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The Roles of Libraries in Political and Socialization Process in Religious Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract
This is a qualitative review on the roles of libraries in enhancing political integration in Nigeria and religious theological and moral perspectives that guide judgments about public policy. There is a need to foster national integration from the political dimension through library which is a key information institution. Religious congregations and associations are important in that, they are usually bound by strong affective ties and frequent patterns of social interaction. This view is presented in terms of the library enhancing political consciousness and participation, and individual's response to political campaign messages. It is concluded that library as a social-based information institution is rightly positioned to socialize outside the box to meet the political information needs of the public and equip them to become better citizens that are politically inclined. Thus, the authors recommend that libraries should provide equitable access to political information, provide media literacy skills, create awareness on the need for political participation and provide rural dwellers with information to meet their educational, medical, political, economic, and social needs.

Keywords: Library services, political participation, socialization, religious-congregations

Introduction
Political matters in Nigeria are so sensitive and decisive that it calls for political consciousness and participation by all citizens, and can be beefed-up by libraries through awareness creation to the public. Consciousness has to do with feeling or state of mind about something. Consciousness refers to an individual's ideas, feelings, or opinions about politics (Longman

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Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2012). Meanwhile, political consciousness is one's political state of mind which is based on the personal awareness of politics, position in the political system and history, and actions one perceived as available to take in an effort to influence the political reality in which one operates. Political consciousness is closely related to the concept of political participation and the idea of social contract between the people and the government (Rulska-Kuthy, 2014). Political participation refers to actions taken by citizens to influence or to support governance and government. People with more education, higher incomes, and white-collar jobs are more likely than others to participate in politics. Reasons for political participation go beyond parties. People participate in electoral matters to have freedom to speak out, hold offices at any level of government, have opportunity to register as candidates vote and be voted for. They can also participate in politics to socialize and hence act as agents of socialization to empower the democratic society and foster social transformation as they take part in conducting public affairs through the following ways as outlined by Lauren (n.d) as information provision, privacy, equity of access, education, independent learners and intellectual freedom which is all from the library.

Significance of the Study

This study will be of great significance to government officials by providing ways with which the library can assist in enhancing political development which is a key dimension of national development. This can thus serve as a guide to influence the drafting and/or amendment of policies that help promote national integration and development. The findings and by extension, recommendations made by authors in view of the study, will be useful to library management in rightly positioning libraries as development institutions, by promoting national development through political integration which has rarely been given attention in scholarship. This will also inform the redefinition of library services to accommodate new roles and functions in light of national development, thus extending the conventional practices of the libraries. Also, at a critical time as this when the relevance of library is questioned in the face of rising technologies, this study is significant in further justifying the relevance of library in the 21st century. The misconception that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and "disruptive" innovators like Google has displaced the relevance of library is corrected by this study in demonstrating other relevance of library especially those which directly correlates national development. Moreover, there seem to be a dearth of literature on how libraries can enhance political integration, which further depicts the significance of this study. The study will add to the sparse existing literature connecting libraries to national integration especially from the political perspective.

Methodology

This study employed scoping review methodology. A literature based approach was employed to collect, analyze and synthesize existing findings of research in respect to the roles of libraries in view of enhancing national integration and development. Literature from journal articles, books, web resources in the areas of librarianship and political science forms

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the basis of this review. The approach to this study helps to provide a summary of literature on the variables understudied.

Information Provision

Information provision is required from library and information professionals to meet the challenges of Nigeria's political system and history, to influence political realities operational in the country. A unique role of libraries as social institutions charged with responsibility of acquiring, organizing, and disseminating information to all members of the society, naturally position them to ensure that information is provided and that citizens have access to information that will enable them function reasonably and make useful contributions in politics. A public library, regarded as the people's university and the custodians of knowledge, makes political information available publicly. People need to be able to find and use information in order to understand how the political system works, and participate in formal and informal political activities (Lauren, n. d.); libraries should provide such information in order to contribute to democratic ideals, as a purveyor of information and knowledge. Alex, Nmecha, Horsfall and Igbinovia, (2017)) opined that without access to information, governance processes lack transparency and government officials will be at pain to earn the confidence of an uninformed citizenry. Access to information enables the citizenry to make informed judgments regarding government performance. Libraries play a key role in making information readily available to enhance political consciousness and participation in Nigeria

Roles of Libraries in Enhancing Individual's Response to Political Campaign in Message

The avalanche of information puts pressure on the capacity of the voter to process and comprehend information contained in campaign messages. Accurate and timely information is the "live-wire" of democracy as it equips individuals to make sound voting decision. According to Desposato (2007), many voters only have basic or no formal education and little or no access to political information which makes voting decision as part of "clientelistic" exchange and not policy debates. Libraries as social and information based institutions are well equipped to carry out information literacy programmes that could develop the ability of electorate to discern political campaign. Libraries could provide objective information about candidates, political parties, issues in a bid to negate widespread negativity which, according to Desposato (2007), will simply reinforce general pessimism about the ability of democracy to address the challenges of development. In doing this, libraries are promoting development by enhancing democratic governance via people-centered elections.

