in the southwest region of Sokoto State. This fact informed, and confirmed the siting of a major tertiary educational established in the study area.

Table 1.1: Primary Schools within Birnin Kebbi Town, 1960-1991

Old Name	No. of Staff	No. of Classes	Population	Year of Est.	New Name
Zoramawa	5	3	160	1934	
Town Primary School	14	9	307	1934	Muhammad Layya Nizzamiya Pri. Sch.
Nasarawa	20	12	560	1950	Waziri Umaru Nizzamiya "A" Pri. Sch
Central Primary	22	15	600	1950	Adamu Gulma Model Primary School
Tudun Wada	18	12	560	1964	Magajin Gari Model Pri Sch.
Palace	19	12	560	1971	Gwandu Emirate Model Pri. Sch.
Dukku	16	10	429	1973	Nasir Idris Kauran Gwandu Model Pri. Sch
Junju	16	9	120	1974	Magajin Rafi Model Pri. Sch.
Takalau	10	8	160	1974	Dr Yahaya Shantali Model Pri. Sch.
Illelar Yari	9	6	240	1974	Hajiya Kubura Model Pri. Sch.
Kofar Sauna	4	2	80	1975	Baiti Model Pri. Sch.
Army Children	34	23	960	1975	Army Children's Pri. Sch.
Kofar Waya	2	2	200	1976	Not in existence
GRA	8	5	200	1979	Justice Ibrahim Umar Model Pri. Sch.
Makeran Gandu	24	12	440	1979	Umaru Illalu Model Pri. Sch.
Total	219	140	5,933		

Source: Birnin Kebbi Master Plan, 1980, and oral interview with Abubakar Mohammad, E.S.Birnin Kebbi L.E.A.

²² Démurger, S. "Infrastructure, Development and Economic Growth: An Explanation for Reginal Disparities in China," ..., 2001.

²³ Gramlich, E. M., "Infrastructure, Investment: A Review Essay," ..., 1994.

²⁴ Canning, D., "A Database of World Infrastructure Stocks, 1950-95" ..., 1998.

²⁵ Calderon, C. A., and L. Servén, "The effects of infrastructure development on growth and income distribution," *Policy Research Working Paper No. 3400*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=625277>

²⁶ ____, *A Survey of Settlements in Sokoto State, 1981*, Ministry of Economic Planning, Sokoto State, Nigeria, November, 1981, P. 107

Post-Primary Educational

As part of the developmental effort by the Federal Government of Nigeria immediately after independence in 1960, education seems to have started, and played a pivotal role in character and behavioural moulding towards controlling of human obedience. During this period, a well recipient of formal and informal education is seamlessly more articulate in the exhibition of good and affable action. In fact, the indispensability of Western education has accelerated the development of meaningful projects whose impacts are still felt in all human endeavours. It is based on moulding the behavioural system and provision of human resources to supplant the exit of the British colonial staff that the bid for educating the Nigerian populace after independence became highly imperative. These facts seemed not to be an

exception, with Birnin Kebbi town taking its toll since the attainment of independence in 1960. With the different stages of development plan of the 1970s, Birnin Kebbi town, as an important center for post-primary education under the aegis of the defunct administration of Sokoto State, had six (6) post-primary institutions. The total student population was 5433, over 10 percent of the entire population of Birnin Kebbi town [27]. Between 10 and 30 percent of the students in the boarding schools established were reported to have come from Birnin Kebbi town and its outlying communities and villages [28]. By this, western education in Birnin Kebbi had tremendously reflected on the major infrastructural developments, and had continued to do so even when it became the headquarters of Kebbi State in 1991.

