



SOCIOLOGY OF FOURAH BAY COLLEGE LIBRARY AS CRITICAL CULTURAL-SOCIAL SPACE IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

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ABSTRACT: *The thought and modes of sociological study of Fourah Bay College library emanate predominantly from the sociology of communications and organisation, according to which a library is a social mechanism. The functional social function of this is to probe and form selections from the stream of engraved communications to systematise and stock the preferred publications and to form the streamed stock of publication accessible to a social public and to determine the social and cultural domination of the touch between the library and the students' social community. The accomplishment of students in the future is lodged upon the social pillar established during years utilised at Fourah Bay College. Fourah Bay College library plays a critical functional social function in carving the future of students by nurturing them for intellectual engagement beyond the college. The college library as a fundamental presence of the college curriculum has considerable potential to carve students through contingent privileges for autonomous learning. The research will seek to find out the strategies that Fourah Bay College library exploits to advance students' relational abilities in the onset of Information and Communication Technology. It will also examine the functional social function of Fourah Bay College library in broadening relational abilities progress amongst students to bolster authoritative social behaviour or intellectual self-determination. The research will explore the extent to which Fourah Bay College library can utilise technology to enhance interpersonal communication, thus enhancing social inclusion. The researcher will utilise a phenomenological prototype to point out the challenges and conveniences or opportunities facing Fourah Bay College library in traditional metropolitan Freetown to provide competent library services to students so that they can be appropriately processed for the electric technology motivated life predicated on such abilities like information social scholarship.*

KEYWORDS: Sociology, Library, Critical, Cultural-Social, Space.



INTRODUCTION

Fourah Bay College library plays a fundamental functional social function in the overall progress of the Sierra Leonean society because approach to information is cardinal to the prosperity of an individual, in the information or knowledge and intelligence economy of the twenty-first century. Correspondingly, Fourah Bay College librarians are the pillar for enhancing such progress. Al-Maliki and Juan (2018) settled that professions are dynamic, and flourish or go extinct conditional on the vision, conformability, and leadership of their members. The Information and Communication Technology innovation is transforming library space and services by affording coherent approach to information by delivering the library into the homes of the users, notably in resource enriched societies of the advanced macrocosm. It is through Information and Communication Technology that college libraries can develop and expand social capital, for example networks, in the form of interaction amongst users. Carstens et al. (2021) argued that the educational value of technology can only be realised by the way colleges and students will utilise an educational justification to attain objectivity through networks for learning and knowledge sharing. The college librarian and the lecturer should develop a parabiotic affiliation that assists to upgrade the student with a repertoire of abilities imperative for one to cope with the diversified and complicated dynamics of the current millennium; for instance, social abilities and multimodal literacies should be prioritised. Together, they should toil towards developing what Jabareen (2020) referred to as urban places whereby users will have the right to be in these spaces, to utilise them in certain ways, to invest them with a sense of groupings.

Fourah Bay College library has a long history of providing access to the resources sociologists and other social scientists have needed and utilised, and to the literature they originate. Furthermore, Fourah Bay College library has established a robust tradition of providing reference and instructional services. Albeit the current and rife growth in information, technology has led to considerable transformations in the way these resources and services are provided, Fourah Bay College library will endure to serve a significant functional function to the field of Sierra Leonean sociology. Knowing how the library is organised and how it toils, what research tools and services are available, and how to utilise these tools and services productively can assist sociology researchers at divergent thresholds to be more capable and constructive.

A Pandect of Scholarly Libraries

Many of the academic libraries in Freetown and other parts of the country assist sociological course work and research, and researchers near major urban centres can also obtain significant materials and extensive research aids from some of the vast non-academic public and research libraries. However, each library's competence to afford these sorts of assistance is influenced largely by the size of its fund, collections, and staff.

