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Digital citizenship and cyber-activism in Zambia

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Introduction

Through a critical meta-analysis of existing research and using three case studies, this chapter explores and reflects on the forms of digital citizenship that have emerged in Zambia. In particular the chapter focuses on the state's responses to cyber-activism and argues that a new kind of digital citizenship is emerging. The chapter begins by outlining the Zambian political and digital context to provide background to the discussion. We then explore the three case studies: a 2004 incident in which an activist hacked a government website; the 2015 by-elections and 2016 elections; and the so-called bush protest of 2020. We argue that these cases highlight Virilio's (2006) conceptions of dromology and dromocracy, which see social change as a result of the speed with which social forces are pushing for change in society. Using this theoretical frame, we utilize the concept of citizenship as rights-claiming constituted by the exercise of performative actions and struggles with the state over control of digital space. This chapter argues that the space for digital citizenship is contested on three fronts which we explore in turn: technologies, tactics and laws.

The Zambian political and digital context

In the period following independence from British colonial rule, Zambia is considered to have experienced three broad political eras: the first republic

(1964–73), the second republic (1973–89) and following constitutional changes in 1989, the third republic has endured up to the present day. Thus, a whole new generation of Zambians, oblivious to past political circumstances, have grown up within the context of multiparty democratic practices.

At the advent of independence, Zambia initially operated as a democracy but soon became a one-party state, under the United National Independence Party (UNIP) which remained in power for nineteen years from 1972 until multiparty elections in 1991. Since then, Zambia has held nine presidential and general elections and enjoyed a relatively stable democracy and peaceful transfers of power between four political parties: UNIP, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), the Patriotic Front (PF) and the current incumbent United Party for National Development (UPND). Despite the shift to democracy, the state has tightly controlled civic space by silencing independent media outlets, while the country has experienced growing rates of poverty and inequality, high levels of foreign debt and political scandals (Gavin 2021). Multiparty democracy is well established but 'opposition parties face onerous legal and practical obstacles to fair competition, and the government regularly invokes restrictive laws to curb freedom of expression and ban peaceful demonstrations and meetings', and political violence remains a problem (Freedom House 2021).

With respect to the media landscape, newspapers, radio and television (TV) stations were subject to strict government regulation since the 1960s, and 'when the internet was introduced in Zambia in 1994, concerns about press freedom, pluralism, and privatisation intensified' (Parks and Mukherjee 2017: 223). During the late 1990s, the government attempted to out-compete independent media by financing state media, but independent outlets, often online, have filled a gap by providing critical news and attracting significant readership (Parks and Mukherjee 2017: 223). 'Along with intimidation, sometimes the state uses arrests, detentions, and protracted legal proceedings against journalists who are marked as problematic' also confiscating their digital equipment, which is costly to replace (Parks and Mukherjee 2017: 223). According to an article in *Foreign Affairs* (Norris 2021), global regressions from the democratic ideals of the early 1990s started when elected political leaders undermined and gradually dismantled core institutions such as the judiciary, electoral management bodies, independent legislatures and the news media. The result is that political and civil liberties are limited in Zambia. The judicial arms of the state are restricted, media independence is violated, while the public end up confused, as citizens 'do not see the damage caused to democracy until it's too late' (Norris 2021). When people do, they respond in various ways, as we discuss later in this chapter.

Regarding internet access, Zambia has generally had very low internet usage, but usage increased slightly when a national information and communications technology (ICT) policy was adopted by the Zambian government in 2006. Of a total population of about eighteen million, 52 per cent (9.8 million) have access to the internet. This has been a nearly 50 per cent increase in internet usage over the past ten years. Of these, a fair number of people accessing the internet are youth, who constitute 37 per cent of the population (Zambia Government 2015: 2). If you were to ignore the youth-age barrier of fifteen years and incorporate children, then there are an estimated 8.4 million youth and children under the age of thirty-five years in Zambia (Country Meters 2019). As of January 2021, Zambia had a population of 18.65 million, with 44.9 per cent living in urban centres, while the rest (55.1 per cent) live in rural areas. Only 5.48 million of Zambia's population are internet users, and internet penetration stood at 29.4 per cent in January 2021.

In terms of social media, there were 2.6 million users in Zambia, equivalent to 13.9 per cent of the total population in January 2021 (Kemp 2021). Social media, and Facebook in particular, have emerged as the leading channels for digital citizenship in Zambia (Internet World Stats 2021), possibly as a result of Facebook's early experiment of providing variants of free basic access services for citizens of the Global South. This was a global initiative started in Zambia in 2014 (Schoon et al. 2020) and later extended to several African countries and countries in other regions. NapoleonCat (2021) reports that there are 2.9 million Facebook users in Zambia as of September 2021.