Table 1.2: List of Post-primary Schools within Birnin Kebbi Town from 1960 to 1991

Name of Schools	Employment		Student Population			Classes	Year
	Senior	Junior	Male	Female	Total		
Sokoto State Polytechnic	135	1410	960	40	1000	24	1976
Abdullahi Fodiyo Day Secondary School	10	12	-	432	432	11	1977
Government Science Secondary School	35	10	910	-	910	23	1977
Women's Teacher Training College	38	22	-	1200	1200	27	1980
Haliru Abdu Teacher Training College	38	57	1600	-	1600	30	1980
Government Day Secondary School	13	4	199	92	291	18	1980
Total	269	1515	3669	1764	5433	133	

Source: Birnin Kebbi Master Plan, 1980-2000

Water Supply

Since antiquity, settlements have been usually sited or located with proximity to sources of water supply, fundamentally in response to the domestic and agricultural needs of the inhabitants. Apart from that, the face value of rivers, streams, and spring waters and the amiable, serene offers to people have contributed inestimably to several developments that subsequently became Birnin Kebbi. This aesthetic value generically is the culmination of the epithet 'water is life' in all human existence. It is important to comprehend that the independence of Nigeria in 1960 has continuously way for other meaningful infrastructures, of which water supply remains indispensable as part of the developmental plan. However, the need for water supply became highly imperative, coupled with rapid increases in population settlements from different

parts of the neighbouring countries, such as Niger and Benin Republics in particular [29]. The increase in population settlements poised for serious needs for water supply as extant water provenances seems insufficient to cater proportionally to available inhabitants. By this standard, it is apposite to construe the pressure of urban density which had begun as early as 1960's, therefore; large water supply schemes were required so that urban population might be adequately supplied with safe drinking water. In response to the social sordid situation, the defunct regional government was saddled with such responsibilities, hence the Ministry of Works, Water and Electricity Supply became responsible for directing the improvement of urban water supply in the region [30].

27. ____ *Birnin Kebbi Master Plan, 1980-2000, Final Report*, Volume 2 of 2, Survey and Analysis, A document of Ministry of Housing and Environment, Sokoto State, Dar Al-Handasah Consultants, 1983, P. 56.

28 Muhammad Sani Ango, Wazirin Kabi, Town Planner, Age 68, at Gesse Phase 1, Birnin Kebbi, on 06/10/2023. Also see *Birnin Kebbi Master Plan, 1980-2000...*, P. 55. for detail on the enrollment of student

in post-primary schools in Birnin Kebbi town during the period under review.

29 TPL Abubakar AB Yeldu, Age 51, Civil Servant (director, town planning KUDA), at KUDA office, Birnin Kebbi, 23-11-2021

30 WJHCB, File No. Dev/24, Vol. II, Rural Water supply, Windmills, and water Board office, Birnin Kebbi, MW. 453/198/W. 1965-1975. P. 248.

To assuage unbridled water supplies, the post-colonial Birnin Kebbi town water supply was provided to sustain the inhabitants through the construction of eight (8) boreholes. In Birnin Kebbi, the majority of the boreholes were located at the well-field near Government Day Secondary School (GDSS) in GRA. To satisfy the needs and yearnings of the inhabitants regarding water supply, each borehole was constructed in Haliru Abdu College, Women's Teacher Training College (W TTC), and others close to the Government Residential Area (GRA). The latter water is pumped to the waterworks for treatment, from where it supplies the northernmost part of the old town during the day and refills the 450 m² capacity of the elevated steel-water tank in the Ministry of Works yard at night. The Army barrack located in the southern part of the town was supplied from their own borehole [31].

In Birnin Kebbi, a water treatment plant was designed by the Ministry of Water and Electricity Supply with a maximum capacity of 675 m³ /hour, and was provided to extend the plant with the capacity to provide twice its amount, if required. While a high-level service reservoir on Dukku Hill has a storage capacity of 4500 m³. In November 1979, the water treatment plant was commissioned, thus the raw water is extracted from the Rima River, filtered and treated at the plant, and then pumped to the high-level service reservoir located on the Dukku Hill [32]. From the reservoir, the water flows by gravity through a 450mm asbestos cement trunk main into the Birnin Kebbi distribution system, which consisted of pipes varying between 50 mm and 300 mm. Again, pipes up to 50mm were generally galvanized iron, while pipes over 75mm were generally asbestos cement [33].

