

**A Purer Democracy
under Cyber Governance:
Future Implications for Black
America's Political Economy**

By

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Abstract

Due to their rational ignorance, many members of the electorate still view US democracy as ostensibly a one-person one-vote concept and system. Unfortunately, this is an incorrect view of governance in the United States (US). For a very long time, US governance has been largely commandeered by oligarchs and plutocrats and their corporations, which have resources sufficient to influence significantly and extensively electoral, policy formulation, and policy implementation processes. This theoretical and conceptual monograph anticipates the future when an adequate proportion of Americans recognize the fallacy of US “democracy,” and act radically to usher in a transformed governance system—“cyber governance”—using digital technologies to level the playing field. Under cyber governance, it is possible that one-person one-vote can become a near reality and produce a purer democracy. This would be a favorable outcome from a Black American economic perspective because Black Americans often serve as the median voter in the *status quo* political economy, but do not reap the concomitant benefits.

Key words: Cyber governance, Future, Democracy, Political Economy, and Black Americans

JEL Codes: H110, H890

Introduction

Due to their rational ignorance, many members of the electorate still view US democracy as ostensibly a one-person one-vote concept and system. Unfortunately, this is an incorrect view of governance in the United States (US). For a very long time, US governance has been largely commandeered by oligarchs and plutocrats and their large corporations, which have resources sufficient to influence significantly and extensively electoral, policy formulation, and policy implementation processes.¹ This theoretical and conceptual monograph anticipates the future when an adequate proportion of Americans recognize the fallacy of US “democracy,” and act radically to usher in a transformed governance system—“cyber governance”—using digital technologies to level the playing field. Under cyber governance, it is possible that one-person one-vote can become a near reality and produce a purer democracy. This would be a favorable outcome from a Black American economic perspective because Black Americans often serve as the median voter in the *status quo* political economy, but do not reap the concomitant benefits.

This monograph assumes the following framework. First, we explore “democracy” to reveal that the current US governance system “violates” basic democratic principles as the concept is often interpreted and understood. Second, we outline the features of a novel and stylized brand of cyber governance that can generate a purer democracy. Third, we

¹ We do not use the terms “oligarchs” and “plutocrats” lightly and we do not overlook the role of political parties and special interest groups in the political economy. The reality is that the wealthiest economic agents in the US play a very influential role in financing parties, think tanks, and interest groups. Therefore, we point directly to those wealthy agents (oligarchs and plutocrats) when characterizing the political economy without which parties, think tanks, and special interest groups would find it difficult to operate.

discuss the positive and adverse impacts of *status quo* versus potential future cyber governance on the Black American political economy. Fourth, we meet potential opposers of cyber governance at the path and offer relevant retorts. Part five summarizes and concludes.

What is Democracy?

An etymology of “democracy” reveals a Greek origin: *Dēmos* (the people) and *kratia* (power, rule). After transitioning through Latin (*democratia*) and French (*démocratie*) it arrives as “democracy” in English in the late 16th century (Etymonline.com, 2022).² Its meaning being: “Government by the people; that form of government in which the sovereign power resides in the people as a whole, and is exercised either directly by them...or by officers elected by them.”³ Consequently, lay electorate members in a contemporary US context interpret democracy to mean that they exercise their power by electing representatives, and that the latter serve as fiduciaries of the former’s political and economic interests.

However, from the outset of US governance and at the national level, those knowledgeable of the political economy know that elected representatives, their political parties, and special interests have had an agenda that often diverges significantly from the electorate’s interests.⁴

² Given the Greeks’ association with the African continent, it is possible that the concept of democracy derives originally from African people.

³ A further elaboration of “democracy” states that: “In mod. use often more vaguely denoting a social state in which all have equal rights, without hereditary or arbitrary differences of rank or privilege.” This is germane to Black Americans in the US.