As of December 2020, there were more than 2.5 million Zambians with Facebook pages (Internet World Stats 2021). According to StatCounter (2021), a site that measures and tracks internet usage based on page views, between April 2020 and April 2021, Facebook had a 55.15 per cent market share of Zambia's social media space. Its highest point during that period was in March 2021, when Facebook took 69.45 per cent of the social media usage space in Zambia. Its main competitors had a much smaller share: Twitter's market share was 21.62 per cent, Pinterest's about 15 per cent, YouTube's about

6 per cent and Instagram's about 2 per cent. Clearly, more than half of the debates on social media are taking place on Facebook. Unlike in other parts of the continent, Twitter usage lags so far behind that its use can be considered inconsequential to Zambian digital citizenship.

Theoretical context: Citizenship, digital citizenship and political participation

The terms 'citizenship', 'digital citizenship' and 'political participation' are central to this chapter and so we explore them in detail in this section. We should note that citizenship is a contested concept. In the academic literature, it can be understood as political status, civic action or a contractual relationship. Citizenship can be understood as the relationship between an individual and a nation state (Pangrazio and Sefton-Green 2021); as the action of taking part in public affairs (Jones and Gaventa 2002); or a level of entitlement in a relationship between a person and the state (Youkhana 2015). At the broadest level, citizenship can simply be understood as participation in community affairs (Lindgren 2017).

Turner (1990) argues that citizenship should not be understood as a unitary term because there are in fact several approaches to the concept. These include dimensions of participation, the need for expansion of social rights, aspects of active or passive participation or indeed what individuals do in their private spheres. Further, Turner (1990: 194) argues that citizenship 'is no longer formally confined by the particularities of birth, ethnicity or gender' but is 'pushed along by the development of social conflicts and social struggles . . . as social groups compete with each other over access to resources'.

Turner's thoughts extend beyond the liberal conception of citizenship as a situation where the individual is subject to the nation state, where the individual is a member of the nation and where a person's rights and responsibilities are established within a geographical and political boundary (Caglar 2015). It also outstrips the narrower view that citizenship is a status bestowed upon individuals by the state, but with accompanying rights and obligations, to being a process of participation in political and civic life. This conception, however, has been questioned by Clarke et al. (2014), who have called for the destabilization, unbundling, disputation and decentralization of the concept.

In fact, other scholars argue that whereas citizenship may be granted, what should be in place is 'civic consciousness', which is deliberately nurtured by individuals themselves (Vlasenko et al. 2021) for the purposes of participation in community affairs and the struggle for social resources.

Further, citizenship should not be seen as something that is handed over to individuals from those in power. When viewed from the top down, citizens' rights become passive rights, an aspect which precludes that citizenship could in fact be a consequence of social struggles, as Turner (1990) argued.

These issues continue to be relevant in the consideration of digital citizenship. The battle for access to resources and the tussle over digital spaces are extended in the online world. The notion of digital citizenship should embrace the view that citizenship involves claiming one's rights with mobile and internet tools and in online spaces.

Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal (2008: 1–2) define digital citizenship as 'the ability to participate in society online'. This includes aspects of inclusion, civic participation and economic opportunity. These three are the metrics demonstrating the ability to participate online and therefore of digital citizenship. They also help define digital citizens as 'those who use technology frequently [daily] . . . for political information to fulfil their civic duty, and [those] who use technology at work for economic gain' (Mossberger et al. 2008). Moreover, Vlasenko et al. (2021: 220) state that digital citizenship 'includes a wide range of activities, from creation, consumption, exchange, gaming, communication, learning and professional activities . . . [these activities] respond to new and everyday challenges related to education, work, employment, leisure, inclusion and participation in the life of a society, respect for human rights and intercultural differences'. Further, in Vlasenko et al.'s view (2021: 222), digital citizens should be 'able to actively, responsibly and constantly participate in community life using ICT'. Essentially, one aspect of citizenship is a form of political action in which individuals 'engage with the state and navigate their sense of belonging to a larger community' (Beaman 2016: 851); or indeed, as Isin and Ruppert (2015: 44) argue, digital citizenship is the 'capacity for making rights claims' and 'involves making rights claims through the internet'. Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021: 16) argue that citizenship goes beyond the practices of voting and civic activism, to the ideal of 'participating in online discussion'.

It is that active, responsible and constant participation in community life, through the internet, that, for the purposes of this chapter, is also referred to as political participation. In that respect, political participation is the act of people exercising their right of 'influencing issues of particular importance to themselves . . . through praxis' (Dahl 1996: 79) or, as Fuchs (2017: 69) argues, it is the reality of humans having the 'right to be part of decisions and to govern and control the structures that affect them'. Further, this form of participation is in line with concepts of cultural citizenship where social spaces and rights are actively claimed (Flores and Benmayor 1997: 15–17).