Table 1.3: Sources of Households' Water Supply in Birnin Kebbi Town, 1979-1991

Source of Water	Percentage
House connections to the water board	50%
Standpipes	36%
Neighbouring compounds	9%
Water Sellers, Wells, and Rivers	5%
Total	100%

Source: Birnin Kebbi Master Plan

Most importantly, the above table indicates that the majority of households in Birnin Kebbi rely on the Water Board for their water supply. At different stages of household development in terms of water supply in the town, this is why it is very difficult to arrive at an average figure for water consumption per head, but household connection is obtainable. Apart from land being fertile and productive, agricultural activities in the area were supported by the government agricultural establishment, which provided services to farmers in Birnin Kebbi. To improve the quality and quantity of agricultural production, the Ministry of Agriculture and Extension Services guided farmers on farm maintenance and management, as well as training and provision of improved seeds in the period under study [34]. Geographically, Birnin Kebbi town is situated within the convection of the Sahel and Sudan savannah belt, where Rima and Shalla rivers provide another great opportunity for farming activities to become all-season [35]. This was supported considerably to boost the growth and development of

agriculture in the study area, which was largely contingent on the availability of water supply, which the Ministry of Water Resources had not neglected. They ensured the establishment of dams and a local irrigation system to facilitate the unrestricted flow of water supply, which enabled farmers to work throughout the year [36]. This developmental project assisted enormously in the supply of agricultural harvest to the consumption areas at very low and affordable prices.

It is pertinent to comprehend that farming activities in the area are supported by government agricultural establishments, such as Farmer's Agricultural Supply Company (FASCO) and Kebbi Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KARDA), as research-oriented establishments with the sole objectives to provide chemicals and extension services to farmers in the study area. Similarly, the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) and Bank of Agriculture assisted in providing loans to farmers to enlarge their various

³¹ Mallan Kakale, Age 63, Plumber, Ilelan-yari Area, Birnin Kebbi, 5th-01-2022. Also see Birnin Kebbi Master Plan 1980,...P.

³² Birnin Kebbi Master Plan, official document, P.

³³ Malam Sanusi Mohammad Ilo, Age 54, a one-time staff of Kebbi State Water Board, at Badariya area Birnin Kebbi, 3rd-01-2022.

³⁴ Mohammed Ago, Age 70, retired civil servant, at Nasarawa I, Birnin Kebbi, on 18th-11-2021.

³⁵ O.M Agidi, (ed.) "Urbanization Dynamics and Land Use Pattern in Birnin Kebbi," in *Journal of Arts and Sciences*, Vol.8, no.1, 2015, p.42

³⁶ M. Labbo, "A History of Birnin Kebbi Central Market, c. 1928-2001," *M. A. Dissertation*, Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 2016, P. 21.

agricultural activities beyond crop production, but also raise animals [37]. These government policies, with their nature of endowments, attracted more farmers to Birnin Kebbi town, as government policies are mostly biased towards urban centers against rural areas.

Federal Infrastructures in Birnin Kebbi Town during the Second Republic 1979-1983

The Second Republic was another significant period in the emergence and development of Federal infrastructural programmes, which were stimulated by the new democratic government of Alhaji Aliyu Usman Shagari that was ushered in 1979. The constitution of Nigeria provided the leverage for some developments, which the Federal arm of the government could legislate and operate freely under the exclusive list of powers. Similarly, the Federal and the State could equally legislate and operate under the concurrent list or power, while the State operates within the purview of the residual list or power. The democratic polity, which empowered the operationalisation of lists or powers, birthed the emergence and development of the execution of some infrastructural projects that were to be provided and owned by both the Federal and State governments. Birnin Kebbi town benefited from the Federal government's infrastructural development, and new trunk 'A' roads were constructed to facilitate a network of connectivity [38]. The trunk 'A' roads are roads owned and maintained by the Federal Government; these types of roads link states. There was the construction of township roads, which was undertaken to link up the town and various neighbouring villages, where the evacuation of crops was done in large quantities. Again, in 1978, Ahmadu Bello Way was also constructed in order to connect the old wards of the town with the market and link to Jega road [39]. The development of road infrastructure by the Federal Government is mainly to bring about easy accessibility of far and close distance neighbouring villages and communities to other facilities in the urban center as hospitals,

schools, and markets. The development of these roads was accompanied by several infrastructural projects, among which included the electrification of outlying rural communities such as Kola, Kalgo, Ambursa, Jega, among others, which, essentially, in the long run reduced rural-urban drift.

