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Let's Be Responsible Citizens! Contesting the agenda of a sponsored call-in radio programme

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PiMA Working Papers

The PiMA Working Papers are a series of peer-reviewed working papers that present findings and insights from Centre of Governance and Human Rights' (CGHR) Politics and Interactive Media in Africa (PiMA) research project (2012-14).

The project, jointly funded by the ESRC and DFID (ES/J018945/1), focuses on expressions of 'public opinion' in broadcast media via new information and communication technologies (ICT) such as mobile phones in Kenya and Zambia. PiMA examines the political implications of such interactions in the two African countries, with a view to drawing conclusions of wider significance to practitioners and policymakers.

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Abstract¹

This working paper considers in detail how the hosts of and listeners to one call-in radio programme in Zambia were influenced by, resisted and co-opted the agendas of the sponsor that paid for its production. It develops a detailed case-study covering fifteen episodes of, 'Let's Be Responsible Citizens', broadcast on Phoenix FM in Lusaka in late 2011 and right through 2012. It shows how the original aspirations of the show's sponsor, Lusaka City Council, can be understood in terms of nurturing popular subjectivities that might enable the state to impose market solutions to the provision of social goods. The Council hoped that this might in turn have enabled them to survey and bring a particular kind of order to the unruly spaces of the capital city. The Council also aimed to evangelise a model of city governance that shifts power away from the dense networks of representative political structures that exist in the city towards consensus-oriented, technocratic modes of assessing social needs and distributing resources. However, the programme struggled to attract audience participation in episodes framed in these ways and, in accepting that they needed to bring the show closer to the concerns of the listeners, the Council enabled the host and callers to 'Let's Be Responsible Citizens' to subvert the show's original intentions. Negotiations over the show's agenda provide a window on how debates about political accountability, legitimate authority and who has the responsibility to meet social needs play out in increasingly media-saturated societies.

Introduction: Communication for development

From its inception, radio in Africa has been a tool of the powerful, deployed by colonial authorities, post-independence one-party states and foreign development experts to talk down to the masses about the correct use of fertiliser, condoms and ballot boxes. Fackson Banda writes:

colonial media may have also served as a tool for 'anaesthetising' the natives with entertainment and supposedly developmental issues. The "saucepan special" was introduced in Zambia and other British colonies around 1949. It was the first popular mass-produced radio set in Africa ... so the natives could listen to programmes on: '(1) agriculture, (2) building villages at a suitable place, (3) digging and building wells and dams, (4) latrines in villages, (5) care of children, (6) education of girls, (7) how to improve livestock and (8) many other things'. (Banda, 2007, p. 66)

The 'Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver' (SMCR) model of broadcasting assumed that individual listeners received information from expert sources and experienced a transformation in their consciousness. Knowledge, diffusing from the core to the periphery, was expected to change attitudes and ultimately behaviour, facilitating processes of nation-building and modernisation (Meftapoulos, 2008). While behavioural change amongst listeners has remained a central motivation for much programme-making, journalists also consistently find ways to co-opt the power of the media for more subversive ends (Englund, 2011). Robert Heinze argues that even the *Central African Broadcasting Services (CABS)*, which grew out of a project for the exchange of greetings between African soldiers fighting in the Second World War and their families,

was a fundamentally ambivalent project from its outset. It was driven by the colonial administration's need for information control, but it developed into a source of information and education for colonial subjects as well as a mediator of social change and, finally, an intellectual forum of Zambia's decolonisation. (Heinze, 2012, p. 1)

Heinze shows that the difficulties of using broadcasting for purely instrumental purposes were recognised from the beginning. Harry Franklin, the first director of *CABS* saw that, 'for a mass medium to establish itself as the central source of information and entertainment, it needed to take the audiences' needs and wishes into account' (Heinze, 2012, p. 2). Propaganda does not work if it

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is closed to the concerns of its audience, but in opening to them it risks undermining its own objectives.

In order to overcome the limitations of a technology that essentially creates relations between 'deaf senders' and 'mute receivers' of information, there have been wide-ranging experiments with forms of broadcasting that allow 'ordinary people' not only to listen to professional broadcasters and guest experts, but also to talk to each other and, potentially, back to authorities (Gumucio-Dagron, Tufte, & Gray-Felder, 2013). The voices of audience-members have been collected, edited and broadcast, through forms of traditional story-telling, the reading out of letters, live and pre-recorded 'vox-pops', and radio-clubs that gather together to listen to programmes, record their responses and return them to the station to be played on air during subsequent episodes (for a comparative historical survey and a contemporary African case, see Chignell, 2014; Mchakulu, 2007).

From the earliest messages from soldiers at the front, all of these methods held the potential for coaching, editing and censorship. However, since the 1990s, media liberalisation and increases in mobile telephone ownership have contributed to the proliferation of radio and television shows in which the audience talks back live, in many cases, unedited: listeners call in to express a view, ask a question or converse directly with an invited guest. These developments are widely expected to have significant social, cultural and political ramifications (Gunner, Ligala, & Moyo, 2012). Forms of participatory broadcasting have become standard aspects of agricultural extension and health sensitisation campaigns as development professionals have accepted that engaging the cultural, social and linguistic concerns of their audiences is a good way of tailoring behaviour-change messages (working paper #5 in this series illustrates how popular this method has become in Zambia, and the volume of official and NGO funding now being deployed to bring such shows to air, see Fraser, 2016).

One approach in particular, 'communication for development', has been championed since the turn of the millennium by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors including the World Bank and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). It includes in its conception a critique not only of previous schools of development, but also of previous dominant modes of communication, claiming to get away from economic and elitist assumptions of the SMCR model. Communication for development (and its close cousins communication for social change and for social mobilisation), rather than diffusing expert knowledge, have the (sometimes rather hazy) aim of using two-way communications to 'generate new knowledge and consensus in order to facilitate change' (Meftapoulos, 2008, p. xi).

Recognising that certain common characteristics of the country contexts in which communication for development has been tried out have limited its effectiveness, DFID's Sina Odughemi suggests that, for true participation and effective country ownership of development to occur, donors will have to help overcome certain 'structural impediments'. Odughemi argues that they will need to bring into being: a particular form of political culture; a good, free and professional media; free information; a class of well-organised and 'economically literate' civil society organisations; and a class of communications specialists working for the government who are concerned with two-way communication and not just propaganda (Mozammel & Odughemi, 2005, p. 20). He admits that these proposals 'amount to a highly ambitious agenda of social and political change that is hardly ever avowed' by others in the industry, and accepts that the actions required for donors to bring this world into being would equate to a 'new imperialism' (for which no apologies are offered – the piece cites Robert Cooper favourably) (Mozammel & Odughemi, 2005, p. 18). As the title of the book Odughemi's chapter appears in – *With the support of the multitudes* – suggests, the lack of an apology here relates to a faith that, in supporting the achievement of these standards, which they consider universal, donors speak for citizens against their oppressive governments, and are successful because they are able to demonstrate and build local support for their agendas through two-way communication.

Participation and the liberal project

A now well-established critical development studies literature shares Odughemi's concern with common structural impediments to free participation. Rather than fantasising about how to overcome them, it thinks about how they affect the impacts of actual participatory events. It notes that participatory processes can be designed not simply as a means to encourage the poor to voice their ideas, but to constrain expressions of popular concern within particular frameworks (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). In other words:

- Processes of public discourse can be a powerful means to secure consent to proposals that individuals would not arrive at in advance;
- Where certain pre-conditions for free and equal participation are not present, such consciousness-transforming potential risks

- being appropriated by particular interests, rather than serving the common good;
- Thus, when elites accept demands for, or actively promote, participation, we should be alert to the possibility that they aim to use the process to legitimate their dominance and to transform political subjectivities without transferring sovereign authority to the citizenry as a whole; and
- Underpinning elite belief systems that proclaim participation rhetorically, but seek to constrain it practically, we might expect to identify a lack of faith in the capacity and reason of the majority of the population. (Fraser, 2005)

This kind of thought has a long pedigree: Alan Kahan claims that this dynamic is integral to classical liberal political thought, in which democracy – mass rule – is seen as an historically inevitable process, but one full of risks that need to be carefully managed. He depicts John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville and Jacob Bruckhardt as 'aristocratic liberals', willing to extend popular sovereignty only as quickly as the popular consciousness can be transformed by systems of education and by bringing proletarian elements into contact with enlightened elites (Kahan, 1992).