Digital citizenship milestones in Zambia

This section explores how Zambians have used the digital sphere for political activism as far back as 2004 and reflects on more recent manifestations of digital citizenship in the context of the 2021 elections. We also outline the legal and political context in which these contestations took place and reflect particularly on how the state responded to citizen occupation of cyberspace. We consider three significant cases: a 2004 incident of hacking; the 2016 elections; and the more recent 2020 'bush protest'.

One of the earliest expressions of digital activism in Zambia was in 2004, as an act of subversion when a young computer expert replaced President Frederick Chiluba's official portrait on the State House website with a cartoon. Shockwaves ran through the state structures. How could that happen under their noses and at that elevated space? The youth in question was hunted down, arrested but released soon after, as there was no adequate law under which to prosecute him. However, this incident, among others, seemingly alerted the state to the presence of internet-based civic activism. The state, soon after, enacted the aptly named Computer Misuse and Crimes Act (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 2004). This law, which was almost a cut-and-paste act of a similarly worded British law of 1990, prohibited unauthorized access to or modification of computer data. Offenders could face up to seven years in prison (Zambia Government 2004). Some years later, in 2014, the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) launched the first cybercrime fighting lab at police headquarters in Lusaka. This lab consisted of three laptops, three external hard discs, two computer forensic machines and eight computers (Temwa 2016). It was aimed at fighting cybercrimes and becoming a 'platform for retrieval, analysis, and reporting of evidence contained on computer systems and computing devices' (ZICTA 2014). Then in March 2020, a fifteen-year-old schoolboy in the small town of Kapiri Mposhi was arrested for defaming the president. The youth, who went by the name 'Zoom' on Facebook, was accused of insulting the president when he wrote that 'we are better off as a country without Edgar Lungu' and that he could name a dog after the president (News24 2020).

Using sophisticated technology, cybercrime police traced, found and arrested the teenager. Earlier, in 2019, in response to what was perceived as increased abuse of the internet, the Zambian government formed the Special Joint Cybercrime Crack Squad (SJCCS), which brought together specialists from security agencies such as the police, national intelligence, the Drug Enforcement Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission. According to the state, the SJCCS was meant to stop abuse and the illegal use of digital platforms among and against Zambians. Minister of Transport and Communications Brian Mushimba said the special security branch would 'reduce risks brought about by the digital revolution'. However, critics argued that the squad was an eavesdropping monster 'out to haunt citizens from enjoying their rights and freedoms' (Msoni 2019). Dataveillance, or 'digital surveillance' (Schleusener 2019), refers to the control, access, exploitation or denial of data, and the collection of personal data, bundling it together and using technologies to cross-reference that data so as to attribute general characteristics to individual citizens (Elmer 2003). All these are within the provisions of the new cybercrimes law (Chilufya-Musonda and Mwamulima 2021).

Following the rise of social media in Africa in the wake of the Arab Spring, and its role in mobilizing protests and enabling political change in North Africa, Zambian citizens similarly drew on these platforms during the 2016 elections (Willems 2016). Citizens used social media to access information on election results in real time; and as Mkandawire (2016) argues, digital media technologies, including social media, coexist with mainstream media in a new converged media landscape in Zambia. Civil society used Facebook and mobile phone SMS messaging 'to ensure transparency and credibility in the electoral process during the 2015 presidential by-election results reporting process' (2016: 96). Mkandawire thus argues that digital platforms have consolidated democracy in the electoral process by helping to validate the official elections results.

More recently, the so-called bush protest in 2020, which was driven by Zambian youth, can be seen as another expression of digital citizenship in which Zambians found innovative ways to protest. According to the Zambian government (2015), the youth comprise 36.71 per cent of a population of about eighteen million. Phiri (2019) has argued that Zambian youth have little faith in representative democracy and instead use social media platforms to directly engage with decision-makers, thus subverting the authority of Parliament. The growth of digital citizenship in Zambia can be attributed to this youth population, and this case clearly illustrates how the youth, and citizens in general, are challenging the state over the occupation of the public sphere. The protests were led by young activists, musicians and artists, some of whom had been associated with media networks for children's rights and civic activism from an early age (Namwawa 2021).

The bush protest comprised an offline protest in an undisclosed location that was broadcast live on social media platforms on 22 June 2020; it was dubbed the 'bush protest' because protesters wanted to avoid the use of lethal force by authorities by holding the protest away from the city. The youth had initially wished to petition the government; they intended to march through the streets of Lusaka before symbolically assembling at the Freedom Statue, in Independence Avenue, outside the country's largest government office building that hosts the ministry responsible for youth affairs. In Zambia, the Freedom Statue, which depicts a man breaking the chains above his head, was erected in October 1974 during the tenth anniversary of the country's independence from British colonial rule. It has come to represent national aspirations for political freedom and freedom of expression. But even with the best of intentions, the police banned the planned youth demonstration, citing Covid regulations, which did not allow for large gatherings (*Lusaka Times* 2020).