At the exceptional limit of the size continuum, libraries can be really knotty administratively, even though most users will be conscious of only the details and duties downright applicable to them. In Freetown, libraries are methodised so that users can utilise them efficiently on their own, establishing what is required through a public catalog and an accessible "mass" section. Practically all users have contact with staff members at a transmission counter, who check out books and sometimes periodicals to them. These staff members also assist users to discover information they may not be capable of spotting on their own and assist construct resources



accessible by imposing loan periods, recollecting books from other users, setting up reserve reading rooms for essentially utilised materials attributed for course readings, and so on. Scholarly libraries also consistently arranged their journals into periodical reading rooms or mass sections, and may provide associated support services there. Interlibrary loan departments provide access to resources owned by other libraries.

Virtually all libraries provide reference service in a diversity of ways, and often in divergent settings. The social function of the reference librarian commonly extends far beyond the answering of informational questions, and may embrace providing personalised assistance in using electronic or complicated print resources, or arranging a literature search, as well as speaking to classes about major disciplinary research tools and strategies. Reference librarians often have specific sections of subject expertise and may perform liaison or collection development work with academic departments for book and journal purchasing. Where this is the case, graduate students may identify it as essential to get to know the librarian responsible for sociology. College and university libraries will generally also have specific sections or departments for government publications. Because these resources can be quite specialised and access to them is complicated, staff assistance can be principally significant.

Regardless of size, most scholarly libraries must deal with a diversity of integral budgetary and technological constraints. For the last couple of years and for a variety of factors, the costs of providing periodicals and other serials have been growing more swiftly than other indicators of inflation (Carvalho et al., 2018). This drift has resulted both in an excelling apportion of budgets being faithful to serials and in an ongoing demand to appraise and sometimes cancel subscriptions to journals. At the same time, there has been grave concern in book title importation in Sierra Leone (Kargbo, 2004), with the outcome that libraries customarily buy a decreasing share of the domestic books published in most disciplines. Economic constraints and rapid book production abroad have also made it more arduous for research libraries to buy as large shares of foreign language books and journals as in the past. Accordingly, libraries rely increasingly on cooperative buying and resource sharing. Functionally, library users may now actually have better access to some resources than in the past when locally owned resources were leaned on more generally.

Vital growth in information technology, such as the CD-ROM and the World Wide Web, has also introduced modern alternatives for delivering information. On-line catalogs with sophisticated search features and other performances have swiftly replaced card catalogs. Furthermore, many periodical indexes and abstracts and the text of key journals are also now accessible online. These services make it feasible for researchers to identify information swiftly and conveniently even from their homes or offices but they almost always cost essentially more to purchase and support than do commensurate print resources. Together, these reasons make for a complicated, rapidly transforming community for scholarly libraries and their users.

Fourah Bay College Library and the Literature of Sierra Leonean Sociology

For sociology's immense thematic and systematic variety, it is arduous to characterise its literature. This variety is ably expressed in the hundreds of articles on Sierra Leone sociology, and in current discourses of Sierra Leone sociology's greater prominent books (Bangura, 2019; Bangura, 2020; Gibril, 2022). Sierra Leonean sociologists depend on and employ a scope of publications and information sources for their research, including books, journals, statistical publications and data sets, and governmental and other technical reports (Bangura, 2019). Of



these, the most significant gates for sociological writings have been scholarly journals and books, which emerge to affect fairly higher or minor significance for divergent Sierra Leonean research communities. Some have intimated, for instance, that there are dual relatively obvious research cultures in Sierra Leonean sociology: one, an “article sociology” that depends on and publishes in scholarly journals, and another, a “book sociology” that depends on values and publishes primarily in books. Comparatively, article sociology may be more attributed of the scientific limit of the discipline, and book sociology more attributed of its historical, humanistic, theoretical, and ethnographic intensity and notions. And, of course, the dissertations written by doctoral students are typically acquired and cataloged by the library.