A similar kind of critique has been developed to discuss a range of types of contemporary aid interventions. In their influential framing, Williams and Young discuss a donor-driven 'liberal project', in which:

'civil society' can play an important part in shaping the attitudes, mores and self-understanding of individuals who are to be encouraged to conceive of themselves and their relations with others and the state in particular kinds of ways. (Williams & Young, 2012, p. 9)

This idea of a 'liberal project' describes a broad intellectual and political terrain, allowing for the possibility that it has been identifiable across a broad historical sweep of Western interventions in Africa, and is sufficiently flexible to allow a wide range of 'self-understandings' that donors might consider within the bounds of toleration. In the burgeoning Foucauldian literature on development we often find a similar but more specific idea of the self that is being brought into being and that can be tolerated, one compatible specifically with the competitive economic order of late capitalism: a rights-bearing consumer-citizen, whose empowerment depends on the ability and willingness to make claims in a particular form – as a rationally-calculating individual making demands on disinterested public good providers.

Mathieu Hilgers describes how Foucault saw the need to re-make people as central to a 'neoliberal' variant that emerged intellectually in the early twentieth century and achieved political dominance in the northern hemisphere in the late 1970s and 1980s. This idea rejected the laissez-faire assumption that removing the state from the economic sphere allows un-coerced interactions to generate efficient markets. Neoliberals saw that the market is not a natural occurrence, but argued that the utopia of a spontaneous market order needs to be brought into being and carefully buttressed by particular forms of political institutions, which in turn bring into being particular types of people. As Hilgers has it:

Neoliberalism must change people. This is why, from Lippman to Thatcher's famous formulation, 'Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul', neoliberalism is a political project. The necessity of making people adapt to a world of generalised competition supposes a radical reform that transforms the way in which they perceive their destiny. (Hilgers, 2012, pp. 81–82)

The aim of any neoliberal political project according to this account is to achieve an acceptance of the moral content of both preference-aggregating systems of rule and preferences that start from each person having an individual *responsibility* to pursue their own betterment in a competitive context. Hilgers notes then that central to this process of 'governmentality' are, 'certain technologies of government whose importance should not be underestimated, notably in their ability to strengthen this trope of individual responsibility' (Hilgers, 2012, p. 85). He argues that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, such technologies of government are less developed than in many parts of the world, but that, in the context of particularly stark failures of market economics to broadly distribute the goods of capitalist development, and in the absence of significant aspects of a welfare state able to secure the lives of the poor, the notion of personal responsibility finds fertile ground:

taking hold of one's own destiny – being an 'enterprising self' in the Foucauldian sense – can constitute a necessary condition for survival... This entrepreneurial logic, espoused by agents with extremely limited means, unfolds in a context where figures of success appear to be those who have succeeded in 'managing their affairs', 'getting business' or 'having a plan'. (Hilgers, 2012, p. 86)

In spite of Hilger's hesitance about the categorisation of systems of rule in Africa as either liberal or neoliberal, there is now a widespread assumption in much critical literature that, through the conditions attached to foreign aid, not only are African states pressured to adopt particular forms of economic and political management, but there are also linked efforts to win the hearts and minds of civil societies and populations, smoothing the implementation of any such project (Craig & Porter, 2006; Duffield, 2002; Gabay & Death, 2012; Harrison, 2001; Rückert, 2006).

Such critiques have, quite successfully, demonstrated that aid interventions are frequently conceived with the *intention* of securing state-level acceptance of (neo)liberal norms, and of generating 'reform coalitions' outside of the state capable of pressing recalcitrant elites to uphold these norms. Nonetheless, few have provided close empirical studies of how African social movements and citizens react to these interventions, and thus whether they succeed on their own terms, or have important unintended impacts. Few have considered the latest iterations of the social accountability agenda, although one unpublished PhD thesis provides an exception (Brennan, 2014). As far as I am aware there are no extant studies of the role of interactive broadcasting through this lens.

It does not seem too difficult to demonstrate that some contemporary interactive media projects are conceived with these kinds of intentions. In spite of contrasting their new approach with the SMCR mode, 'behaviour change' remains central to the attraction for aid donors of new forms of interactive broadcasting. For example, while Meftapoulos (writing a World Bank sourcebook on communication for development) makes a great play of the desire to get-away from 'vertical' approaches to communication, the attractions of the new 'horizontal' method for him include reducing the risks of misunderstanding and miscommunication such that,

Only after this explorative and participatory research has been carried out does communication regain its well-known role of communicating information to specific groups and of trying to influence stakeholders' voluntary change. (Meftapoulos, 2008, p. xviii)

Of course, just because something is written in a sourcebook, there is no reason to think that all Bank projects proceed according to this logic. Nor should we overplay the role of the Bank, or aid donors as a whole in interactive broadcasting in Africa. The spread of mobile handsets and the development of call and text management technologies have made call-in shows a popular, cheap, easy and common format for all sorts of programming from quiz shows to shopping channels and sports call-ins. It is then only by looking at particular interventions in detail that we can consider the extent to which any instance of interactive broadcasting is designed with (neoliberal) consciousness-transforming objectives, and how and whether these objectives are realised.

Let's Be Responsible Citizens

'Let's Be Responsible Citizens' was broadcast on Zambia's first and most celebrated commercial FM station, *Radio Phoenix*, which originally broadcast solely in the capital Lusaka, but now has relay stations spreading along Zambia's urbanised 'line of rail', including towns such as Ndola and Kitwe in Copperbelt Province. *Radio Phoenix* broadcasts in the English language, in part as a result of the station's stated desire to avoid tribalism, in part because of its self-image as a symbol of the modern, liberalised Zambia. It also helps to target an educated middle-class audience whose wealth attracts advertisers. The station is owned by its founder, Errol Hickey, a businessman with interests in the tourism sector as well as broadcasting, and is managed on a day-to-day basis by his business partner and the station's matriarch, Elizabeth Pemba, who selects, trains and mentors all of the staff (Hickey, 2012; Pemba, 2012).

Radio Phoenix hosts the longest running of all Zambia's interactive programmes, *'Let the People Talk'*, which airs twice a week for two hours. It is widely regarded as politically influential and, partly as a result of hosting it, the station is perceived as an important part of Zambian civil society, being committed to an agenda of 'good governance'. For example, the station was seen as having played an important role in the campaign against former-Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) President Frederick Chiluba's third term bid in 2001 (Mbangweta, 2011).

In the period leading up to elections in 2006, *Radio Phoenix* drew consistent attention to the corruption of the MMD and provided a good deal of airspace to future president Michael Sata, as he built from scratch a popular urban opposition movement. Sata's appearances on *'Let The People Talk'* consistently made the news and played an important part in his Patriotic Front (PF) running the MMD close for the presidency in 2006, while winning the Lusaka municipal elections (Larmer & Fraser, 2007).

Based in Lusaka, *Phoenix* has an important link to the local politics of the city, not just to the national agenda. In the run up to the 2006 elections, a significant part of Sata's 'man of action' appeal, established in part through appearances on '*Let the People Talk*', was the idea that he had cleaned up the streets of Lusaka in an earlier period as mayor. On taking power locally, the PF's ability to provide 'order' in urban areas (something that Patience Mususa describes as embodying a nostalgic appeal to the era of one-party rule) appeared a vital aspect of its audition for national office (Mususa, 2012). Nonetheless, Danielle Resnick describes how, in the 2006-2011 period, the ruling MMD successfully disrupted the PF's efforts to reorganise the capital and systems for the allocation of residential land, slots in bus stations and stalls in markets remained under the control of party-political networks rather than the City Council (Resnick, 2013).