The purpose of the protest was to 'denounce bad governance and what they referred to as "oppression by the government and foreign investors". Among other demands, the protesters called on the government to curb corruption, be accountable, respect human rights, create job opportunities and include the youth' (CIVICUS 2020). Riot police were deployed all over the capital, Lusaka, as thirteen youth activists live-streamed themselves making speeches against corruption and poor governance, while more than half a million people tuned in online (Allison 2020).

Protesters set out ten demands, among them better job opportunities, an end to corruption, better education, constitutionalism, protection of human rights including the right to free assembly and free expression and access to information. The protest was triggered by a call made online by (among others) a 22-year-old University of Lusaka (UNILUS) political science student, Mumbi Namwawa, and singers like Kings Malembe (Zed Gossip 2020). The call was for President Lungu to create jobs, economic empowerment and political positions in the government for youth. Lusaka province minister Lusambo responded viciously, saying that the call was 'stinking nonsense . . . stupidity at its highest level, and rubbish', and that youth should stop lawlessness and the 'misbehaviour' of addressing the president through social media (Zambia Landscape 2020). Namwawa responded that the youth would respond to the ministerial insults with public demonstrations and called on youth across the country to join the protests. They applied for a permit, which was denied. Pilato, an activist musician, then called on the youth to 'use social media to the maximum', adding that 'we have the power in our hands and we have to use it for the collective good of our country. Let's go live on Facebook, let's post and make graphics to express ourselves' (Pilato 2020).

A chorus of counter-responses from state operatives followed: President Lungu said that he had 'information that some people are ganging up under the name of civil-society organisation to bring anarchy because they are saying the freedom of speech has been threatened by remarks attributed to Honourable Lusambo'. He warned that those 'plotting' to cause chaos and anarchy, and plunge the country into turmoil, would be dealt with within the law (Ask Muvi TV 2020) and called for their arrest. Lungu's personal lawyer and a Member of Parliament for the then governing Patriotic Front Party, Tutwa Ngulube, called on the police to 'break their bones' (Let's Talk About Zambia 2020).

On the day of the scheduled march, heavily armed troops in newly acquired riot gear, showing off the latest anti-riot trucks and ambulances, in a shock-and-awe operation, patrolled the Lusaka streets until nightfall. But the youth were nowhere to be seen; instead, they had left town, to a secret location in the bush, to broadcast their demands, online, to the rest of the world (Mwebantu 2020b). This unique countermove, shifting the protest online and garnering widespread support, represents a shift to digital citizenship. A form of 'pirate modernity' had occurred. In Sundaram's view, pirate modernity is the 'creative corruption of . . . media technologies that create their own spatiality and thereby reproduce non-legal economic practices, media objects, [and] software' to create forms which are different from the originals (Sundaram 2010: 12–15). It is a 'contagion of the ordinary, which distorts the very "orderliness" of the everyday life'; or as in this instance, the youth had fashioned for themselves an alternative communication infrastructure (Schoon et al. 2020: 6) by creatively circumnavigating police challenges, swiftly shifting away from offline forms of protest to cyberspace and thereby reaching more people within and outside Zambia.

Nonetheless, the police celebrated their victory – the march did not take place. But one of the protesters, B'Flow (2020), tweeted: 'One day the people will ask "Why were the police on the streets in Lusaka with guns on the 22nd June, 2020?" Then the story will be told about how the young people of the country mobilised the police to march on their behalf.' The youths had no permit to go onto the streets under the old precolonial Public Order Act and Covid guidelines. But who needs to worry about a permit and Covid guidelines in cyberspace?

Whereas the Public Order Act gives power to the police to regulate public processions, and Covid guidelines required that all gatherings of more than five people should be permitted by the Ministry of Health (*Lusaka Times* 2020), no such requirement is possible, or enforceable, in the digital sphere. As part of the Covid regulations that came into effect in March 2020, any gathering of more than five people who were not family members was prohibited. People who contravened this law were liable to six months' imprisonment (Zambia Government 2020). Such draconian rules are in tandem with those in Nigeria, Mozambique and Pakistan. These rules assist states in 'rolling back democratic progress by squeezing an already-constrained civic space still further', especially as the pandemic becomes an excuse for states to 'advance pre-existing anti-democratic projects of stifling dissent and manufacturing consent' (Anderson et al. 2021: 42).