The published literature in Sierra Leonean sociology can also be seen as part of a broader professional communication system which comprises less formal intersections like presentation of papers at national and regional conferences (Grech, 2019). Developments in information technology have fostered the progress of such "discreet colleges" especially in sociology, where computers have long been significant tools. Sierra Leonean sociologists have, for many years, made use of data analysis packages like the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and now quite generally have their own personal computers with word processing software and connections to the Internet. Subsequently, previously distinctive engagements like writing, data analysis, and publishing have begun to coalesce (Labani et al., 2017). E-mail listserv discourse cohorts and the comfort with which writings can be posted to the World Wide Web have advanced effective communication among Sierra Leonean sociologists sharing research interests, and imply to clench appreciable commitment for the discipline (Burawoy, 2014). Fourah Bay College library participates in and assists in advancing these developments in a diversity of paths. For instance, many libraries participate in the JSTOR programme, subscribe to full text services, and provide their users with on-line access to journal indexes like Sociological Abstracts and the Social Sciences Citation Index. Many also support the growth of specifically electronic journals by directing users to them through their on-line catalogs and web pages.

Blanket Approaches for Literature Inquiring in Sociology

It is challenging to contribute exceptional overall blueprints for site information in sociology for a diversity of factors. As noted, any number of topics and approaches may be traced, and a considerable number of journals and other sources may accommodate significant articles or other information. Furthermore, a doctoral student "intimidated by the literature" in anticipation of preliminary proposal presentation (Barlosius & Blem, 2021) will require utilising divergent research strategies than will an undergraduate student writing the typical library term paper. Significant transformations in information technology make it even solid to hint methods that will be accurate five years from now. It is also significant to recollect that, albeit librarians favour to view literature searching as something of a constructed and logical engagement, it can and should often take place in a more accessible, informal, convenient, or even cryptic way exclusively in the anticipative moments of a research project. However, being observant to the following issues and invitations can help form literature searching to be more effective and more potent. Users are advised to consult their local library staff for additional advice and guidance, and for current information on local resources.



1. Recap or Review Instruments.

Notwithstanding, sociologists gravitate not to utilise or lean on review serials; these can often demonstrate beneficial by recapping and appraising the fundamental debates of current research and setting them in an immense frame of reference. An identical role is played by subject encyclopedias like this one, by disciplinary handbooks (Cunningham, 2022), and to some degree by sociology textbooks. Some recapping sources like these can be found in general and specialised reference books and guides (Chua, 2009). Furthermore, inquiries of electronic databases can sometimes be restricted to "review articles."

Differences in indexing phraseology. Periodical indexes and library catalogs really often utilise a defined list of subject terms, which may modify from those normally utilised in a section of literature, by a community of scholars, or by an individual student endeavouring to portray a topic. Thriving utilisation of these instruments often necessitate coordinating a notion to indexing phraseology. This can conserve time by assisting to eradicate inappropriate citations.

2. Approaches for Inquiring Electronic Resources.

The academic communication structure in all fields suggests probable to be attached gradually to growths in information technology, and researchers will require comprehending how to interact with and utilise electronic tools productively. Notwithstanding, most users now know that rough "keyword" inquiring can give them useful citations; it is also significant to comprehend how to utilise "Boolean operators," such as and, or, and not to combine and manipulate terms (Schmidt, 2021), and to consolidate subject indexing terms into a inquiry method.

3. Appraisal of Sources.

The monitoring function recreated by peer reviewers of journal articles assist guarantee that an article has passed a test of quality or adherence to acknowledged research norms. This is less apt to be the case with other information sources, notably those found on Web pages or via Web search engines. It is certainly significant to develop a generally wary prospect on information sources, and to appraise such sources on the groundwork of such things as integrity of origin, purview and coverage, prominence, and currency (Valkenburg et al., 2021).

4. Fourah Bay College library collections as a connected mode.

Since it seems bizarre that the financial challenges facing academic libraries will ease in the foreseeable future, Fourah Bay College library will continue its efforts to share resources effectively. As a result, library users should assume that the collections available to them extend far beyond what the library owns. Graduate students and the faculty, especially, will need to be conscious of how their library is building these more wide-ranging resources accessible and how long it will take to obtain publications from elsewhere or the diaspora.

5. Fourah Bay College Library as Social Space

Philbin et al. (2019) compared libraries to parks, community centres and many other social settings that provide a public space in which individuals may engage in a range of social and informational activities useful in population health. However, the library environ is free from the profit driven market or money relationships characterising exchange of commodities in



parks. The author further argues that such parks are constantly transforming context as discerned by the divergent public and private interests of those who establish and utilise them.