In 2011, Sata finally won the presidency. The PF again won Lusaka City Council, and again the Council was the focal point of a campaign to bring order. The task was always likely to be replete with political difficulties. In Zambia's independent history, the only three parties to have ever taken power have all initially organised a militant base in the country's urban centres. Upon taking power each in turn has quickly been threatened by the difficulties of delivering on the hopes raised during their campaigns, and has found it challenging to stabilise volatile and densely populated centres, typically turning their electoral base in the medium term to a rural one. In the case of the PF, while the residents of many of Lusaka's densely populated 'compounds' and informal settlements were widely understood to be the party's most ardent supporters, and the chief audience for its promises of 'more jobs and more money in your pocket', any process of bringing order would likely involve both costs and benefits for them.

In 2012, shortly after the police had started a programme to forcibly clear 'illegal' settlements in the compounds, the Mayor of Lusaka declared (on a show discussed below):

Historically, it was common practice that political party cadres, their payment, or the way that people said thank you to them, was for them to jump on any land they find. So unfortunately this was cultivated for a very long period of time resulting in the establishment of some of these settlements, which we are struggling with to offer services, because we find there are no proper roads, in short, no planning. The Patriotic Front Government won't do this and will try to put things back in order. Bring sanitation to the city. Bring dignity to the way our people live ... It's a challenge because at times it looks like we're being harsh on our people, but in essence we are trying to make things better. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012d)

The mayor here ties together an urban sanitation clean-up with a campaign to end certain 'neopatrimonial' influences on Lusaka's governance. As the Council's public relations officer understands it, the problem is the attachment of party cadres to members of parliament (MPs), who present themselves as the fount of all resources and licenses. This undermines the possibility of councillors playing their appropriate role as representatives of community needs, which can be arbitrated rationally and have resources allocated to them in open sessions in the council chamber. He explains:

We have a tendency in the city where people don't think it is necessary to know their councillors. Some of them even joke about it to say, 'look, a councillor doesn't feed me. Why should I know him?' (H. Kapata, 2012)

Resources that might plausibly be used to develop any particular area of Zambia (or 'feed' the residents) can come from a wide range of sources. Firstly, the central government runs major infrastructure programmes, including, for example, electrification programmes or, through the Roads Development Agency (RDA), road upgrading schemes. It also attracts and manages donor-funded projects, normally through the Ministry of Finance but also through various line ministries.

Secondly, city councils generate revenue from rates, fees and fines. They have historically been denied revenue-raising powers beyond these sources, and have been politically frustrated by the central state. Nonetheless they use what money they can bring in from these sources to cover legal responsibilities, including the provision of sanitation, done in consort with the state-owned water and sewerage companies, and the provision of power, organised by the state-owned power company, ZESCO.

Thirdly, parliament pays each MP (who are all members of the Council, sitting alongside the ward councillors in the chamber) a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) of one billion Kwacha (equivalent to over £100,000 p.a.), for the administration of which the MP is supposed to organise a non-party political CDF committee. Finally, councillors themselves also have a Ward Development Fund (WDF), paid to them by the Council, the spending of which ought also to be controlled by convening a non-party political Ward Development Coordination Committee. Lusaka City Council public relations officer Henry Kapata complains about a common

misperception that the resources available at this level are meagre. This, he claims, leads residents to ignore the councillors and see MPs, through the CDF and their assumed links to the central state, as the root of all development:

Now people want to believe that is not so much money that the area councillor should receive. So they will rather see the Member of Parliament who will receive Constituency Development Funds which amount to one billion Kwacha per annum. So they would rather communicate directly with the Member of Parliament. (H. Kapata, 2012)

Making a rough calculation, Mr Kapata claimed:

When people pay ground rate to Lusaka City Council, every month for example, if there is a ward called Jack Ward and people pay something like 300 million Kwacha on a monthly basis at ground rate, we knock out ten percent of that 300 million and give it to the councillor so that he can work on certain things like the drainage system and a few other problems. (H. Kapata, 2012)

If these figures are accurate, given at least five councillors in a constituency, the total WDF going into a constituency annually would dwarf the CDF.

President Sata came into office vowing to govern according to the Bible's ten commandments, and some of the first legislation that the new government enacted empowered local authorities to pursue a campaign of urban moral regeneration, restricting licensing hours for bars and nightclubs and banning cheap alcohol sold in sachets. This 'tujilijili' had become known as the currency with which young and poor cadres had been rewarded during election campaigns.

The PF had some political incentives to pursue this course. In 2011, they added to their core vote the backing of Zambia's Catholic Church, and much of a previously non-partisan 'civil society' – groups that represented a respectable, educated urban vote (the type of people who many would see as typical *Radio Phoenix* listeners). This was achieved in part by toning down the populist rhetoric of the party's earlier campaigns and appearing as the party of rational governance in the face of the previous regime's corruption. The PF poached a large number of skilled NGO and media workers to work for the new administration at the national and municipal levels – including several *Radio Phoenix* staff.

Some of the fruits of the relationship between *Radio Phoenix* and the PF administration, first of the City Council and then nationally, were a number of sponsored interactive shows. The first, *'Sanity in the City'*, sought to deal with the liquor licensing regulations, pressing home the rationale for a crack-down on premises serving underage drinkers, and nightclubs staying open late, encouraging callers to report licensees in breach of the regulations. The second, *'Lusaka City Council and You'*, sought to give residents an opportunity to call and make general enquiries about the work of the Council. The third, *'Government and You'* brought in senior government ministers to explain their policy portfolio and to answer questions from the public. This became highly partisan as listeners hostile to the new administration made many calls to the show, and senior ministers stopped attending. Finally, *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* ran eleven shows from December 2011 to March 2012 and four more in October and November 2012, at a total cost of 15,000,000 Zambian Kwacha.

The name of the show is highly suggestive of an instrumentalised version of participation concerned not simply with allowing the poor to voice their own concerns, but with a conscious attempt to transform their political subjectivities. The trail, played at the start of the show and typically again half way through (after the interview section and before calls come in), supports this kind of interpretation:

'Let's Be Responsible Citizens' is a Lusaka City Council initiative, designed to change the mind-set of citizens, to take responsibility of their actions, of their surroundings, public property, and be mindful of facilities, equipment and installations. But most of all, be responsible citizens, to obey all rules and regulations, be aware of nuisance by-laws related to the environment, rates collection, town and country planning, flea markets, general hygiene, street vending, and what we, the citizens are responsible for. 'Let's Be Responsible' is brought to you every Thursday.

The argument developed below explains what was meant in the minds of the show's sponsors by this framing and how their intentions were contested. The table below shows the evolution of the show, listing guests and topics for discussion on each of its episodes over the period.