⁴ The fact that “electors” (the so-called electoral college) are ascribed a constitutional role (Article II and the 12th Amendment) in the election of the nation’s chief executive is instructive in this regard. Arguably, a purer democratic process would permit the popular vote to determine

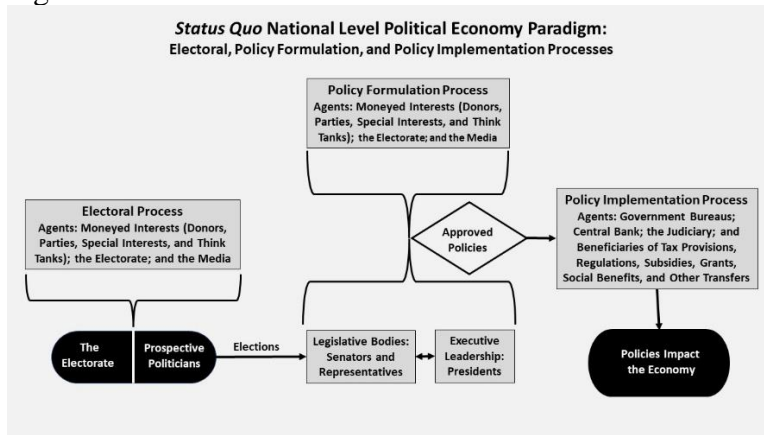
Reaching back to the middle of the 20th century, important scholars of the political economy, such as Black (1948), Arrow (1951), Downs (1957), Buchanan and Tullock (1962), and Olson (1965) determined that, elected representatives formulate and approve policies that assist them in being re-elected again and again while accounting for their own interests. At the same time, moneyed special interests (i.e., political parties, special interest groups, and think tanks all backed by donor oligarchs and plutocrats and their corporations) and the media play a powerful role in formulating and implementing political policies. The policies, in turn, impact economic outcomes. This was such a well-known reality that by the end of the 20th century noted Black American psychologist, Professor Amos Wilson (2014, p. 158) surmises: “When all is said and done one can conclude that the United States has the best government that money can buy.” In other words, governance is not so much a reflection of a democratic process as understood by the lay electorate; rather it reflects the outcomes and desires of those who have the political clout (read resources) to impose them. It is well understood that the lay electorate is more a recipient than a shaper of political economy outcomes.

To visualize governance under democracy as it is understood in the US, we present a *status quo* national level political economy operational diagram. Consider Figure 1, which should be read from left to right.

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the holder of this high office. According to the National Archives and Records Administration (2022), public opinion polls have shown for some time that sizeable majorities of Americans favor abolishing the electoral college.

Figure 1



Source: The author

We begin with the most democratic aspect of the political economy recognizing that electoral agents (donors, parties, special interest groups, think tanks, and the media) interact with, and apply pressure to, the electorate and prospective politicians to shape pre-election platforms and policies. After being elected to national office (center of the diagram), representatives, senators, and presidents interact with policy formulating economic agents to hammer out policies that largely fulfill the latter's interests. Importantly, in the policy formulation process, the electorate and the media play downsized roles. Moneyed agents (donors, parties, special interests, and think tanks) play the most significant roles in driving policy formulation. The right-hand side of the diagram highlights the policy implementation process where government bureaus (US departments and agencies), the central bank (Federal Reserve Board), the judiciary (Supreme Court), and all economic agents who receive benefits (tax provisions, regulations, subsidies, grants, social benefits, and other transfers) all play roles. Notably, because there are legal constraints on outside intervention during the policy

implementation process (e.g., fair contracting laws and the “independence” of the central bank and the judiciary), we do not show in the diagram political economy agents influencing the process. However, it is increasingly common to discover moneyed special interests’ involvement in policy implementation processes also.⁵

While members of the electorate may receive social benefits, and state and local governments may transmit to members of the electorate certain benefits that are derived from central government grants and other transfers, these benefits generally pale in comparison to the tax and subsidy benefits that accrue to those moneyed economic agents who have cultivated these benefits through the electoral and policy formulation processes. Recognize that we have not mentioned here the central government’s direct operational and capital expenditures that are captured by agents who have participated in the electoral and policy formulation processes.

Figure 1 and the foregoing text convey well-known and classical Public/Rational Choice views of the political economy that are based narrowly on a conceptual model that is built with the following four assumptions in mind:

1. A mainly rationally ignorant electorate that can be influenced by politicians’ existing and/or proposed platforms/policies that have been shaped by donors, special interest groups, think tanks, and by the media (Downs 1957 and Becker 1983).
2. Elected officials (policymakers) who can be influenced by donors, political parties, special interests and think tanks for “rent seeking” purposes (Olson, 1965 and Tollison, 2012). This view is in contradistinction to the view espoused by Trumbull

⁵ A case in point is Microsoft’s recent efforts to ensure its right to capture information technology contracts from the US Defense Department (Conger and Sanger 2021).