The library fits well in Cox's (2023) conception of future space because of the social, liberated, and inspiring ambience it provides to users. The future space is described as an area where informal social gatherings take place besides the first place (work) and the critical social place (home) according to Cox (2023). It is a place free from the pressure or organisational social forces characterising exchange of strict rules in pedagogies, stern, and intimidating rules and regulations, as well as an emancipated zone whereby users navigate their way knowingly in a world of adventure, opportunity, convenience, and critical social dialogue. Even though the reader might elucidate and digest this as an idealistic delusion, besides it is an ideal worth endeavouring for. The library as a social space reflects an "emblem" of community life that facilitates and promotes broader, more ingenious social interaction. Ordinarily, social space can either be physical, virtual, or both, like: community centres, social media platforms, and other open spaces where folks congregate or network or link up for social discourse. These social spaces can either be publicly or privately controlled, like commercial databases, parks, or community centres or town halls.

6. Fourah Bay College and Society Core

Gong and Zuo (2020) noted how college students cherish the beliefs and form of ideological and political views of the society they operate or belong to, for instance, the community or nation. The author further states that significant transformation that takes place in such institutions cannot be separated from society. Colleges and their libraries are dependent variables that are completely interlaced with their socio-economic and political community. "Steering Tertiary Education: Toward Resilient Systems that Deliver for All" (World Bank, 2021) highlighted that investing in tertiary education brings direct gains for instance, input to establishing expanding systems, investing intelligently in contemporary technologies, ensuring equity in access and financing, accomplishing effectiveness in resource utilisation, and gaining strength in service delivery so that learning endures. It would be unattainable or unlikely to expect transformations to occur within the ward of colleges in ostracisation from the society (Moscardini, A. et al., 2020). "A library was created to function as a means of expressing its social processes and carries out through its techniques developed for its purpose" (Dukare, 2019).

Boohene and Maxwell (2017) argues that socially and developmentally, the college as an institution has been and continues to be perceived as an agent for personal and socio-economic and political community development and an agent of transformation of a locality. This transformation depends on the learning and working culture as well as how the administration perceives the college librarian and the librarians' style of leadership, as well as the perceptions of the college administration. The college librarian should be a transformational rather than a transactional leader with the capacity to contribute towards the realisation of institutional goals, vision, and mission.

From a sociological perspective, colleges and their libraries are also agencies of socialisation as they induct students into the norms and values of society. The growth of the college library in empowering citizens is dependent upon a number of caveats, for instance, the socio-economic and political community, the initiative of the librarian, lecturers and support staff,



attitudes of learners, motivation of staff, the extent of community engagement, availability of resources, and learning infrastructure among others. Trivedi (2017) argues that the ambience of the library is critical because the college community must be convinced of the indispensable social role of the library “...developments in libraries from traditional to modern era is critical.”

7. Learning Community

Gamage et al. (2021) portrayed envisaging the learning experience as consisting of the learner “on platform” readily learning under the guidance of the mentor or faculty member utilising a set of resources accommodating the knowledge or content or skills to be learned within an environment. The author fully admits the entire notion of the network between the learner and the environment in expression of the component of the learning experience constituting of the learner or mentor (lecturer), knowledge, and the environment. However, this reasoning fails to take into reflection the critical social function of the library as part of the curriculum and the environment in a broader context. It neglects the focal point of the library and librarian in the learning method.

The Fourah Bay College library plays a crucial function in nourishing independent learning amongst students through a conducive environment for researching and broadening horizons beyond what is commonly given by lecturers. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) described learning as a process involving permanent or temporary change in behaviour or knowledge that arises in consequence of internal or external influence for learner development and adulthood. The key issues in learning revolve around transformation, behavioral transformation, and learning in response to internal or external influence developing adult engagement. The librarians functions in learning institutions are broadened through considering a pedagogical philosophic coordinative dimension, and this can be accomplished through affinity with teachers in the design of information literacy programmes. Learning encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, each with differing thresholds shifting from the basic to the most complicated.