Table 1: The guests and topics of 'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'

Guests	Topic	Date
Henry Kapata, LCC with Willy Chikwemba and John Ndlovu, refuse collection contractors.	Waste in Matero	08/12/11
Henry Kapata, LCC with Donald Mwiila and Smart Lungu, Zero Maombe, refuse collection contractors	Waste in Garden	15/12/11
Henry Kapata, LCC with George Mwamba and Joaquim Kaoma, refuse collections contractors	Waste in Kaunda Square	29/12/11
Edgar Mulonda, LCC with Alan Mulenga and Lazarus Mangela refuse collection contractors	Waste in Chawama	05/01/12
Henry Kapata and Edgar Mulonda, LCC with Beatrice Kafue, Stephen Kamana and John Chonda, refuse collection contractors	Waste in Ngombe, Kabanana, Chaisa	19/01/12
Henry Kapata and Edgar Mulonda, with Mr Ndlovu, Waste Management Association	Open forum	26/01/12
Henry Kapata and Edgar Mulonda, LCC with Mr Hussain, GL Carriers Ltd	Waste collection in low-density suburbs	02/02/12
Henry Kapata, LCC, with Moses Mulenga, Funeral Superintendent LCC	Cemeteries	09/02/12
Henry Kapata, LCC and Chief Fire Officer LCC	Combating fire	16/02/12
Henry Kapata, LCC with Patrick Simuchimba, Electrical Engineer	Traffic lights and street lighting	23/02/12
Henry Kapata, LCC with Reuben Matebula, Assistant Manager for Markets, LCC	Markets in Lusaka	01/03/12
Daniel Chisenga, Mayor of Lusaka	Open forum	15/10/12
Cllr George Nyendwa, Chaisa Ward, and Cllr Cassius Balazi, Kabwata Ward 6.	Role of councillors	29/10/12
Cllr Potipher Tembo, Chawama Ward 2. Cllr Lawrence Chalwe, Nkoloma Ward 1	Floods and relocation of illegal settlements	05/11/12
Jean Kapata MP for Mandevu; Cllr Nyambo, Roma Ward 17; Cllr Bwalya, Garden, Ward 19.	Development in Mandevu	12/11/12

The initial format of the fifteen shows was that Lusaka City Council public relations officer Henry Kapata, known to listeners as 'Mr K', came in to the studio and brought some guests with him. Together they fielded thirty minutes of questions from the show's host Luciano Haambote, known to listeners as 'Luchi'. The phone lines were then opened for thirty minutes of calls from the public.

As discussed in a previous working paper in this series (Fraser, 2016), sponsors of such shows often insist on a high degree of control over what is broadcast. In this case, from the start, the close relationship between *Radio Phoenix* and the city administration allowed for a high degree of journalistic freedom to be negotiated. As the host explained:

some [guests on sponsored shows] will give you questions, and you will ask them. Some, you will ask and say, 'is there anything that I can add on top of what you have given me?' And they would say no, and you have to respect them because they paid. There are others that when you ask if you should add anything on top they would say yes, and so those ones, you know, that you have room to play with. (Haambote, 2012a)

In this case, all that the Council did was to pick the guests and broad topics for discussion. Luchi managed the debate, researched the issues prior to the show, and chose his own questions. The host himself put the unusual level of leeway offered to the station down to the Council's confidence that both Mr K and Luchi could think on their feet, that Luchi understood and sympathised with both the Council and Mr K personally, and that he would ask reasonable but interesting questions (Haambote, 2012a). Their personal relationship began when Mr K himself had become a serial caller to one of Luchi's other shows, *Traffic Report*, seeing it

as part of his job to engage with the frustrations and complaints being expressed by Lusaka's drivers, who were calling in from the city's traffic-jams to complain about the poor management of the city.

The Council's expectation that the existing rapport between Luchi and Mr K might play to their advantage seems to have been well founded. Luchi went on to win the national media awards 'Presenter of the Year' in 2012, and has a very relaxed and charming style on air. He almost always set a light tone at the start of the show, making clear to listeners that his personal relationship with Mr K extended outside the studio. Most shows started with a running joke about how, in spite of regular promises to meet at the gym, neither of them had succeeded in losing any weight since they last met (over time, Mr K started to claim that he was indeed losing weight, and leaving Luchi behind).

The concept of responsibility reflected in the show's trail does not initially appear to fit especially well with the neoliberal concept of responsibility as willingness to adopt market behaviours. It is closer to a simple demand for obedience in relation to formal state regulation. However, it soon became clear during the show that market discipline was precisely the point.

Who is responsible for clearing up this mess?

The topic for discussion for the first five shows was refuse collection, or in the technical jargon, 'solid waste management' in the (poorer) high-density suburbs of the city. In Lusaka, in the one-party 'socialist' era, refuse collection in formal settlements was free and organised by the Council. Police checks on households enforced the rules that there should be no burning, burying or dumping of waste. These services and regulations were never applied in the informal settlements that grew around the city. As Zambia experienced a drawn-out economic decline, and then went through World Bank enforced structural adjustments, there was very low investment in the equipment and manpower needed to keep these services running. After a dual-transition to democracy and the free market in 1991, the Council's infrastructure eroded and the burning, burying and dumping of litter became ubiquitous – resulting in ever-more serious problems of disease, air and ground-water pollution, blocked storm drains and (in combination with the increasing population of the city and the inadequacy of the drainage system anyway) serious annual flooding of many significant compounds around the city, leading to repeated outbreaks of cholera and other water-borne diseases.

From 1997, new models were developed. This began with donor-supported pilot projects run through the Lusaka City Council, initially under the 'Sustainable Lusaka Programme' led by the UN Centre for Human Settlements, and supported by Irish Aid and the ILO. From 2001, leadership was taken over by DANIDA while the UNDP and various NGOs experimented with various models in different compounds. However, 2001 also marked the collapse of support for the party of government in Lusaka, and on-running tensions between the central government, which controlled almost all money-raising powers, and the city authorities meant that no attempted solutions had any real degree of success.

A model that had emerged by 2001 might be referred to as a neoliberal solution with populist characteristics. It was expected to fit well a city in which autonomous community efforts at development were typically the most effective partly because, after a decade of austerity measures and political calculations, the state was virtually absent. Budding entrepreneurs were identified (allegedly through participation/consultation with elected local councillors) to bid to run community enterprises. The companies were granted monopoly licenses to charge user fees to households for weekly collections in defined residential areas.²

These 'community based solid waste management companies' consolidated litter from the neighbourhood in (and around) containers in a collection zone. The Council then committed to using their limited equipment to take refuse from there to the city dump. This didn't happen and, more recently, the community enterprises have been invited to pay the Council or a private contractor to make these collections. The community enterprises were designed both as a low-cost means of running door-to-door collections, and with ideals of economic empowerment for marginal groups, designed as a labour-intensive way of generating jobs in poor communities.

By 2011, the schemes had had little visible success. Low payment rates in poor communities (in spite of legal compulsion to use services) combined with poor quality service from the community enterprises and weak infrastructure at the central (municipal)

² For an effective critique of the operation of the system in its early years, see Nchito & Myers, 2004. Munthali, 2006 offers a slightly more recent critique.

level to take the consolidated rubbish to landfill. Rubbish collected in vast piles both around the collection sites and in many other informal locations (often in storm drains) in which it was dumped and burned.

The reunification of the national and local arms of government under PF leadership in 2011 offered a chance for a new start and the aim of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* appears to have been the generation of a wider consensus within the city on the desirability of this liberalised system, and a resulting increase in subscriptions. In the first phase of the call-in shows, managers of the community enterprises were brought into the studio by Mr K, one area of the city at a time, to discuss their projects. Three plausible goals were visible within the Council's motivation. The simplest was the desire to use the show to establish a discourse of civic responsibility, in which individuals were pressed to pay their fees for the service. One of the contractors from Matero was asked by Luchi near the start of the first ever show: 'Why do you think people don't pay? Why don't you have that many residents in the area of your jurisdiction who are on board with this very important exercise?' He replied:

This is why this programme has come in timely. We need to change the mindset of people. People have always felt they can just dispose of garbage anyhow. They don't see the reason why they should pay for disposal of garbage, so we need to do a lot of sensitisation. Anyway, who can give me a reason why they cannot afford 20,000 Kwacha or 30,000 Kwacha? I would not agree with that person. ("Radio Phoenix," 2011)

The form of 'sensitisation' that seems to have been in mind was that the show would encourage complaints from residents about their neighbours who refused to subscribe to the service, creating in them a sense of shame. Luchi and his guests encouraged listeners to call in and talk about anyone in their area burning, burying or dumping rubbish and, if they did not want to call the station, to take photos on their mobile phones as evidence and to report their neighbours to the police or to the community enterprises.