Socialization is a process by which cultural and behavior pattern of a particular society is transmitted from one generation to another for social perpetuation (Giddens, 2014:23-4). As a process of internalization, individuals are inducted and absorbed into one's social and physical environment. All human societies have well-defined strategies for social control which includes system of values, beliefs, norms and sanctions. Value system prescribes what

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is intrinsically worthwhile. It has to do with social conception of what is right and wrong and what 'ought to be'. Values are sole determinants of priorities among people's goals and objectives. It is also the basis for self-approval or condemnation. Socialization affords the society the privilege to reproduce itself socially and biologically perpetually from one generation to another. Political socialization is the process by which citizens learns about political leaders, governmental institutions, and political process and acquire their political beliefs and practices Muxel (2022).

Socialization is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2005), as "the process by which we learn to become members of society, both by internalizing the norms and values of society, and also by learning to perform our social roles". (Davis, Nancy, Robert and Robinson, 2016), defines socialization as "the process which someone learns the ways of a given society or social groups so that he can function within it". Ian Robertson (2011), defines socialization as the "process of social interaction through which people acquire personality and learn the way of life of their society". It is through socialization that the individual learns the normative values, beliefs, skills, languages and other essential patterns of thought and action that is relevant for social life.

Socialization is developmental in nature. As individuals mature from youth to adulthood, and even during the latter, they continue to learn new political information (Penssiero and Janmaat, 2024). This ongoing process of learning serves to shape values, political commitments, and political skills, which in turn determine which policies, candidates, and political parties are favored. Put another way, the socialization process provides the conceptual tools needed to render judgment on political matters.

The primacy principle holds that what is learned early is retained the longest. And just what kinds of things are learned early? Generally, it is not specific attitudes about public policy or detailed information about institutional process children lack the cognitive capacity to acquire such things. Rather, conceptions of morality, broad orientations toward authority (e.g., toward authority figures, the law), and various identities (e.g., national identity, sexual identity, religious identity, partisan identity) are the phenomena learned at an early age.
The structuring principle holds that what is learned early is not only retained, but molds later learning as well structuring the acquisition of later attitudes and behavior (Linda M, et al, 2008). Early orientations and identities serve as "filters" in terms of whom and what is to be believed or trusted as well as whom and what might be accordingly dismissed as untrustworthy. For example, a partisan identity acquired early in life serves as a filter in assessing candidates and issue positions as maturation takes place.

The Place of Religious Institution in Nigeria Political Socialization Process
If religious beliefs and practices have important political consequences, the primary socialization agent for these beliefs and practices is the local church. In the following section, we examine the role of the local church in this regard.

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Religiously active youth are more likely to express moral compassion and commitment to justice than nonreligious youth. In contrast to the later, religiously active youth are more likely to volunteer, be civically engaged, and render service to their communities (Smith and Denton 2011, Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby 2007). Our own research from a large survey sample of youth indicated that what mattered most for racial and ethnic tolerance was the regularity of religious observance (Gimpel, Lay, and Schuknecht 2013). Regardless of religious tradition or denomination, those who attended church services every week were more tolerant than those who never attended or attended only occasionally. Even as early as adolescence, a significant division emerges between the religiously committed and the less committed less so between mainline and evangelical Protestants, between Protestants and Catholics, or between Christians and non-Christian traditions.

Theological Perspectives and Moral Judgments

Religious congregations are among the most important, active, and far-reaching institutions in Nigeria (Robert G. Smith, 2018). They are the source of theological and moral perspectives that guide judgments about public policy. Moral commitments undergird a wide variety of public policy goals (Cornwall, Marie, 2017). These values, usually religiously informed, are expressed at the ballot box, ultimately directing political decision making on governmental matters such as the redistribution of wealth, equality, tolerance for deviance and the limits on individual freedom, the severity of criminal punishment, policies relating to family structure, gender roles, and the value of human life. Political differences that touch on competing understandings of right and wrong have come to constitute passionate divisions in contemporary politics

With this in mind, the acquisition of specific values and value hierarchies has been described as the starting point for political socialization research (Conway, M. Margaret 2011). The question remains, however, as to what specific beliefs should be "the starting point". Theological perspectives on God, life after death, the Bible, the historicity of Jesus Christ, and the origins of life are all possibilities. All are linked to a traditionalist-modernist divide that could serve as the appropriate starting point for socialization research within congregations.