Mandal and Dasgupta (2019) stated that in the information age or information communication technology, the role of the librarian in a learning organisation has shifted from encouraging dependency, to supporting and guiding outright independence or autonomy in the quest for information, knowledge, and wisdom among students and members of the community. The author further noted that for a librarian to be efficient at teaching and aiding learning, they should embrace contemplative practice and breed a professional method concerning the principles of effective learning and autodidacticism.

8. The Fourah Bay College Library Core

Spencer (2018) avowed the crucial social function of lecturers and college librarians in the cultivation of the habit of the utilisation of library and reading among college students.

“The role of academic librarians has changed over the last fifty years, reflecting changes in higher education and information technology. A greater emphasis on learning and assessment in colleges and universities...demonstrate direct impact on student learning” (Krier, 2021). The accomplishment of students is hinged upon the synergistic network between librarians and lecturers in empowering students with expert potent to read beyond the word or vocable through the growth of critical thinking skills: “when librarians and faculty work together,



students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills” (Fagan, 2022). In Sierra Leonean colleges, the librarian works intimately with the English lecturers to facilitate access to reading material for students, but there is a demand to work with all lecturers to optimise resource usage.

9. Civic Education: Fourah Bay College Library and Departments

Kisby (2021) argued that information is critical to civic participation and also in promoting the development of civil society because informed citizens are more likely to participate in policy discussions where they can communicate their notions and solitudes candidly. The researcher further argues that society should provide citizens with civic commons to freely swap notions, and that this is conceivable through libraries reforming physical and virtual space for the advancement of the community. Libraries and librarians are better stationed to deliver complimentary social spaces where members of the community can participate in information, interexchange notions, and engage in purposeful cross-generational and cross-cultural conversation like social recital sessions. “If a society through its schools to educate for citizenship in a significant way; what is required at the pragmatic threshold is broad cruising and abreast national social discourse, to formulate as far as feasible a tier of agreement, about how citizenship and education for citizenship are to be understood” (Merry, 2020).

Civic education refers to the culture of social insight, experiences, and circumstances captious for one to partake efficiently as a responsible and effective citizen of a representative and constitutional democracy. It includes the requirement of information and learning experiences to equip and empower young individuals to enthusiastically participate in the democratic process, according to Sulistyarini et al. (2023). Most developments buttressing civic education can be evidenced to the final decade of the twentieth century when the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna acknowledged the significance of enhancing regard for human rights through education and endorsed a structure for bolstering of regard for human rights.

“Learning for effective participation in democratic and development processes at both local and national levels...an important means for capacity development on the societal level by empowering people for effective civic engagement...an essential dimension in strengthening a society’s ability to manage its own affairs and is complementary to capacity development on the individual and institutional levels” (UNDP Democratic Governance Group, 2023).

Fahrmier (2020) noted that modern democracies face the challenge of sustaining themselves in times of crises because of diverse culture, inequalities, and political traditions. The authors further acknowledge that the future of any democracy rests on the extent to which a nation prepares its young people through community engagements so that there will not be any disharmony and distrust of politicians by the young. Kamruzamman (2020) argued that society should establish conditions to empower citizens by providing access to enough and correct information that will enable them to engage in making informed options according to their cherished options. The researcher further emphasises an empowerment mindset and the process of formulating an atmosphere whereby individuals take full responsibility for their lives in their zest to accomplish academic and socio-economic goals.



Pathan (2020) made reference to people in the East, even though his findings and recommendations can generally be applied worldwide; for instance, every nation has to contend with coming up with premier aptitudes that can bolster young people to engage ardently in the future of their country and how to convert such aptitudes into school positioned engagement in the model of a curriculum and pedagogical strategy and information. Similar aptitudes should envelop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in order to beat a cordial balance between theory and practice with reference to political and socio-economic existence.