A second identifiable motivation for the Council might be understood in terms of management theories of public value. Here, superintendent authorities generate and welcome 'transparency' and public feedback on the performance of privatised contractors for monopoly public service in order to improve services that are not in any normal sense subject to competition.³ In this case, the aim seemed to be to put pressure on the community enterprises by giving listeners an opportunity to make a public complaint against them. This had the advantage of giving a wider set of customers (not just individual callers) a sense from the regulator that their concerns were being heard. During the first broadcast, Mr K praised the community enterprises that had accompanied him, but noted:

We have been failed several times by some of these community based enterprises ... Some of them when they are asking to partner with Lusaka City Council, they give us a very rich CV. Ten trucks. Four forklifters, what, what. But when you see them working on the ground, all you see are two over-age people with two shovels... In most places we've been extremely disappointed. There are only a few that are operating to the expectations of the Council. That's why we keep terminating contracts. ("Radio Phoenix," 2011)

Both of these framings of the problem with litter collection in Lusaka – that citizens are to blame, and that the community enterprises might be to blame – have advantages from the show sponsors' perspective. If they could be made to stick, this might shift attention away from public hostility to the policy as a whole, and various failures of the Council.

Finally, Mr K suggested a third motivation: that the successful registration of households as subscribers to the new waste management system might help the Council to achieve a significantly more ambitious objective than just cleaning the streets. It might serve as an entry-point for a data-driven system of surveillance that would start to impose order over the entire city. Asked on air about the implications of the new system, Mr K responded expansively:

It means people are going to have to be very faithful to the community based enterprises. They're going to have to tell us how many people are dwelling in that one particular structure. Because it's been extremely difficult for the Council to monitor development in peri-urban areas. There are a lot of illegal structures. Where you expect a two-room house, it's now a fourteen-room home. Meaning more people, more litter. They don't pay anything to the Council. They just live and dispose

3 See, for example, Meynhardt, T., Gomez, P. and Schweizer (2014). For a more critical view see Dunleavy & Margetts (2006).

indiscriminately of waste. If we are to capture all of these people, we have to capture them through this new system that we are trying to introduce. Then we will have more money at Lusaka City Council ... As it is now, we have certain people who don't pay anything to anybody. They don't pay anything to ZESCO [the parastatal power company] – there are illegal connections. They don't pay for water. There are just illegal connections. They don't pay for garbage. So we'll have to capture all these units so that they become part of the Council. So that we work in collaboration with our partners at ZESCO, so that before they put power in this particular new house, they'll have to consult with us to say, 'what is it that these people have done that is not within the law?' If we tell them we don't recognise the extensions they've put forward, they won't put power. ("Radio Phoenix," 2011)

Whatever the Council was trying to achieve, it might well have been disappointed by early results. In the first of the shows, featuring community enterprises from Matero, the programme received three text messages, all asking for factual information and, in fifty minutes with the phone lines open, just three short calls. The very first call that came in was from a man called Gordon. He was calling from Matero, which is exactly what the sponsors had been hoping for, and initially he commented along lines that delighted them: 'There are a lot of problems here. Our neighbours are just dumping litter in the night.' ("Radio Phoenix," 2011).

This gave one of the contractors, Willy Chikwemba, an opportunity to condemn the practice and advertise his services:

People who dump at night and burn at night are really affecting their neighbours who are subscribing. Because if you burn at night, you know the pollution comes out of it. If you dump at night in the drainage then when the area floods you will say, 'the Council is not doing anything'. But it's you who are doing it ... So let us do the right thing and subscribe to the system. ("Radio Phoenix," 2011)

However, when Mr K then asked the caller which service he was subscribing to. He replied: 'Well, I used to pay a certain company, but now I've dug a very big pit where I dispose of garbage.' Mr K, half-jokingly, responded: 'You are the people we're looking to prosecute, because we've said several times we don't allow that. So please give us your details so that we can make an example' ("Radio Phoenix," 2011).

After Gordon's call there was a long delay before any more calls came through to the studio, and the host carried a good deal of the conversation himself. No more calls came from Matero, but one caller did ring to complain that the systems in Ndola, another Zambian city, were just as bad as in Lusaka, and a final caller criticised Mr K's proposals for restricting the provision of litter bins in Lusaka's central business district (CBD), suggesting: 'It is the responsibility of the Council to provide such services. That's why we pay such rates to them' ("Radio Phoenix," 2011).

By the time of the fifth and final show on waste management, the programme's interactive aspects were attracting somewhat more participation. The show received seven calls over the thirty minutes allocated to calling. The content of calls was not much changed: residents and companies consistently deflected discussion of their own responsibilities back to the failure of the Council to meet its responsibilities. One of the contractors invited on to the show by the Council, Mark, suggested that the costs of the system were unmanageable for poor residents of his area:

We have a number of people who are retired, and widows, widowers. Those people, their complaint is that they don't have money – that's the reason why they are throwing their garbage into the drainages and digging garbage pits. But even if it's like that, we are trying the whole time to sensitize them so that their mindset can be changed. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c)

The comments of Stephen Kamana, another of the contractors, suggest the extent to which even those who had won work from the new system did not think much of it. Kamana explained that the reason local populations did not accept the privatised regime was that it provided a poor service. He blamed this not only on the Council's attempt to save money by employing community enterprises, but also on its failure to invest in infrastructure, specifically in the trucks necessary to remove the huge piles of refuse concentrated by the community enterprises to the city dump:

We are moving from a situation where people were getting free services from the old regime. And we had equipment at that time. But now, all the equipment has broken down, so we have reached a stage where people are offering a poor service. So even the law which is there to say, 'don't dig a pit', I don't know how we are going to implement it. First of all give us the tools in the compounds. If the tools are given to us, definitely we are going to do a good job ... So let the city fathers do something,

and you know we are lucky in Lusaka especially, we have got the senior councillors. Here we've got the Vice-President, even the Minister of Local Government is here. We've got the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I think they will do something so that this mess could be finished, otherwise we won't clean the garbage here. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c)

Given the political context of Lusaka, complaints such as Kamana's, against the Council, frequently took on a party political flavour. With MPs in the city also sitting on the Council as its most senior members, Kamana expected that the national leadership of the PF should be particularly involved with attempts to solve problems in Lusaka. Callers throughout the series echoed these sentiments. The dominant feeling was that poor residents of informal compounds had voted heavily in favour of the PF. They were invested in the party, felt they had contributed to its campaigning and electoral victory, were still keen for the PF to deliver change, and were willing to organise community efforts to help do so. They had trusted a well-known group of political celebrities that made up the party leadership. They now expected their needs to be met by that group working co-operatively and providing unified leadership for the party's structures and were alarmed by what they saw.

Of the calls received on the fifth show, all but one individual criticised either the quality of the service offered by community enterprises for garbage collection or the prices they charged, or both. For example, Mark rang in to declare: 'They are charging too much. Some people don't work and it's very difficult for them to raise money ... charges must be minimal' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c).

Mark did not advocate a free system, but rather that the current arrangements should be altered to enable poor residents to pay one-off charges instead of being required to subscribe. Mr K's response was to recognise Mark as an effective 'serial-caller' who had been using interactive shows on *Phoenix* and other stations to press his concerns, and to thank him for his contributions:

Mark's observations and concerns were pretty good. We need such residents ... Those are suggestions that he has made several times on several media, so we want to believe if they can pick it up from there, then we can do the right thing. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c)

Rather than pressing too hard the idea that unless citizens are willing to pay the prescribed rates, the new system could not work (apparently the original intention of the show), Mr K's reply to Mark suggested a more passive-aggressive strategy for managing some of the hostility that the interactive format of the show had brought to the surface:

We know as a Council that we have not done well. We know that as community based enterprise system, we have not done well. We know that as residents we have not subscribed as stipulated by the laws. So we said let us bring up some discussion where we involve everybody at the same time, so we know who is wrong, who is right and what is the way forward. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c)

We can see here ways in which interactivity itself can communicate more than simply messages about how elites want citizens to behave. The necessarily open and responsive form of live call-in is attractive to those keen to see governance problems dealt with non-conflictually. This can be an important objective for administrators in a context in which – as Mr K had recognised in an earlier show – refuse contractors had withdrawn from the compounds having been stoned by the residents in the very poorest parts of town (Chibolya in this case) ("Radio Phoenix," 2011). As often happened during these shows, Mr K projected an image of a consensual council, willing to listen and to take on board the criticisms – so long as callers and the companies also played their parts in the new dispensation.