(2012) that non-moneyed, weak, and unorganized interest groups have significant power.⁶

3. Policymakers who recognize that they may be penalized if they are excessive in their responses to special interest groups (Denzau and Munger, 1986).
4. An equilibrium that is derived from the fact that the costs imposed through the operation of the just-described political economy are diffused, while the benefits gleaned from rent seeking efforts are concentrated (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962).

Given the economic conditions that prevail widely for Black Americans, they are not well positioned to play systematically impactful roles in the political economy’s electoral and policy formulation processes (Nelson, 1978)—at least not in proportion to their representation in the population.⁷ Specifically, Black Americans’ median household income is a fraction of the nation’s median household income;⁸ the mean wealth of Black households is a fraction of that of US households;⁹ and most Black firms are relatively small and are of the sole proprietorship

⁶ We adhere to the Public/Rational Choice view because Trumbull (2012) is not definitive—“quite often” versus “perpetual”—and does not explain sufficiently the sustained ability of elites (oligarchs, plutocrats, and leaders of large corporations) to accrue great expanses of wealth and power and to do so increasingly.

⁷ This outcome is revealed most transparently in the Black American “spending power” (about USD 1.1 trillion in 2021 (Nielsen 2021)) to US gross domestic product (GDP; over USD 23.0 trillion (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2022)) ratio, which is about 4.7 percent. This compares with Black Americans representation in the US population of 13.4 percent (Census Bureau 2022A).

⁸ The Census Bureau (2021) reports that for 2020 Black Alone median household income was 67.9 percent (\$45,870) of the median household income for the nation (\$67,521).

⁹ The Federal Reserve Board (2020, p. 11) reports that for 2019 Black households’ mean net worth (wealth) was 19.0 percent (\$142,500) of mean net worth for the nation’s households (\$748,800).

variety.¹⁰ Consequently, Black American special interests groups and think tanks are limited in scope and financial backing, and are unable to ensure a proportionate share of the benefits that are derived during the electoral and policy formulation and implementation processes. By extension, White and other ethnic groups capture a disproportionate share of the benefits that emanate from the political economy. The latter outcome speaks to the “non-democratic” nature of the *status quo* political economy. This is doubly disturbing for Black Americans given their role as the median voter (Black, 1948); i.e., the group that often determines electoral outcomes after accounting for participation by all other ethnic electorate groups.¹¹

What is Cyber Governance?

It may be informative to begin this section by highlighting what cyber governance is not. It is not intended to convey, as the term is often used, governance of cyberspace. It is not electronic voting (Urken, 2004), although electronic voting is an element of cyber governance. Also, E-governance (Dawes, 2008) is not cyber governance, although E-governance should continue under cyber governance. Electronic voting and E-governance are two important concepts that emphasize digital technologies to conduct electoral and policy implementation processes. However, they are not understood to effect significantly the legislative development aspect of policy formulation. Cyber governance, as we envision it, leverages digital technologies to conduct all aspects of governance.

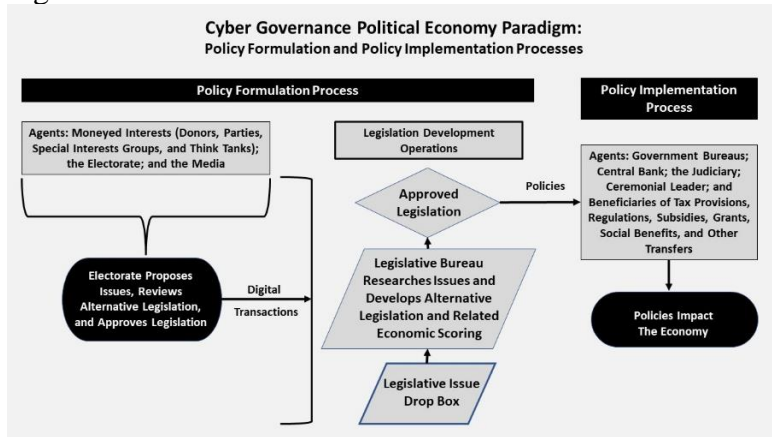
¹⁰ The Census Bureau (2022B) reports that for 2018 Black American nonemployer firms accounted for 96.2 percent (3,115,000) of all Black firms (3,239,551).

¹¹ Given the closely divided nature of the nation’s polity and of legislative bodies in a mainly two-party system (Democrats versus Republicans), Black Americans often represent the median voter.