The greatest challenge of college libraries in Africa is how to incorporate civic education in the curriculum considering the heterogeneity of African societies with regards to the diversity of language, culture, politics, religious belief, and economic status among others. In Sierra Leone, civic education is incorporated in the educational curricular as part of either general education or content, and then as a specific subject in high school education. The country has more than eighteen indigenous languages, yet the language policy only regards English as the official language (Midterm Population & Housing Census, 2021). Alscher (2022) hinted that civic education should embrace all learning domains in order to produce well balanced students physically, practically, intellectually, quality and willingness. Information/multimedia literacies should be the pillar of such education, and this will provide librarians with a niche in the pedagogical scheme of things in a learning community. Funk on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (2022) emphasizes that “Information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life...it is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.”

Conceptual Framework of Social Space: Transforming Ambience of Fourah Bay College Library

Fourah Bay College library as an influenced social space deliberates on the domineering responsibility of the librarian because of frank regulations, limits and delimitations with reference to the utilisation of social space. It is out of this context that this research advocates for an integral reenvision of Fourah Bay College library or the college library social space and its significance given the liberating social function of Information and Communication Technology. The future of Fourah Bay College library should be free from the inordinate restrictions of procedures, regulations, and rules that undermine the individual users to conceive their full potential with regards to significance of social space and other library resources. This can be realised through instilling the philosophy of reconfiguration stewardship in the education and capacitating of future librarians. Deng (2022) stated that a transformational leader prides connections, registering in a vision for learning and engaging with everyone in a reasonable, rational, motivational, and participatory path in the process. There is demand for librarians to reform library intellectual social space contemplating the generation of Information Communication Automations and successive e-learning, e-libraries, and virtual communities.

Liborio (2023) states that social worlds can be illustrated as a multidimensional space formulated on the basis of principles of contrast or dissemination comprised by the set of developments functioning within the social macrocosm. The researcher further explains social discipline as a multi-dimensional space of positions whereby position can explained in stint



of a multi-dimensional system of matches whose advantages align to the values of the divergent applicable variables within the discipline. Cox (2022) noted that research on library space is crucial for social researchers, since it provides information on the significance and knowledge of library spaces and further supports in rethinking the concept of space in transforming the universe. The researcher further noted that research on library space is indeed a timely topic as more information can now be searched on Google. Research can be premised on positivist, post-positivist, or interpretivist paradigms in that it will present qualitative and quantitative sociological discourses and approaches of the social phenomenon coupling to library social space, and also rethinking the lived exploits of users in their social interactions within the library intellectual space.

Despite growths in automation and the advancing gap between developed and developing countries in adapting to new technology, it is still crucial for librarians in developing countries to perceive library space in all its dimensions or manifestations, for instance, the virtual and physical space. A social space is virtual or physical, such as a social centre, online social media, or other gathering locations where individuals meet and interact. Social spaces can be public or private, for instance, parks in urban areas are public locations, while houses owned by people, restaurants, nightclubs, shopping malls, and websites, are privately owned and controlled spaces. Public space refers to a social space that is openly accessible to all irrespective of gender, sex, class, race, or any other reason, like the library. Suharso (2019) views the library as a unique sort of public space anchored on community education, and knowledge and epitomising freedom and free access to community knowledge. The library is a public space because it is free from market forces that characterise the market place, for instance, supermarkets and bookshops. The provision of space for intertribal, intercultural, interracial, and inter-generational social interaction cogitates the autonomous dimension of the library as a social and public space. It also cogitates the extent to which the library can react to every individual reason in esteeming of relevancy to local circumstances. The modern library is both a virtual and physical social space whose pillars are grounded in culture, education and social understanding.

Kokko (2021) differentiated between the physical space or “space as a whole” and the socially-based ‘spatiality’ which is the established space of social organisation and production. The researcher believed that physical space has been a “misleading epistemological foundation upon which to analyse the concrete and subjective meaning of human spatiality.” Generally, library space has been perceived as the physical space with regards to the tools, users, equipment, and holdings as well as the gothic, anachronistic architectural designs, elitist, mythic, and other infrastructure symbolic of freedom, knowledge and peace.