Another pertinent infrastructural development was the construction of a military barrack, comprising of so many structures like residential quarters for senior, intermediate, and other ranks, administrative blocks, a clinic, a games park, a parade ground, workshops, primary and secondary schools [40]. Other meaningful projects to keep the barracks alive were the erection of an officers' mess and a 'mammy' market, which accelerated the growth of the town in size and population. The new era was marked with the arrival of heterogeneous ethnic groups migrant such as Yoruba, Igbo, Nupe, Tiv, among others; there was serious evidence of accelerated commercial activities. The migration of varied ethnic groups was accompanied by distinct and uncommon skills and experiences of various fields of human economic endeavours, such as carpenters, author mobile mechanics, plumbers, and tailors [41]. As a result of government policies, by 1976, many stalls, shops, and warehouses of assorted goods were located in all parts of Birnin Kebbi town; consequently, the growing commercial prosperity of the town made it emerge as a commercial urban town. There were also skill or raft centres that provided not only services, but also attracted many people into the town for training as apprentices [42]. Examples of such centers include mechanic workshops, printing centers, and fashion design centers. Certain government developments are directly responsible for attracting certain businesses in the town, which in turn pulled so many people to Birnin Kebbi town. For instance, the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 paved the way for many Igbo ethnic groups that had fled some northern Nigerian cities and towns as Kano and Sokoto, to return and re-establish themselves. In the

³⁷ A. A. Kware, "Agriculture and Livestock Production in Sokoto, c. 1804-2011," in M. T. Usman and M. A. Rufa'i (ed.) *Social and Economic History of Northern Nigeria, Since 1500 AD*, Makurdi, Aboki Publishers, 2015, PP. 126-128. Also see M. M. Bello B/K, "Production and Exchange in Birnin Kebbi in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *B.A. History*, Department of History, University of Sokoto, July, 1987, PP. 43-46.

³⁸ AfDB, "An Infrastructure Action Plan for Nigeria: Closing the Infrastructure Gap and Accelerating Economic Transformation, Tunisia, Tunis Belvedere, An Africa Development Bank Group Production, 2012, PP. 17-18.

³⁹ Focus Group Discussion with Eng. Bilyaminu Aliyu Dakingari, Age 48, Deputy Director Civil Engineering

Project Coordinator, Sani Ahmed Gwadangaji, 52 Age, Assistant Director Civil Engineering, and Abubakar Chika Age 50, Principle Civil Engineering all of State Ministry of Works and Housing, Kebbi State, Birnin Kebbi, on 15th-11-2021.

⁴⁰ Alhaji Ibrahim KKB, Age 86, Galadiman Gwandu, at his residence Nasarawa II, Birnin Kebbi, On 5th-01-2022.

⁴¹ Alhaji Kura Tela, Age 62, Businessman Chairman Tailors Association, Kebbi chapter, Nasarawa I, Birnin Kebbi, on 11th-01-2022.

⁴² Abdulwayid Yakubu, Age 51, Civil Servant, at State Ministry of Information, on 5th-11-2021.

case of Birnin Kebbi, due to its proximity and commercial advantages of neighbouring countries of Niger and the Benin Republic, particularly those who come for one business or the other, a plethora of the Igbo and Yoruba established themselves in Birnin Kebbi town [43]. In fact, the existence of electrical and electronic businesses as well as computer centres in the town arises as a result of the establishment of Rural Electricity Boards (REB) and National Electrical Power Authority (NEPA) services in the town [44].

Other public utilities constituted a number of social services not available in the rural areas were equally present with the Federal government's effort to satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of Birnin Kebbi, increasing teeming population, and settlements of the 20th century. It is a fact that the provision of public utilities such as pipe-borne water, electricity, education, healthcare, and recreational facilities attracted many people to migrate to the urban centres of Nigeria, of which Birnin Kebbi is not an exception. The role of social amenities cannot be underrated in the urban growth of towns and cities in Nigeria.

Another social service established since 1960 in Birnin Kebbi town that helped both social and economic activities of the town greatly was the telecommunication services offered by the Nigerian Telecommunication Limited (NITEL) and the Nigerian Postal Services Limited (NIPOST). These services played vital roles in boosting the economic, social as well and administrative activities of Birnin Kebbi and its environs, including [45]. It facilitated easy communication among varied people, and as well improving on trade and commercial activities of the town with other places like Jega, Kalgo, and Buza.