This attitude was widely admired by callers. The only individual who called during the fifth show who did not complain about the system in Lusaka was a man called Shakespeare, from the Copperbelt. He called to express his admiration for the show and desire to see it replicated outside the capital. It was not necessarily the topic of the show that the caller particularly admired, rather the atmosphere of open critique that callers had created, and Mr K's willingness to tolerate it: 'Mr Kapata has taken a lot of flak, I know that, and he's willing to stand up and explain things' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c).

Even callers whose calls were full of complaint often made a similar point. Mr Phiri's long and vituperative condemnation of the Council on the same show opened as follows:

Mr Kapata, you know I like you very much because you seem to know everything. But you have got very few solutions. This whole thing Mr Kapata is because of the City Council's weakness. This whole drive for garbage collection will be in vain. I am saying so because the City Police have gone to slumber, and we don't have inspectors to check people's homes. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012c)

Throughout the first five shows, residents consistently refused to engage with the idea that the problem with garbage collection stemmed from their failure to subscribe to the new scheme, and community enterprise service providers consistently refused to accept that the crisis was their responsibility. The Council then stopped sending representatives from the community enterprises to engage the public in this way.

When callers set the agenda

The first of a range of revised-format shows featured just Mr K and Mr Mulonda from the Council, offering an 'open forum'. The public response was indicative of the hunger amongst citizens to engage authority figures on their own terms. Without the discussion being framed by an interview section about, for instance, solid waste management in a particular area of the city, the intensity of calls increased significantly. Measured by the number of calls processed, this was the single most popular show in the series, attracting nineteen calls in 45 minutes. Of the nineteen calls made, two complemented the show and proposed that *Phoenix* and other community stations should organise more call-in shows that allow people to question civic leaders. All of the others raised particular concerns about topics ranging from corrupt roads contracts, lax implementation of the zoning regulations, the state of the pavements, disabled people's access to bridges and noisy neighbours. In tone these calls tended to combine gripes about the Council's failures to implement regulations, the resulting collapse of order (and morality) in the city, personal criticism of neighbours and industries that were considered to be behaving anti-socially, and straightforward requests for information about how residents could put pressure on the authorities to respond to their individual concerns:

In Kaunda's day, bars were only allowed to open at a certain time and had to close at a certain time. These days, they can open when they want to and play music as loud as they like. (Mr Ndlovu, Jesmondine, "Radio Phoenix," 2012e)

Chickens make noise, but guinea fowls are worse. Our neighbours are keeping them and we can't sleep. How should we make a complaint? (Samuel, Chawama, "Radio Phoenix," 2012e)

This was the show that got closest to generating any kind of consensus on what responsible citizenship might look like: people and companies should behave sociably, and the state should step in where they refuse to do so. Mr K dealt with the calls through a mixture of good humour, a bravura tour of his encyclopaedic knowledge of Zambian statutes and regulations, and honest explanations of the reasons that the Council was unable to enforce them. This approach seemed to mollify many callers.

Party politics was barely mentioned. It only raised its head in relation to comments about a recent announcement from a minister that, rather than taking the Council's current approach of attempting to enforce zoning regulations, the government might consider regularising the status of the many informal street vendors' markets in Lusaka. The market vendors are organised, militant, and politically influential (Cardozo, Masumbu, Musonda, & Raballand, 2014, p. 53). They had been involved in running battles with the Council's street-cleaning teams in the CBD. The minister had been criticised in the media recently for buckling to pressure from the PF's core support base of slum dwellers, a sentiment that Mr K seemed to agree with, but trod carefully around. For example, an anonymous female health worker commented: 'Allowing the street vendors to come into the city is going to help those people, I am sorry to use this term, at the bottom of the food chain, but again you look at the health hazard it is causing' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012e).

Mr K endorsed the comments, and then, in response to a direct question from another caller about a large new market being constructed illegally under a flyover bridge very close to the *Radio Phoenix* studios, commented more politically:

We have a problem here... They have really come with a bang, but I don't think that the current minister will allow them to continue with what they are doing there. There are no toilets. There's no running water... We understand that now there's leeway for vendors to be part of us, but we will not allow that kind of behaviour ... It was on television when one of the cadres was point-blankly talking about the minister, to say, 'I am warning the minister not to touch us'. Such kind of utterances are not healthy for the city. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012e)

As a public relations officer, party political questions are not comfortably within Mr K's portfolio, and after the open forum, *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'*, retreated to safer territory. Mr K started to bring senior managers of key departments of the Council along with him to discuss their portfolios, in cemeteries, fire services, traffic lights and markets. Through these shows the 'passive-aggressive' recognition of failure remained a favoured tactic, designed perhaps to generate a non-conflictual atmosphere. If this was the aim, occasionally the strategy worked. On 16 February 2012, Mr K's opening comment on the show was:

Sometimes we will have to diversify and see other sections of Lusaka City Council where we have literally failed, and I know that today people will have a bombardment of questions because we have not done pretty good when it comes to combating of fire. Today I have brought Mr Wellington Malambo. Now Mr Malambo happens to be the Chief Fire Officer of Lusaka City Council and so he will be able to explain to of course the listeners on some of the challenges we are facing as Lusaka City Council. Certain areas are impassable, and why should we be blamed? And who is to blame? And so we expect the residents of Lusaka to query us on all these matters to do with fire. Why are we late? We want to explain. And where we have failed, how can we work together because after all this programme is for the residents of the city. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012b)

Luchi adopted a very critical tone during the interview phase, all the time prefacing his detailed, technical questions about the weaknesses of emergency response provision, and the options for reform, with comments about how he expected lots of people to call in to complain about the same issues. They didn't. The second part of the show was very peaceable, attracting relatively few calls, and became a dry technical debate on the best types of fire trucks. There was some discussion of the lack of citizens' 'smart behaviour' when it came to calling the service and clearing access to water hydrants. Basic safety questions about how not to provoke fires were also covered. The show fell somewhere between what the trail promises, a way of 'changing the mindset of citizens', and a consensus-building exercise between the host, guest and callers that also accepted the need for policy reforms and that popular ignorance is not the whole problem.

It seems plausible that the ways that hosts and guests discuss topics during the first 30 minute interview sections of these shows sets the tone for the call-in section. Most callers in the second 30-minute section agreed with and reproduced the tone and language of the earlier debate. Though provision appeared utterly inadequate (the city owns just one fire truck) and the guests suggested they were expecting to be hammered, in fact the discussion was very tame. Callers raised a couple of technical questions that might be helpful in clarifying the discussion for a wider audience. In that sense, a small and educated group of callers was joining in with the idea of the show itself as a public service, helping through their calls to educate the rest of the public.

It was only as the show concluded that the listener suddenly gained an idea of how the topic might have been chosen with an instrumental function for the Council in mind. Mr Malambo's closing comment was that it is very important that when rescue workers entered compounds having been delayed on the way, or with insufficient water to put out the fire, residents should understand that their own behaviour might contribute to these difficulties, rather than 'stoning us like snakes' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012b). None of the callers and none of the dialogue during the show had brought out this ugly reality – that the authorities' relationship with some citizens was so cracklingly tense that certain neighbourhoods had become no-go zones for the emergency services. This might simply be suggestive of the limited reach of a show presented on a 'middle class' station in English, but it may also be suggestive of the ways in which debates set up by hosts and guests on relatively technical grounds, requiring quite a lot of knowledge to join in a policy-oriented debate, fail to inspire forms of engagement that address popular concerns. Without that kind of engagement it seems implausible to make claims about such shows performing any kind of 'governmentality' function amongst difficult to govern populations.