Liu et al. (2020) defined space as a significant feature for modernity, social integration and organisation, for example, integration through interpersonal communication with actors co-present in space. Cheung (2022) noted that public space is not an empty usage or dimension along which social cohorts become regularised, but has to be considered in terms of its involvement in the composition of systems of interaction in hyper-dense communities. Frederic (2023) acknowledged the democratic nature of public space considering that both public culture and public space are socially and politically constructed and fashioned by the many social encounters that add up to the daily social life in social spaces and engagements. The researcher further explores the concept of public culture by exploring the right to be and use public spaces as well the sense of ownership and belonging to such spaces.



Yuen and Johnson (2017) lodged Oldenbourg sociological discourse between the sociological functions of people's first places (homes), their second places (workplaces), and the public spaces (libraries) that serve as safe, nonaligned cultural social spaces in an era of alignment or multipolarity, free from ideological or orthodoxical divergencies and informal meeting spaces. The researchers further felt that due to the complicated and ambitious life of the current era, social spaces or third places were becoming defunct, because many individuals shuttled between their first and second places, and not ceasing over at dividing and unspecified terrains such as supermarkets or shopping centres, which fall short as third places, since they are not entrenched in education, culture, knowledge, and social merriment. Additionally, governments are not investing in the growth of libraries as third spaces to foster community cultural cohesion and keep up culture. Librarians should push for more automation of libraries and strive towards transforming such spaces into uplifting and bracing social places that are quite distinct from home or work.

Purcell (2022) diagnosed Lefebvre's theory premised on the thought of "the spatial triad," attributing to the divergent proportions of space, such as the mental, social and physical. Jacqueline (2023) portrayed a triplet structure for space, trio paths of conceiving about and encountering space, expressly: spatial applications or practices, portrayals of space, and emblematic spaces. The researcher pinpoints space with respect to the perceived, which refers to spatial application practice, and the conceived, referring to emblematic spaces. Spatial discourse of space makes more sense when individuals contemplate not only the possessions or folks encapsulated but also the social affinity or systems and engagements done or the phenomenology of user social behaviour in the library: "space is social: it involves designating additional or limited appropriated places to social affinity and social space has thus always been a social output" (Weidenhaus, 2023). Spatial application or practice refers to space casually produced by society, for instance, perceived or physical space. Hatipoglu et al. (2023) elucidates that spatial applications or practices encompass practices of the body, for instance, benches, roads, chairs, and sitting or sleeping mats, which permit individuals to experience space. Portrayal of space or the assertive space refers to the conceptualised space, conceived by urbanists, scientists, planners, technocrats sub-dividers, social engineers, and architects; for instance, there are laws that govern use of the road, libraries, buildings, museums, mosques, churches, archives, galleries, museums and related cultural heritage centres. From a phenomenological context, the emblematic space refers to space as populated and experienced through its affiliated portraits and hallmarks, traditions, or rules, for instance, the golden rule "silence in the library" or any other rules of social authority.

Senem (2022) examined Kroll's discourse which distinguishes between three paths of establishing social space, namely, rational (empirical/normative rationale), reductive (liberal/libertarian), and authoritarian (power coercive). The former relates democratic space like the community or the social space while the latter refers to the ultimate control of events, for example, the former also refers to the free academic public, national or college library.



Jiang et al. (2023) is of the notion that the further librarians override space with explanations, for instance, top down approaches to user information literacy, education would be substantiating of a drive towards authoritarian (power coercive) and totalitarian perspectives of space and how it should be utilised. The authoritarian space tends to be defined by a penchant to control, with a lofty degree of politicisation and institutionalisation. “What is different is what is excluded: the edges of the city, shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games, of guerrilla war, of war. Sooner or later, however, the existing centre and the forces of homogenisation must seek to absorb all such differences, and they will succeed if these retain a defensive posture and no counterattack is mounted from their side” (Lefebvre, 1991). The researcher is implying that globalisation loses authority from its creature and its propensity to homogenise can be neutralised by micro social reasons, for instance, tradition, local or national politics, and culture.