However, Zambian Covid law, together with the police stance, is against the notions of political citizenship, which are 'grounded in the guarantee of legal and political protection from raw coercive power' (Fayomi and Adebayo 2018: 537). Nonetheless, out of fear of the state's panoptic gaze, (Foucault 1977), the 2020 youth assumed thereafter that they were under watch by the state, as Elmer (2003) could have warned. They thus never assembled in the bush again. Instead, they dispersed their protests through several individual internet-based platforms, including posting blank but black-painted message pages on Lungu's official State House site (Namwawa 2021).

Some young people (Namwawa 2021) felt that the youth-led movement, whose highlight was perhaps the bush protest, was a success because it may have brought certain results: offers of economic incentives to the youth; hastily arranged government meetings that some youths boycotted; high numbers of youth registering to vote; high youth voter turnout; and the subsequent victory of the opposition in the August 2021 elections.

Nigeria's Ayibakuro (2021) agrees with Namwawa (2021) that Zambian youth took action to bring democratic solutions to economic problems. Those actions included registering to vote in large numbers, massive turnout at the polls [and] the 'use of social media to mobilise, despite attempts by government to restrict same, especially on election day and a simple determination to engender change' that would impact on youth lives. The protest resulted in, among other things, a Youth Charter of 2020 in which young people demanded that they be acknowledged as the 'future of Zambia' whose burdens must be 'met in our lifetime' (Zambian Eye 2020).

Popular expressions of digital citizenship

As in other contexts, not all expressions of digital citizenship in Zambia are related to political activism. Facebook user analytics for one month (August 2020) show that Zambia's most popular Facebook sites were Mwebantu, with 4.2 million people reached in one week; Zambian Landscape, with 2.7 million; Zambian Watchdog, with 2.1 million; Zambian Weddings and Kitchen Parties, with 1.9 million; Chellah Tukuta Photography, with 1.8 million; Zed Diary, with 1.5 million; Milly Beauty Products, with 1.2 million; QFM Radio, with 1.1 million; and the opposition politician, now president, Hakainde Hichilema, with 1 million people reached in just seven days (Mwebantu 2020a). Further, most recent statistics suggest that the fastest-growing Facebook pages may be youth-oriented. For May 2021, these included Esther Chungu's page, with 30,792 new fans. Chungu is a youthful, gospel artist and TV presenter. She was closely followed by Hakainde Hichilema, the leader of the opposition UPND, with 24,516 new fans; Mwebantu, a news page, with 20,209 new followers; Pompi, a performance artist, with 15,383 new fans; and President Lungu, who gained 13,961 new followers in one month (Social Bakers 2021). Clearly, youth were in competition with popular politicians.

It is important to note that these pages reach people who constitute youth, most of whom were born and brought up within the new digital culture, which, according to Lindgren (2017: 4), is the summing-up of the 'equation of digital media + society'. This is a society that emerged after the explosion of the internet and social media, leading to the creation of 'networked publics' which are spaces 'open and designed for participation by everyone' (Hjorth and Hinton 2019: 19). While these Facebook pages are not designed for political activity, they represent a form of cultural citizenship, creating pathways of communication to form virtual communities (Bosch 2020). Glancing through the earlier factors concerning Zambian youth's occupation of various digital platforms, a question might arise as to whether such occupation is sufficient to constitute digital citizenship. However, in taking note of that concern, what should not be lost is that proponents of social media and the internet, or techno-fetishists (Fuchs 2017: 247), argue that the internet and digital channels are spaces favoured by societies across the world as they facilitate democratic participation. Thus, in Malaysia, for example, people's internet activity has led to the adoption of terms like 'online participation', 'digital democracy' and 'cyber-democracy' (Abdulla et al. 2021). In Zambia, though, a Zambian Governance Foundation report (Nyambe and Hamusunga 2017) reveals that 91 per cent of youth do not directly engage with decision-makers in any way because of limited participation opportunities. This may slowly be changing, as indicated by the examples cited earlier.

Unfortunately, it is that prospect of unlimited and uncontrolled participation in public affairs that has brought about new and perhaps predictable responses from mostly illiberal state structures, Zambia's included. There is a definite contestation over who should control the digital space in Zambia, as the state sees digital citizenship as a challenge to its authority, as demonstrated earlier. Popular culture in Africa is increasingly related to citizenship and identity claims, with people's everyday engagement with popular culture a central part of this. As Dolby (2006: 35) has argued, popular culture is a site of struggle and 'Citizenship thus is an active process that involves the core of people's daily existence, including the ways in which they interact with and use popular culture'. Cultural citizenship refers to the ways in which citizens experience their social context and how they relate to others in seeking a sense of belonging, with the internet – and, in this instance, Facebook – as a 'site of sociocultural and political agency' (Bosch 2020).