A more politicised style of questioning returned with a second open forum show, this time with the Mayor of Lusaka, Daniel Chisenga. Luchi's introductory interview with the softly-spoken mayor was very gentle. He asked relatively open questions about land allocation procedures, and allowed Chisenga to answer technically, at length and, without Mr K's charisma, setting a somewhat soporific tone for the show. Compared to Mr K's earlier open forum, a slightly lower volume of calls came through, partly because the mayor provided less snappy answers. The content of the calls was not dissimilar, combining critique and requests for information.

Having access now, not to a public relations officer, but to an elected official who framed his comments in terms of the achievements not just of the Council but of the ruling party, the topics under discussion were typically on slightly hotter topics than a neighbour's noisy guinea fowl. Party politics entered as three of the ten callers again raised questions about the relaxation of

regulations on street vendors. As during the last open forum, *Radio Phoenix* callers tended to oppose what they saw as a softening of the PF's commitment to bringing order to the city. This time the political implication of having callers criticise a senior PF representative live on air brought out, perhaps for the first time on the show, a caller keen to defend the new administration from other callers in terms that listeners would have understood as class-based and party political:

People should sympathise with the vendors – they also have families and the cost of living in Zambia is very high. Those people who are calling and saying, 'arrest them', them, they are eating. Their stomach is full with sausages. So please, be honest with the people selling in the streets. They don't want to have to steal. They voted for this government. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012d)

Much as the initial set-up interview on this show seemed to affect the tone of the calls that followed, a more partisan set of calls also seemed here to provide permission for Luchi to sharpen the interview and, in a gap between calls, he started to pursue by far the most sensitive line of questioning he had developed with the mayor. As both Chisenga and Luchi will have been aware, the vendors squatting an illegal market near *Radio Phoenix* were claiming to be PF cadres who enjoyed political protection, in part through the adoption of the name 'Don't Kubeba Market' (the ruling party's slogan from the recent election campaign). Their claim pitted the authority of the Council against the political calculations of unknown senior figures within the ruling party.

Although Luchi's questioning proceeded politely, almost jokingly, he gently introduced the question of whether Chisenga had the authority to keep his clean-up going, or would be over-ruled. The mayor effectively claimed that he remained in charge and that this would become evident as the law took its course:

Luchi: I know we're talking about illegal land, but can I ask you about illegal markets as well? For example, the market that's right opposite this building. They call it the 'Don't Kubeba market'. I am not sure if you're aware of it? What measures have the Council put up so that situations like that market don't come up?

Chisenga: ... The law, the Bus Stations Act provides that the only legitimate authority that can run markets is the City Council. You and your colleagues cannot just wake up and start putting ramshackles around and say you are creating a market. That's illegal. So as long as the law remains, it's the Council that has jurisdiction over markets. So we will not entertain anyone who is going to break the law. The Don't Kubeba Market, like we've always said, it remains illegal.

Luchi: Were you aware at the time that they were going to build this market? Because at the time it seemed, it took almost three months before it was all put up. I mean we could see it developing from upstairs here.

Chisenga: ... Everyone who has been a victim of any demolition in this city will tell, you, 'yes I was served notice'. But what is the story? The people that promote them, sometimes political cadres will tell them to say, 'you just continue. If you finish building it the Council won't demolish'. What I will tell you is a law is a law. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012d)

As late as April 2013, no effective action had been taken and newspapers continued to report warnings from the Council that the market was illegal and would be demolished ("LCC speaks out on illegal markets," 2013).

This discussion heralded a change of tone for the show as Luchi and the callers increasingly focused their questions on how inner turmoil within the PF might affect development in the city. Making this move overcame any difficulties the programme had with engaging an audience or making agenda-setting radio programmes. It also became less and less clear what the Council stood to gain from sponsoring a show that was openly investigating the difficulties that the ruling party was having in settling its agenda and resolving internal rivalries.

Roasting the councillors

The next three shows featured as invited guests elected councillors from three different constituencies. The initial point of these shows, from the perspective of the Council, was to establish more clearly in the minds of the citizenry the particular role of the various layers of officialdom, such that complaints about unmet social need might be dealt with rationally. As Luchi put it:

The big misconception in this country is people think when you have a problem in your area you speak to the MP. They don't follow the chain of command. What the Council would like to bring out to the people – in short the councillor is the first in a long chain of command. (Haambote, 2012a)

However, rather than councillors' presence attracting calls for information on the rather narrow realms in which they have formal responsibilities (primarily public maintenance works in their wards), the tone of the shows changed. Being elected on the ticket of political parties (reflecting the balance of power in the capital, all the councillors featured were from the PF), councillors were obliged to make political capital from their appearance, even in the discussion of relatively technical issues. Callers well understood this, and aimed to use it as leverage. Both the host and callers were much more personally hostile to the elected representatives than they had been with council functionaries and contractors.

This dynamic was particularly accentuated during the show of 5 November 2012 in which the guests were Councillor Lawrence Chalwe from Nkoloma Ward 1 and Councillor Potphet Tembo of Chawama Ward 2. Chalwe wanted to use the show to encourage some squatters in Misisi, an area within his ward, to move away from land on which they had settled. The land in question is based in former quarries. As a result it is impossible to drain and floods annually. Those living illegally there are very poor and cannot afford accommodation elsewhere. They have historically been reluctant to leave what little property they have in spite of floods that send cholera-infested water above the height of windows in around 200 households. They have protested, over a period of years, that arrangements had not been made to upgrade the area, to re-house them adequately during floods, or to allocate better land for them in the long term. While the former President had made a proposal to give the squatters better land, this had never been followed up and the PF made great play in opposition of this failure. Nonetheless, now they were in office, the Vice-President (who has responsibility for disaster planning) had made a public call on people living in Misisi to again move out of their houses before the floods arrived.

In the interview set-up for the show, the councillor urged residents that the task of responsible citizens was to make a plan, ahead of time, about where to go, and indeed that they had a responsibility enshrined in the Zambian Constitution not to create a health hazard for other citizens. Luchi aggressively pursued the question of where the squatters should go. In previous years they had been forcibly evicted and then temporarily accommodated, at great expense, in a football stadium. The PF's line was that it would not be necessary for the government to make this provision again if residents voluntarily moved out early and rented accommodation elsewhere, and that a long-term solution would soon be announced anyway by the cabinet. The councillors declared that they were unable to pre-empt that announcement, and also felt unable to express any opinion on the matter in case they contradicted the forthcoming cabinet paper. In a furious interview, Luchi made the councillors look foolishly evasive, having been sent on to the show to deliver a message to their constituents, but without the ability to engage effectively. Following Luchi's cue, callers were equally merciless. The first of six, Sishula, stated: 'How many times are we going to have a short-term solution? You carry on wasting money, wasting money, wasting money ... We are getting fed up of you' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012f).

The second, Chilufya, excoriated the councillors:

I am so disappointed with those two gentlemen there. I am so disappointed that these are the people that were voted in by those people who are suffering right now. What they are saying is so dry. It's like they have no heart, they are not part of the reality that these people are living in ... PF was not born in September last year. It has been an opposition party. You used to talk so much about that issue, you went to those people and said you are going to find a solution. So it is so absurd that today they can be talking as though they don't know what they are doing ... It's so embarrassing and you should be ashamed of yourselves, especially you two people sitting there, that you have got no answers... ("Radio Phoenix," 2012f)

The third, Mr Maina, a former councillor himself, offered the hapless guests some advice on how to manage call-in radio:

Whenever you are going on such a programme, you have to consult with your seniors before you come ... the problem in your ward is bigger than yourselves. So the fair thing is to say you cannot manage. Development is not about you, it is all about the central government. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012f)

The fourth, Tim, noted pithily, 'Even in the time of Noah there was an ark'. The fifth, an anonymous caller, complained, 'They need to tell people where they are being moved out to. Why does this discussion always happen at the last minute just before the rains come?' ("Radio Phoenix," 2012f).