The policy for the establishment of a banking institution was another infrastructural development championed by the Federal government to stimulate economic and urban upliftment in Birnin Kebbi since Nigeria's independence in 1960. The European Barclays Bank of Nigeria was opened in Birnin Kebbi

town in 1959 [46]. It was opened to ease the British colonial economic enterprises in the dominated areas. With the indigenization process in Nigeria in the 1960s, the bank was renamed to Union Bank of Nigeria Limited, and thus opened its new branch in 1983 along Murtala Mohammad Way, Nasarawa Birnin Kebbi. Similarly, in 1978, United Bank for Africa (UBA) opened its branch in Birnin Kebbi at the GRA area. With the increasing influx of migrants to Birnin Kebbi, more bank branches were opened to foster the economic and urban growth of the town. More so, in 1988, the Nigeria Agricultural and Co-operative Bank opened its branch in Birnin Kebbi along Ahmadu Bello Way. This bank created a prolonged prosperity for farmers to lean financially for support in the execution of agricultural activities through sustenance from loans, seeds, and seedlings provided [47].

The Expansion of Birnin Kebbi Town, 1980-1991

Birnin Kebbi metropolis had witnessed tremendous expansion during the British colonial period, especially when Usman Shehu became the Emir of Gwandu by succeeding his elder brother Muhammad Bashar. The Sarkin Gwandu, Usman Shehu, reigned between 1918 and 1938, and one of such infrastructural developments witnessed during his administration was the movement or expansion of Birnin Kebbi from the Wala area to a new settlement called Nassarawa. Sarkin Gwandu Shehu was an astute and charismatic leader who always desired to bring peace and development to society [48]. One of the fundamental and first contributions made by Sarkin Usman Shehu was the expansion of the town. The place where Sarkin Gwandu built the new Emir's palace was an area reserved for tree planting and seemed to be where Sheikh Abdullahi Danfodiyo used as a battlefield in 1805 during the reformist jihadists' movement [49]. He allocated a piece of land to people and his followers, which subsequently gave birth to the emergence of the Nassarawa area. However, this area was later laid out in the same order as the urban city. In fact, Nassarawa was different from the former area, and it was then that

⁴³ Alhaji Ibrahim KKB, Age 86, Galadiman Gwandu, at his residence, Nasarawa II, on 5th-01-2022

⁴⁴ Alhaji Arzika Buzu, Age 71, former NEPA staff, at his residence Nasarawa II (Gawo), on 11th-01-2022, on the Rural Electrification Board late colonial period in Sokoto Province, see A. A. Sifawa, "Colonial Infrastructure and Social Services in Sokoto Metropolis: 1903-1960," *M.A. Dissertation*, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2011, PP. 151-157.

⁴⁵ WJHCB, Private Mail Bag Re-number, Ref. No. MLGCD/off/2/Vol. I/126. P. 113

⁴⁶ A. Abubakar, "A Study in the Economy of Kebbi State with Special Emphasis on Industries and

Enterprises, 2001 to 2007," *M. Phil History*, Department of History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2011, PP. 95-96.

⁴⁷ A. Abubakar, "A Study in Economy of Kebbi State.... P. 96.

⁴⁸ U. Dalhatu, "*Daular Gwandu: The History of Gwandu Emirs*, Zaria, Woodpecker Communication Service Press, 2016, PP. 230-235.

⁴⁹ Alhaji Ibrahim KKB, Age 86, Galadiman Gwandu, at his residence, Nasarawa II, on 5th-01-2022 and TPL Abubakar AB Yeldu, Age 51, Civil Servant (director town planning KUDA), at KUDA office Birnin Kebbi, 23-11-2021.

time when the Government Reserve Area (GRA) was established away from it in 1935 [⁵⁰].