In addition, belief systems vary in terms of the appropriate role for both the church and the individual in society; for example, many religious institutions focus on a moral reform agenda. Frequency, and ability of clergy to speak their minds to their members and the public (Laura R. Olson, eds. 2012), Clergy may make political speeches from the pulpit to encourage their members to participate, and participate in a specific manner (Barkowski, John, 2020). However, the extent to which clergy address matters of public affairs varies based on differences in resources and opportunities and differences in terms of theology and ideology, although differences between evangelical and mainline Protestant clergy in addressing matters of public affairs have narrowed over time (Bartkowski, John, 2010).

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Transmitter of Group Norms

Although religion as a font of values may provide a simple explanation for the widespread agreement among congregants on some political issues, it is less obvious why such clearly policy congruence holds with regard to issues that are less easily understood in religious terms. Religious congregations and associations are important in that they are usually bound by strong affective ties and frequent patterns of social interaction.

As noted earlier, one of the most important ways in which political dispositions are affected by religion is through the local context that religious institutions provide for the interaction of like-minded individuals. In addition, congregations serve as "political communities" (David Ahern, 2020), reinforcing accepted ideas and practices and providing pressures for individuals who are ambivalent or undecided. Even if ministerial leadership does not espouse clear-cut political positions from the pulpit, religious institution can still serve as strong socializing agents, providing members with information and skills relevant to political engagement and participation (David Ahern, 2012).

Building Civic Skills

As politically socializing institutions, religious institution can directly promote engaged citizenship by providing regular attendees with opportunities to build the skills necessary to participate actively in politics (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 2011). By participating in church activities beyond attendance at services, members learn skills that make them more likely to participate in politics because they perceive less cost in doing so, (in fact, it is less costly) and because they are prepared to apply organizational skills they have learned in church. Thus, developing members' skill sets is largely a by-product of church participation. Religious traditions vary as to how likely they are to provide training opportunities for the skills essential for political participation, with hierarchically organized religious institution less likely to do so, whereas congregationally based religious institution are more likely to do so (Verba 2011).

Certainly not all religious institutions encourage their members to participate in political and civic activity. Many religious institutions in the United States do not take an active role in the political process, and their leadership resists endorsing parties or candidates. "Activist" or "political religious institution", on the other hand, see it as their mission to take an aggressive role in making the governmental system more just and enabling their congregants to participate. In these religious institutions, congregants are in fact expected to participate and work actively to make the worlds a better place (Wald 2017); politicized religious institutions are also very important because political topics are discussed during worship services and worshipers receive clear political instructions and admonishments directly from their clergy (Djupe and Gilbert, 2008).

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Loci for Direct Mobilization

Finally, religious institutions serve as sites in which those who attend regularly may be mobilized directly to become politically engaged. Religious institutions help to politicize and mobilize voters. Religious institutions may sponsor voter registration drives, and pastors may encourage participation in campaigns (e.g., Barnes, Sandra L. 2014). Church attendance facilitates political contacting; because regular worshipers are more prone to engage in informal political discussions with friends, more likely to pick up a voter guide left in the church, or may even find themselves on some mailing list of an organization promoting a moral or social issues agenda (Guth, Kellstedt, Smidt, and Green 2012). The most common form of religious political contact is clergy encouraging their parishioners to register and vote.

While the family unit acts as the primary agent of socialization, the transmission of political values is intrinsically linked to the availability and dissemination of information. Parents and guardians do not operate in an intellectual vacuum; they rely on established norms and codified values to shape the political orientation of their wards. In the Nigerian context, where religious identity is ubiquitous, encompassing over 83% of the population, religious institutions function as critical information hubs. Consequently, the library within the religious institution assumes a pivotal role, not merely as a repository of theological dogma, but as a strategic centre for political and social information access. By curating and disseminating literature that bridges faith with civic responsibility, religious libraries provide the intellectual scaffolding necessary for parents and religious leaders to foster political literacy. Thus, the nexus between religious socialization and political behaviour is mediated effectively through the information services provided by these libraries (Okuonghae and Obadare, 2020; Adeleke, 2023).

Recommendations

(1) Libraries should provide equitable access to political information through various electronic, social, and print media platforms at their disposal. Such political information should include voters right, election's schedule, among others, should be done with the intent to increase political participation and awareness. This free and equitable access to information will enable Individuals Bridge the gap in the state of their political knowledge which will enhance their political participation and invariably spurs national integration.

(2) Libraries should provide information and media literacy skills to members of the public in order to enable them respond properly to political campaign messages regardless of the media. These media literacy skills will also equip them with skills to detect "fake news" propagated during campaigns thereby enabling well informed decisions.

(3) Libraries should create awareness on the need for members of the public to participate in political activities as a means to democratic sustenance. This awareness could be through the library's blog/website, radio jingles, telecast, library notice boards, flyers, posters, banners among others.

(4) Library services and resources should be extended to those in the rural areas with limited access to scientific information. Such services and resources should focus on meeting their information needs.

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