Discussion and analysis

In our analysis of these three cases, we use the framework of 'dromology' to analyse the interactions and emergent relationships between citizen and state, as both sides 'mutually prostheticise' (Bratton 2006) against each other for control of digital space through speedy actions. In doing so, usually, states employ dromological techniques to exercise power (Virilio 2006) over youth and the rest of the population.

Paul Virilio's (2006) conception of dromology argues that the real world is a result of social velocity and speed. Reality is not static; in fact, he argues that stasis is death. Thus, this view can be interpreted as meaning that there is nothing like civil development, or modernity, or the quiet democratization of society. Instead, what we have is the state of 'dromocracy', which sees social change as a result of the speed with which social forces are pushing for change in society.

In one respect, this involves a complex set of 'rights claims-making and performative citizenship, and [especially with regard to] the participation of young people in politics . . . [and] entails complex and often contradictory struggles over definition of social membership, over the categories and practices of inclusion and exclusion, and over different forms of participation in public life' (Sanghera et al. 2018). Whereas literally, dromology is the insatiable, uncontrollable and abnormal impulse to wonder and travel in the lust for new experiences (Sam 2013), dromocracy, in this chapter, may be an appellation for social change towards either more open societies or more closed societies. For 'success', change depends on the 'velocity of knowledge' spread through (among other things) the 'dictatorship of movement' (Orlet and Cardoso de Castro 2016), or sometimes effected through performative citizenship and rights-claiming.

According to Bratton (2006), modernity is a world in motion that is expressed in a political landscape governed by competing technologies of surveillance, mobilization, fortification and their interdependent administrations. It is a contest of shifting, restless logistics of differential governances while transforming the raw material of the world and rendering it into more appropriate forms. Further, within the context of citizenship, dromology requires us to see that the concept refers to states of inclusion or exclusion of individuals from either the nation state or, in our instance, the digital space. In other words, full citizens have rights either in the nation state, or they inhabit the nation's public sphere. If so, there has to be a dromological movement of 'being-ness' between the state of existing as an alien, or stranger without rights, to being a person with rights, responsibilities and privileges. In between those two irreconcilable states, there is the shadowy citizen, or 'denizen' (Cresswell 2010). Denizenship, in that regard, is the in-between state where the occupant has rights but at the same time is excluded from certain privileges. This conception accepts that the individual is in a state of mobility where the person becomes 'prosthetic' (Cresswell 2019) from being excluded, without rights and privileges, to being advantaged. The person is thus entangled in a pervading sense of motion, or movement. Such mobility is defined by Cresswell as the morass of a person being classified (represented), or in movement, or in the actual practice/act of citizenship.

This chapter further acknowledges that a fast, or dromological, movement towards the public's use of social media, the ubiquity of the internet and the speedy occupation of the digital space is happening before our eyes. As technological optimists could argue, this trend could lead to more open societies. It is also argued that a similar trend in reverse could lead to more closed societies. In that sense, dromocracy refers to the state of the 'rule of the fastest (the one who possesses the weapon of superior speed) or to the rule of speed itself (a form of power that can evade human control' (Collins 2008). This is irrespective of the direction the speeding arrow is pointed at.

But this drive does not exist in isolation. In Zambia, it is accompanied by a countervailing force. Bentham's concept of the public good, or social utilitarianism, has been misappropriated by the Zambian state through the use of many surveillance techniques and technologies. These include closed-circuit television (CCTV), speed cameras and the Smart City project, which has resulted in a $230 million country-wide secretive national surveillance infrastructure run by an unknown government department. This Chinese-built data-mining and information management system, initiated in 2015, will cover seventeen cities through a national broadband network consisting of

9,000 kilometres of optic cables. When completed, the national data collection and storage facility will be able to analyse large amounts of data to ensure 'secure, efficient and interoperable systems' between government departments (Huawei 2021). However, according to Briant (2021), the existence of such pervasive infrastructures leads to citizens realising that the idea of technologies being neutral is a myth.

Thus, this descriptive study sees citizens as engaged in a contest with the state where both sides 'mutually prostheticise' (Bratton 2006) against each other for the control of digital space through speedy actions. In doing so, usually, states employ dromological techniques to exercise power (Virilio 2006) over youth and the rest of the population. In Zambia's case, and building on Virilio's framework, we argue that youth activists momentarily gain advantage with the speed of adoption of new technologies and rights claims to digital spaces, but that the slow state arrives on the scene with more 'muscle' – i.e., tools, tactics, laws and power. Youth, who are early adopters of new technologies, may use speed to gain advantage but the government subsequently catches up with them and overtakes them through several means, including making SIM-card registration mandatory; banning of bulk SMS; passing laws that force mobile service providers to keep records of all transactions on their systems; and compelling the mobile telephone service companies to make such records available to the state (Roberts and Bosch 2021). All these actions facilitate the state's surveillance and arrest of youth activists.