It is worth noting that the expansion of the metropolitan area became necessary to meet the increasing demand for residential and commercial plots to be met. Besides, Birnin Kebbi, as the headquarters of Gwandu Emirate and Birnin Kebbi Local Government, had served as a centre of party-political activities, which naturally attracted immigrants who came for varying interests. The expansion of the Birnin Kebbi metropolitan area, therefore, became necessary in order to give the area a more urban outlook and also to provide space for future expansion. Birnin Kebbi town Council proposed the extension and expansion of the town in 1972 [⁵¹]. The extension was to incorporate the suburb areas of Shiyar Zabarmawa, Rafin Atiku, Gesse Phase I and Gesse Phase II, Badariya, and Bayan Kara Areas.

The proposal was implemented, and lands from these areas were carved out and incorporated into Birnin Kebbi Metropolis in 1979. This development expanded Birnin Kebbi by two miles away from the new site towards the eastern part of the town [⁵²]. The extension stopped at the permanent site of Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic in the north, Gesse Phase I in the west, and Gesse Phase II in the west east [⁵³]. The expansion exercise, however, necessitated the renaming of all the major

roads and streets in Birnin Kebbi metropolis. This became so necessary because the exercise affected the former roads and street names.

By and large, infrastructures have been used as tools to stimulate the growth of human settlements in many urban areas. Policy makers and planners have used infrastructure systems to attract private investments for housing and economic development. With increases in infrastructural development, cities grow exponentially bigger every year, demanding more land. This eventually resulted in requisitions for more buildings, infrastructure, and services in order to satisfy the needs and demands of the increasing population. The availability and conditions of these infrastructures and services could determine the level at which environmental resources are utilised.

However, the pattern of urban distribution in Birnin Kebbi town indicated a gradual spread in the built-up areas from the north-western part of Birnin Kebbi town, moving towards the western part in a linear pattern. The population increased from 119,000 to 160,000, leading to the rapid development of settlements in the southern part of the town. This led to the overall increase in the percentage of built-up area by the year 1990s to 3.4% of the total land coverage. Similarly, vegetation covered 46.3%, water bodies covered 0.02%, and agricultural land covered 32.2% while bare ground covered 18.2% [⁵⁴].

Table 1.4: Percentage of Land uses in Birnin Kebbi town by the year 1990s

Land Uses	Percentage %
Build up Area	3.4%
Vegetation Cover	46.3%
Water Body	0.02%
Agriculture Land	32.2%
Bare Ground	18.2%
Total	100%

Source: A. Sadiq, "An Appraisal of the Birnin Kebbi City Master Plan for Sustainable Development

There was a significant increase and decrease in the different land cover types in the study area by the year 1970. This was credited to the increase in population due to natural growth and the influx of people into the study area, and the need to develop critical infrastructure to provide the necessary services to support the new status of the town. Built-up area increased from 1,687 hectares

(ha) in the 1960s to 4,189 ha in the 1990s, vegetation reduced from 73,030 ha in the 1960s to 57,790 ha in the 1990s, while the water body decreased from 51 to 29 ha. Similarly, agricultural land increased from 9,270 ha to 40,134 ha, and bare ground decreased from 40,773 ha to 22,669 ha [⁵⁵]. The built-up areas become densely populated as land previously used for farming or agricultural purposes close to

⁵⁰ U. Dalhatu, "Daular Gwandu:" *The History of Gwandu Emirs*. 233

⁵¹ Alhaji K.K. Ibrahim, 84 years, Galadiman Gwandu, Oral Interview, Birnin Kebbi, 12/03/19.

⁵² Habibu Arzika, 78 years, Businessman, Oral Interview, Birnin Kebbi, 14/03/19

⁵³ Mainasara Bashir, 67 years, Teacher, Oral Interview, Birnin Kebbi, 16/03/19

⁵⁴ A. Sadiq, "An Appraisal of the Birnin Kebbi City Master Plan for Sustainable Development," *MTech in Remote Sensing*, Federal University of Technology, Minna, April, 2021, P. 60.

⁵⁵ A. Sadiq, "An Appraisal of the Birnin Kebbi City Master Plan for Sustainable Development...", P. 61.

settlements was gradually being converted to building or settlements. It also shows that there was not much increase or expansion in terms of the extent

of built-up area, but densification of the existing urban space.