Cyber governance optimizes individual economic agents' participation in the political economy. It is a direct participation paradigm that excludes elected representatives, except for a mainly “ceremonial” leader (president). In its purest form, cyber governance combines direct political participation, the use of digital technologies, a selectively interested or rationally disinterested electorate (influenced by policy formulation agents), and a special government bureau to conduct legislative development aspects of policy formulation processes. Policies so formulated are implemented mainly by the same agents that guide policy implementation in the *status quo* political economy. To our knowledge, this stylized form of cyber governance is novel.

To clarify and elaborate cyber governance, consider Figure 2.

Figure 2



Source: The author

Figure 2 features policy formulation (the interaction of policy formulation agents and legislative development operators) and policy implementation processes. The electorate is the primary actor in the policy formulation process because only the electorate can propose formally

governance issues for consideration; the electorate reviews alternative legislation that is prepared by a special legislation development bureau to address governance issues; and the electorate approves the associated legislation. Members of the electorate, moneyed special interests (donors, parties, special interest groups, and think tanks), and the media can all seek to influence the electorate using tools at their disposal.

Moving to the center of the diagram and the legislative development aspect of policy formulation, we observe an iterative three-step process. First, the electorate proposes/submits legislative issues to a drop box. Once issues command a certain level of interest/attention, the legislative bureau performs necessary research and analyses to develop relevant legislative alternatives to address issues in the context of existing laws.¹² Having developed alternative legislation to address issues, the legislation is thrown back to the electorate for review and comment. The legislative bureau then incorporates comments and finalizes the legislative alternatives (we do not envision an elongated iterative process between the electorate and legislative bureau) and organizes a referendum. The electorate then casts its votes for the legislation. Legislation that garners sufficient votes from the electorate is deemed approved.¹³

Cyber governance's policy implementation process is comparable to that of *status quo* governance, except that an elected ceremonial leader (figure-head president) is included.

¹² If required, then new laws would be crafted as part of the legislative development aspect of policy formulation.

¹³ These referenda would feature simple yes/no votes—the results of which should reflect the majority will of the electorate. Cyber governance's transparent and ongoing legislative development process permits intertemporal logrolling across voting groups and precludes problematic "cyclical majority" voting issues that are discussed by Arrow (1951) and Buchanan and Tullock (1962).

In many ways, cyber governance is orthogonal to *status quo* governance because it does not include a process for selecting representatives. In addition, individual members of the electorate, not elected representatives, determine outcomes of legislation development that underpins policies. That is, legislation and related policies are derived through a nearly pure one-person-one-vote “democratic” process. Also, as opposed to moneyed special interests using their clout to shape outcomes during both electoral and policy formulation processes, moneyed special interests must focus and reorient their policy-shaping efforts only on the electorate. In other words, if economic rents are to be gleaned during the policy formulation process, then the electorate will be the primary extractors of those rents—not parties and their elected representatives. Therefore, cyber governance can constrain the policy formulation process so that approved policies do not diverge widely from the electorate’s interests, which is appealing from a democracy perspective.

The cyber governance system just outlined has a few unsettled elements. The following is a partial list of kinks that should be clarified and elaborated before the system can operate smoothly and successfully:

1. Policy formulation agents’ activities should be mainly constrained to influence the electorate only—not members of the special legislative development bureau or agents engaged in policy implementation (except for the provision of information).
2. Criteria should be established to constrain legislative issue proposals to individual members of the electorate.¹⁴

¹⁴ Note that the absolute number of issue proposals, *per se*, is not at issue here. In fact, it is the redundancy of issue proposals that cause them to rise to the level of consideration.

3. Statisticians should be put to the task of determining, based on the electorate's size, when redundancy in issue proposals raises them to a level warranting research, analysis, and the development of legislative alternatives. Similarly, given the electorate's size, statisticians should determine the number of votes that cause legislative alternatives to achieve an approved status.

While this cyber governance paradigm is constructed for national governance, it can be applied at state and local levels with required modifications. In fact, we advise that cyber governance be tested at local and state levels before it is adopted at the national level. Also, we suggest that Black Americans, who anticipate future opportunities for self-determination, should consider cyber governance as a viable tool for managing their political economy.