Waters (2023) contended that imagining about “Third Space” can bolster librarians and libraries establish ingenious paths of engaging with multiplying diverse populations in increasingly dynamic contexts. The researcher further contends that collections, automation, and services provided by libraries can no longer be thought of in traditional twentieth century terms considering the transforming automative terrain and increased access to information, for instance, the drive towards access through joint portals. College libraries have to grapple with the sophistications and dualities of cultural and racial or tribal diversity, communal social authority, and social embodiment. Mandal (2023) felt that the inauguration of market forces in utter spaces results in philosophical space or space vacant of or cleft in meaning and low in social interaction, other than cold rock and stone consumerist or market guided networks, or culture characterised interexchange of commodities in markets.

Sultani (2020) dismantled the significance of library classification schemes and services because of the functional and structural limitations they impose based on a national and international epistemological and ontological basis of students literacy skills. Perera (2022) resonated parallel perceptions when the researcher called for an essential reflecting pertaining the utilisation of prejudiced intellectual constructions like classification and cataloguing designs, and the rules, regulations, and approaches that resolve the utilisation of space. These call for a rectification on selective paths to classify intellectual capital to make it simpler for users to grasp the scheme of possessions.

Challenges and Opportunities

In Sierra Leone, college libraries are more pronounced in resource endowed colleges, while those resource starved in urban and rural areas, and low and high density residential areas have limited access to library services. Some colleges do not have sophisticated libraries let alone decent classrooms, and the challenge is to correct this situation and improve access to information for all. Young people face a myriad of challenges ranging from poverty, crime, social exclusion, child abuse and HIV/AIDS, and college libraries can play a crucial social function or responsibility in turning these into privileges through establishing spaces for open conversation and interexchange of notions. Since Sierra Leone has a deep tradition of oral history, college libraries should engage story tellers in communities, to bolster in strengthening culture through human social narratives.



Other selective innovative perspectives for deliberation would be information integration and arbitration, or repackaging into song, drama, and dance utilising simple automation, for instance, recording oral stories or assist students in telling their own stories premised on their own experiences. There is a demand to bridge the gap between rural and urban terrains and ensure fair access to college libraries for students and communities. College libraries should exploit the privileges provided by the information or knowledge distribution and embark on consistent professional development and workplace learning to expand more appreciation to their practice so that they are able to assist communities and students better with regard to life-wide expertise.

Considering that the curriculum in colleges embraces all spheres of learning from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, it is imperative for librarians to handle the information torrent by enabling students with information proficiency expertise. Dong (2022) argued that the integration of information skills into the college curriculum is one of the foremost concentration areas of the teacher librarian, and that this is crucial in transforming the library into an essential cog in the teaching and learning business.

College librarians should learn more on the sociology of education, social philosophy, and psychology so as to appreciate the pivotal fundamentals of life skills, for instance, self-management skills and critical thinking communication. Presently, information literacy skills programmes vary from one college to another; in some institutions, they are referred to as customer education while in others they use the term information literacy. The formation of a college library council would bolster standardized information literacy programmes for colleges. However, the accomplishment of such an association will rely on the stretch to which associates are willing to portion out resources irrespective of their status; for instance, will low densities libraries be willing to cooperate with those in high densities?

CONCLUSION

College libraries have an onerous task to establish spaces that inspire and add value to library services. Waters (2023) reiterated that the theory of third space was not a solution to library problems, but that it enables librarians to engage in rigorous intellectual social discourse in exploring their profession amidst micro and macro reasons, for instance, democracy, globalisation, continuous learning, and the demand to contribute towards a better universe. The college librarian should rise to the occasion by embracing automation and maintaining and advocating for the remodelling or revamping of space to bolster partnership in the automation driven era. Furthermore, there is a demand to lobby responsible authorities to address issues of colleges without sophistication libraries and to revive those that are automation dysfunctional libraries in order to serve not only students and staff, but the entire community through linkages with public and national and international libraries. It is also crucial to contemplate public and private sector partnerships in the growth of college libraries; for instance, companies operating in communities should provide support for college libraries as part of their corporate social responsibility rather than just exploiting resources without investing in the growth or progress of the communities. A national policy for college libraries should be formulated with input from all stakeholders, namely: government, professional associations, commerce and industry, communities, Library and Information Training Colleges, and others.

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