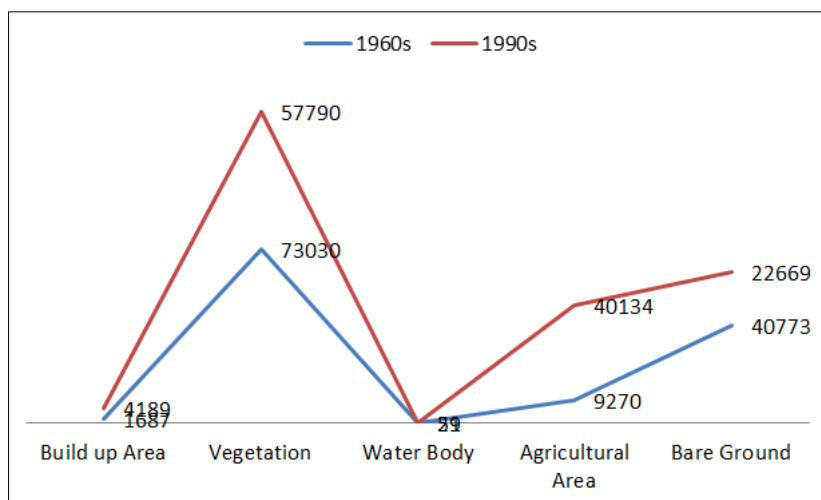


Figure 1.1: Status of Land Uses

Source: A. Sadiq, "An Appraisal of the Birnin Kebbi City Master Plan for Sustainable Development

Oral Informants

Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Abdulwayid Yakubu	51	Civil Servant	State Ministry of Information	5 th -11-2021
Abubakar Chika	50	Principle Civil Engineering	State Ministry of Works and Housing, Kebbi State, Birnin Kebbi	15 th -11-2021
Alhaji Arzika Buzu	71	former NEPA staff	Nasarawa II (Gawo Area) Birnin Kebbi	11 th -01-2022
Alhaji K.K. Ibrahim	84	Galadiman Gwandu	Nasarawa II Birnin Kebbi	12-03-2019
Alhaji Kura Tela	62	Businessman Chairman, Tailors Association, Kebbi chapter	Nasarawa I, Birnin Kebbi	11 th -01-2022
Bilyaminu Aliyu Dakingari	48	Deputy Director Civil Engineering Project Coordinator	State Ministry of Works and Housing, Kebbi State, Birnin Kebbi	15 th -11-2021
Habibu Arzika	78	Businessman	Birnin Kebbi	14-03-2019
Hassan Muhammad	79	Retired Civil Servant	Birnin Kebbi	15-04-2019
Mainasara Bashar	67	Teacher	Birnin Kebbi	16-03-2019
Malam Sanusi Mohammad Ilo	54	One-time staff of the Kebbi State Water Board	Badariya area Birnin Kebbi	3 rd -01-2022
Mallan Kakale	63	Plumber	Ilelan-yari Area, Birnin Kebbi	5 th -01-2022
Mohammed Ago	70	retired civil servant	Nasarawa I, Birnin Kebbi	18 th -11-2021
Muhammad Sani Ango	68	Wazirin Kabi, Town Planner	Gesse Phase 1, Birnin Kebbi	06/10/2023
Sani Ahmed Gwadangaji	52	Assistant Director Civil Engineering	State Ministry of Works and Housing, Kebbi State, Birnin Kebbi	15 th -11-2021
TPL Abubakar AB Yeldu	51	Civil Servant (director of town planning, KUDA)	KUDA office Birnin Kebbi	23-11-2021

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion centred on the infrastructural developments recorded from

Nigeria's independence up to 1991 in Birnin Kebbi town. It could be observed that, 1976 Local Government reforms initiated the identification of

Birnin Kebbi as a Local Government Area Council with the bid to fast-track developmental projects such as schools, pipe-borne water, health, and road infrastructure within Birnin Kebbi town. Therefore, the paper further demonstrated that with the departure of the British colonial enterprise, both Federal and State Governments in Nigeria initiated infrastructural development to improve the citizens' needs and aspirations, fundamentally to accelerate their standard of living. For better clarity, an appendix page below has been included providing the synopsis of infrastructures evident in the period under examination, as shown in Table 1.5.

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