Favorable and Adverse Impacts of the Two Political Economy Paradigms

Status Quo Governance

We first consider the favorable and adverse impacts for Black Americans under the *status quo* political economy. It is difficult to identify favorable impacts. Consider Black Americans' current political economy position. What appears *a priori* as an advantage often sours when examined fully. For example, in the current 117th Congress, Black Americans elected representatives to the House of Representative at a rate nearly proportional to the Black population.¹⁵ However, even with this seemingly favorable

¹⁵ The Congressional Black Caucus (2022) indicates that, for the 117th Congress, there are 54 voting Black Democratic Representatives in the House, which is 12.4 percent of the House's 435 members. According

and sizeable representation, and holding the deciding (median) vote in a closely divided House after all remaining representatives are counted, Black Americans have not seen the passage/approval of legislation that is important to Black Americans; e.g., the Reparations Bill and the Voting Rights Bill (Robinson, B. 2021)—just to name two. We must not overlook the fact that, even if the legislation passes in the House ultimately, then it could be defeated in the Senate where Black Americans comprise only 3 percent of all votes.

Unfortunately, the governance system is unbalanced and does not reflect a one-person-one-vote reality. For example, it is instructive to note that less than 3.5 million Whites in the States of Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming control ten US Senate seats, while about 45 million Black Americans only account for three Senate seats during the 117th Congress (Robinson, L. 2021). Consequently, as part of national elections, Black American are the recipients of many promises, but do not have sufficient clout to ensure that desired legislation is formulated, approved, and implemented.

It goes without saying that Black Americans benefit at the margin from certain legislative initiatives. However, Black American benefits from the formulation and implementation of policies are generally an afterthought, not the primary intent of policymakers. This is a natural outcome given Black America’s marginal, so-called minority status and limited ability to influence policy formulation and implementation processes. Accordingly, and as one would expect, legislative initiatives are often designed to not benefit, but to harm, Black Americans. As an example, consider the “Three Strikes Laws” and “Crime Bill” that accelerated the development of the prison-industrial complex during the 1990s (Alexander, 2012).

to the Census Bureau (2022A), Black American comprise 13.4 percent of the population.

In those rare cases when policies on the surface appear to be designed to improve outcomes for Black Americans, it turns out that much of the expenditures (operational and capital) associated with the policies end up benefiting non-Black Americans, who are the chief operators and implementers of the related programs. This is particularly true for housing- and health-related social benefit programs.¹⁶ We should keep in mind that Black Americans' representation among likely recipients of certain of the nation's means tested social benefit programs is constrained to about 25 percent.¹⁷

A final adverse outcome for Black Americans in a *status quo* political economy is that, due to the representative form of government in force, much of the Black electorate remains rationally ignorant of policy formulation and implementation processes.¹⁸ This because costs exceed the benefits of becoming informed of the issues and voting. In addition, some members of the electorate are under the misperception that elected representatives are their fiduciaries in Washington, DC and logically leave the reins of governance in those representatives' hands. On the other hand, some members of the electorate comprehend that they do not have the clout (read resources) to effect policy

¹⁶ It is common knowledge that Black Americans mainly benefit as recipients of housing and health services—at the bottom of the policy implementation chain. *Inter alia*, because Black Americans have a very low residential housing ownership rate in the nation (43.1 percent in 2021 (Census Bureau 2022C)), and because there are so few Black American physicians (5.4 percent of all US physicians (Preidt 2021)) who can deliver health services, most of the funds associated with US Government delivery of housing and health services accrue to non-Black Americans.

¹⁷ Schrider *et al* (2021) reports that for 2020 of the 37.2 million persons in poverty, only about 8.5 million were Black Americans; i.e., Black Americans account for about 23 percent of US persons in poverty.

¹⁸ Smith (1988) concludes that because they only incur weak challengers, incumbent Black congressional representatives have little incentive to address their constituents' needs.

formulation and implementation processes, and they, too, logically leave the reins of governance in their representatives' hands. Under these circumstances, the electorate is caught flatfooted and unprepared to intervene in policy formulation and implementation efforts on those rare occasions when their intervention could be impactful and beneficial.