Another key strategy utilized by Zambian citizens is described by Parks and Mukherjee (2017: 225) as platform-jumping, where users 'cross multiple platforms each day, shifting from analogue to digital, desktop to mobile, and audio to text-based systems as they participate in social and work-related communication and information exchanges'. When news or information is blocked, users platform-jump, tactically shifting their 'practices of sharing or consuming information from one platform to another in an effort to facilitate broader access to that information' (2017: 225). Examples of platform-jumping include scenarios where radio DJs post controversial material on social media instead of on-air. As in other African countries, blogging and vlogging have also emerged as a vehicle for social activists, though such content is not always political.

Yartey and Ha (2015) define self-broadcasting as a communication style in which an individual self-projects their identity, which may entail posting pictures, adding status messages or commenting on posts of others on Facebook and other platforms. We consider this to be a manifestation of digital citizenship.

One example is the Zambian YouTuber Joey Mukando, one of the leading self-broadcasters in Zambia. She has several websites, and on one site, there are 40,000 followers; on another she is followed by 13,000 people. On her most recent vlog, Mukando had 15,000 views while the vlog was shared 214 times. Kax Tee, on the other hand, on the vlog analysing and listing Zambia's top vloggers, had 8,970 subscribers and 32,747 followers. These are impressive numbers for individual youth bloggers when compared to social media 'likes' for state-owned news corporates. For example, government-owned newspapers like the *Times of Zambia* had 38,271 likes and 39,809 followers (*Times of Zambia* 2021). The more popular *Zambia Daily Mail* had 291,023 likes and 306,989 followers (*Zambia Daily Mail* 2021).

State responses to digital citizenship

The Zambian state has responded to these expressions of digital citizenship in a variety of ways, including a move to pass laws dealing with perceived cybercrimes. In 2004, the government campaigned for and swiftly passed (without much parliamentary debate) the Computer Misuse and Crimes Act, in response to the humiliation caused by the young computer expert who replaced President Chiluba's official portrait on the State House website with a cartoon. After these and similar occurrences, it has been observed that the state has a tendency to mount new legal structures, or even design counter-narratives, when such incidences occur.

After the drama of 2004, the struggle for civic spaces continued. In 2019, a special cybercrimes police force was quickly formed. In 2021, the government speedily enacted the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act – a law that had been talked about for years. However, the haste and drama with which it was brought into force raised some eyebrows. It pointed to government's discomfiture with citizens' increased use of the internet and social media for information sharing. It was on the basis of this law that the state shut down sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram on polling day, in August 2021.

According to Bowmans (Chilufya-Musonda and Mwamulima 2021), the new cyber law legalized the state's interception of any form of communication where the government believed that a cybercrime was being committed or planned to be committed. It formed a special 'police', created a storage facility for intercepted communications, compelled internet service providers to install interception and storage facilities and software at their own expense and surrendered all intercepted communications to the government when requested.

In all this, citizens had no right to be informed that they were under intelligence scrutiny, or that their communications were being intercepted and transferred to a government storage facility. However, the June 2020 response by youth, of leaving Lusaka streets to conduct their protest campaign on the internet and in the bush, suggests an awareness that they were being watched.

Beyond that, the new law has also created new cybercrimes, including spreading of hate speech. However, there is a broad definition of what constitutes 'hate speech'. As Mwananyanda (2021) argues, hate speech is a 'notoriously difficult concept to define . . . [and] a lack of clarity leaves people unsure what expression is allowed or prohibited, leading to self-censorship'. It is that form of self-censorship which can be likened to Foucault's (1977) conception of the panoptic gaze, which Simon (2005) argues leaves people with a sense 'that there is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide'.

To illustrate this point, and in an unusual move, the normally reserved former president, when signing the bill into law, issued a statement indirectly confirming that the panoptic would be at play. Lungu said the new law would bring 'sanity in the way the internet was used' and end 'abuse by people who feel they can do or say whatever they want using the veil of cybersecurity' (*Lusaka Times* 2021). This is the same excuse that was used to justify the creation of the SJCCS (see previous discussion).

In response, several civil-society organizations challenged the law and took the issue to the constitutional court. They argued that the new law had a 'chilling effect' on media freedom and compromised the privacy of citizens. Moreover, the law fell short of international standards such as the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (2014), also known as the Malabo Convention, to which Zambia is a signatory (MISA-Zimbabwe 2021).