The programme did not receive a huge volume of calls, in part because of Luchi's exasperation with the guests. He followed up on many of the caller's questions, reiterating his central point repeatedly that the administration could not at the same time try to

claim credit for a yet to be announced long-term solution and, at the same time, insist on the same old answer – that the residents evacuate. Finally, the last call that came in was a significantly more robust defence of the administration's position than either of the councillors had been able to muster:

I would like to disagree a bit with the previous callers. In the first place, a person knows that his place is an illegality. We are not allowed to settle here. I do not have documentation to settle here. It is not a planned settlement. A person goes to settle in a place, and now when the disaster comes he wants to be assisted with resources. But those are public resources, which we so much need... he wants his government to find a solution, which I find not agreeable.... Every person should be responsible. When you get a plot and you want to build, get a plot in a normal manner, in a legal manner and then you won't have problems. But if you get a plot in an illegal manner, these are the results and taxpayers' money should not be spent on such illegalities. ("Radio Phoenix," 2012f)

The caller was Mr K. He was not in the studio this week, but was calling from his office at the Council. The idea of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* had been to air calls from the public that might build a consensus on what it takes to be a responsible citizen. In seeking to attract more engagement by moving the agenda of the show closer to the party-political interests of its listeners, the Council had set up a humiliating experience for the ruling party and the councillors. The discussions in the show were widely reported in the national media, compounding the offence.

By this point, the original objectives of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* had been so thoroughly usurped by the callers and the host that the commitment of the sponsors might be in question. Luchi was unrepentant and unconcerned. He located the legitimacy of his more robust challenge to these particular guests in an understanding that those who choose to play in the arena of formal representative politics open themselves to a higher standard of scrutiny that council officials: If the Council call me and say, 'listen, we are paying, don't roast them', I might slow down on how much I roast them ... but I think even the Council understand that these are councillors who have been elected by the people, so ultimately they are answerable to the people. (Haambote, 2012b)

The Council concluded that, since the profile of the show had become much higher, the skills required to manage callers required them to pick a prize-fighter for the final show in the series. For the last programme of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'*, two councillors from Mandevu constituency were accompanied by their high-profile MP, Jean Kapata. Kapata is an experienced campaigner in her own iconic constituency, the heartland of the PF vote in Lusaka, the scene of some of its largest election rallies, and the second most populous constituency in the country, having over 300,000 voters. She was a Cabinet Minister in the PF administration and did almost all the talking. This time the councillors left the studio unscathed.

Kapata's performance was authoritative. She opened the show by explaining the very wide range of sources of funding that were being spent on development activities in her constituency. The complexity of planning and sourcing of resources for the initiatives was striking. This set a very broad agenda for the call-in section of the show and no particular topic emerged from the wide range of calls that came in. On the surface, the show appeared a model of interactive radio as a producer of liberal accountability. Citizens called in to explain their unmet needs to a figure of authority, and a generally convivial but challenging tone was maintained as Kapata sought to explain where various projects had got to, and was praised and criticised in equal measure by a combination of the host and the callers. Co-operation, consensus building and collective solution-finding were highly emphasised on all sides. A number of callers expressed their delight at Kapata's willingness to appear, and commended the show and the MP as model of how the new administration needed to engage the population.

However, it is worth remembering that the original point of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* featuring councillors had been to convince the public that their fixation with the political celebrity of certain Zambian MPs (the 'city fathers', like Kapata) was misplaced, and to re-emphasise the importance of going through the 'right channels'.

In most of the projects that Kapata described, she had no formal role. Nonetheless, the MP presented herself as a necessary co-ordinator of all the resources coming in to the constituency, and the other guests, callers and the host of the show saw no reason to challenge this framing. Another way of thinking about what was really going on then was that a representative politician was managing to associate herself with, and extract a share of the credit for, the allocation of various resources that (should have) had nothing to do with her. Her approach may represent the reality of the way things are done in Mandevu: Kapata sees herself as the local sovereign and the assumption appeared to be shared by the local population.

It might be suggested that the arrangement may allow for some rough and ready version of political accountability to emerge. If all development in the constituency is considered Kapata's responsibility, at least one senior figure has the sense that their future electoral chances depend on demonstration of the ability to deliver. If the calls to the show are anything to go by, this might be a way of constructing and supporting systems of accountability that 'go with the grain' of existing local political culture, rather than necessarily hammering home the idea of going through a technocratic notion of 'the right channels' (Kelsall, 2008).

The sense that the MP felt under pressure to 'deliver' or at least to manage expectations was visible in the frequency of exhortations: 'we're getting to it', 'people must be patient', etc. A second way in which the guests sought to manage the risks inherent in the show, indeed in a sense to assert that there was no need for the show, was to refer to the extent to which the constituency was, quite without the radio station, a community already communicating effectively with itself. This was a task made relatively easy for the guests since, in four out of the ten calls taken during the show, the caller was already well known to the guests and/or the host of the show, and several of them might be understood as either formally elected community representatives or those seen as sufficiently well-informed to speak articulately in the name of the wider community. Kapata and her councillors responded to some of the callers in the following ways:

Mr Lifuka is my younger brother anyway. He went to school with my younger brother so we must go back to him for advice. (Jean Kapata, "Radio Phoenix," 2012a)

We talk every day you and I, Proud. You know that because we talked earlier today. (Jean Kapata, "Radio Phoenix," 2012a)

I'd like to congratulate Mr Musoni and Mr Proud. We need to come closer together. There was a time when I was setting up a WDC (Ward Development Committee) and I invited you but you didn't want to join. So let's come closer together and build up Garden. (Clr Bwalya, "Radio Phoenix," 2012a)

One implication of all of these comments was that it would be rather rude of the callers to cause trouble on the radio when they already enjoyed a relationship outside of the studio.

In an interview following the show, Kapata was quite clear that MPs attend call-in radio shows in order to establish their reputation and legitimacy with the electorate, rather than to be held accountable by them. She rejected out of hand the idea that she might learn much about the development issues in her constituency by attending such a show. She instead pointed to the presence in her office of a professional constituency officer tasked with daily interactions with members of the public, and to the dense network of party structures that are designed to enable an MP to keep a close ear to the ground:

We are aware. We already know, because even before I became a member of parliament I knew. First of all I got on the ground. I knew what the people of Mandevu were facing, and I know them and I noted them down. (J. Kapata, 2013)

Kapata emphasised instead that interactive radio is a good platform from which to promote awareness of the extent to which she has delivered development to the constituency, and thus to seek re-election:

For me, the reason why I go on ... is to inform the people what I have done and what I am doing. (J. Kapata, 2013)

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the political and economic processes by which interactive shows are brought into being place important constraints on what they are. Instead of starting by imagining what particular technologies and broadcasting formats could achieve in an ideal world, it presents a grounded study of what radio stations and hosts do with these technologies and formats in particular places, and how successful they are in achieving their objectives. It suggests that by their very nature live call-in shows always leave space for the agency of audiences to resist instrumental agendas.

The case study of *'Let's Be Responsible Citizens'* provided an illustration of the processes at work. It showed how audiences were capable of imposing on the show the understanding that tidying up the city depended principally on senior elected politicians rather than any change in citizen's mind-sets. Callers presented a model of the responsible citizens as one willing to morally condemn the failures of their MPs and Ministers to deliver on electoral promises, and threatened to withhold future electoral support. In this sense they showed great faith in political activism within representative structures and understood interactive media as one forum in which representative politics could be contested, rather than as an alternative way of doing politics.

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