As Mwananyanda (2021) argues: 'The speed with which this law was passed . . . is highly concerning. Rather than provide security, this law could backfire against its promulgators in future, and history in Zambia is replete with examples of how laws meant to deal with dissent came back to bite those who had made them.'

Closing civic spaces for youth, either through coercive forces like the police or through legislative frameworks, and enticing them with free money are just some of the ways in which the state has responded to youth occupation of digital spaces in 2020. The state has used these and other means at its disposal, including economic avenues and political promises of a good future around the corner, to restrict civic spaces.

For instance, immediately after the 2020 youth protests, Zambia witnessed revitalization of dormant youth-centred programmes as a way of responding to youths' demands for economic empowerment and jobs. At the last count, there were seventeen such national projects under the then Ministry of Youth and Sport. Such projects were launched, or relaunched, or reinvigorated, through a $23 million Multi-Sectoral Youth Empowerment Programme to benefit 150,000 youths (Lungu 2021). The state, seemingly, strategically (re) introduced and channelled money through 'youth empowerment schemes' as a way of buying support (Mwebantu 2020c). However, the strategy proved ineffective. Just as happened in 1991 and 2011, the youth and other citizens took the money but voted against the governing party (Electoral Commission of Zambia 2021).

Clearly, a vigorous macro dialogue between the state and youth was taking place in Zambia through the two sides' actions. Primarily, this offline and online debate was around control of civic space. The speed with which the two opposing 'actors' responded over the years, but chiefly since 2004, could (in Virilio's view) determine the winner of this contest. As we have shown, each time youth claim their rights in the digital sphere, the state reverts to all means at its disposal to reassert its dominant position in that space. For a long time, this has been a tit-for-tat affair. What is not in doubt, though, is that this competition demonstrates that Zambia is in a state of dromological change.

Thus, we see the contestation over digital space as follows (Table 6.1).

As Table 6.1 shows, it is clear that the act of citizenship, and moreover, digital citizenship, is contested. From the youth perspective, citizenship is an act of placing demands upon the state through street marches and the

Table 6.1 State Versus Youth Dialogue over Cyberspace

Actors	Context	Intentions	Persuasive Aim	Actions
Youth	Citizenship	Political participation	Quest for civil rights and open spaces	Publication of Youth Charter Intended march across Lusaka streets
	Digital citizenship	Rights claims	Make internet an open and free public space	Blogging and self-broadcasting Vlogging in the 'bush' from outside Lusaka
The state	Citizenship	Minimization of digital spaces	Peace fostered by a strong, domineering state	Application of laws, institutions and systems to narrow civic spaces
		Unfettered power and control	Pursuit of peace, stability and security	Deployment of police to curtail protests
		Define public interest	Easy access to funds	Funding of numerous youth projects and programmes
	Digital citizenship	Controlled digital spaces	Protecting citizens from cybercrime and abuse	Enactment of cyber laws, Covid regulations and intensified surveillance
			Minimizing criticism of state actions	Creation of special Cyber Squad and surveillance infrastructure

publication of the Youth Charter. When that is not possible, youths resort to acts of digital citizenship through self-broadcasting, blogging and vlogging from the bush.

In response, and in line with republican conceptions of citizenship as a status bestowed upon individuals by the state (Clarke et al. 2014), the state functionaries apply the law, unleash the police and entice youth with financial incentives so as to stop public protests and narrow citizens' access to public spaces. With regard to digital citizenship, the state enacts special cyber laws, implements tough Covid regulations, and establishes special institutions such as the SJCCS, and unleashes them into cyberspaces.

Conclusion

We have positioned the digital sphere as a ‘dromological society’ (Virilio 2006), which is built on Castells’s (2010) networked society of speed, information flows and crucial spaces. The internet, like cross-country road infrastructure, was made for the necessity of fast, frequent, long-range mobility (Dalakglou 2017). So, movement is at the centre of the occupation of digital spaces and was central to this study.

Clearly, citizenship consists of intertwined pull and push factors in a dialectical relationship between the state and youth. We have observed that the push for change was constantly made by youth, who wanted civic spaces to be opened up and to be expanded. They were inspired by the pull factors within the principles of democracy and the ideals for limited roles of the state. They pushed for dromological changes in society. On the other hand, the state experienced different pull and push factors: the push was inspired by the search for stability, peace and for state-guided civic spaces. The pull factors were embedded in the philosophies of illiberalism. Such ideas justified the state’s increased access to political, economic, social, legal, surveillance and other resources – the panoptic project. However, the net result of this contestation is a country that is engrossed in a rapidly changing but constant state of social change and social movement, or dromocracy. The ultimate winner, or victor, is undetermined and thus undeclared. The fight, as we have described, is over the public sphere, including the digital space.

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