Cyber Governance

In contrast with *status quo* governance, cyber governance's purer democratic principles present mainly favorable political economy outcomes for Black Americans. We have identified at least three advantages below (also see Appendix I):

1. By design, cyber governance is predicated on a one-person-one-vote paradigm, which serves as a leveler of the playing field for political economy agents. This is an enormous improvement for Black Americans over *status quo* governance.
2. Given policy formulation agents' focus on the electorate, and if the Black electorate continues its current practice of voting mainly as a bloc and can leverage its median voter power, then Black Americans are likely to accrue substantial economic rents under cyber governance. This will increase the net benefits of active participation in the political economy as opposed to retaining a rational ignorance position.
3. Cyber governance may motivate the Black electorate to become increasingly entrepreneurial; i.e., engage in more logrolling and coalition building with other electorate groups, which facilitate policy formulation and

implementation efforts that produce economic benefits specifically for Black Americans.^{19,20}

Before leaving this section, it is important to note that, because it dispenses with executive and legislative components of *status quo* governance, cyber governance should usher up substantial costs savings for the nation. For example, during 2020, the executive and legislative arms of national government cost USD 100 billion (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2021). Even after accounting for new costs associated with creating a new special legislative bureau and the near one-time cost of developing the required digital cyber systems for cyber governance, a substantial portion of the USD 100 billion should be available for higher valued uses. Also, economists generally acknowledge that when economic producers and the related owners of production in noncompetitive markets are the source of financing for efforts to influence electoral, policy formulation, and policy implementation processes, then those financing costs are passed on to consumers. Therefore, reductions in, or the elimination of, these financing costs under cyber governance should cause consumers (the electorate) to face lower levels of inflation. Reduced inflation would be an important improvement for all electorate groups operating in the political economy.

¹⁹ These three advantages acknowledge the high hurdles faced by those who attempt to organize groups to generate individual and/or collective benefits as discussed by Olson (1965).

²⁰ Enough time may elapse before cyber governance is adopted to permit the Black electorate to fully form a political party, which would be an effective tool for organizing the electorate and for signaling strategies for members of the electorate who choose to remain rationally ignorant voters. The Our Black Party (2022) appears to be one such political party organizing effort.

Anticipating Opposers of Cyber Governance

Change is a painful process for most economic agents. For this reason alone, significant opposition should be expected for proposals to transition to a cyber governance paradigm. But beyond the resistance to change, opposers may raise seemingly legitimate concerns. We address three often-cited concerns: (1) The insecurity of the Internet; (2) the complexity of the US legislative process; and (3) the electorates' disinterest in most legislative matters. No doubt other concerns will be lodged against cyber governance. However, an in-depth analysis of the concerns may reveal logical and favorable responses on the side of cyber governance—similar to the responses provided below.

On the insecurity of the Internet, we have long questioned the release of this Defense Advanced Research Project Agency-invented system to the public during the 1980s before it was completely secure. An important and related question is: How insecure is the Internet? Clearly, there is evidence that the Internet as currently constituted is insecure. The media reports often on Internet viruses, worms, ransom ware, and other cyber insecurity issues. Because there is no “cyber security industry” within the US industrial classification system, it is difficult to determine precisely total spending on cyber security goods and services in the US.²¹ However, there appears to be no uncertainty that the US is not sufficiently prepared for threats, such as cyberattacks (US Government Accountability Office, p. 6).

²¹ It is curious to note that despite its increasing importance over the past 25 years, no single “cyber security industry” has been established within the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). As a result, operational statistics on this economic activity are spread across, and are intermingled with, several NAICS industries: 541513, 518210, 541511, 541512, 423430, 511210, and 541519 (Census Bureau 2022D).

On the other hand, to assess realistically the extent of cyber insecurity it is appropriate to query one of the highest caliber and most sophisticated Internet systems. We know that the US Department of Defense (DOD) has worldwide operations including Internet-like communications systems. Notably, over the past 20 years, the only publicly-known breaches of US DOD information security systems that come to mind were at the hands of insiders—not outsiders.²² Therefore, if DOD can operate a “secure” system from a purely technological perspective, then should it not be possible for DOD—with all of its technological prowess—to collaborate with information technology (IT) experts in the US and abroad to develop (if it does not already exist) a secure IT system that facilitates the digital transactions that are required for cyber governance?²³ Importantly, almost two decades back, the DOD recommended against the use of electronic voting (Center for Scientific Evidence in Public Issues 2021). However, for its fiscal year 2021-22 budget, DOD requested funds to facilitate Internet voting by troops (Shane III 2021). These funds were not awarded by the US Congress. However, that decision resulted from strong opposition by moneyed special interests intent on maintaining *status quo* governance. Nevertheless, the idea of Internet voting, which is an important component of cyber governance, is here to stay. Four states (Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, and North Dakota) (ibid) already permit it.

Relatedly, it is worth noting that the Federal Reserve Board (2022) is now in discussion concerning the promulgation of a very sophisticated IT system that will facilitate digital dollar accounts for all economic agents

²² Important cases that come to mind are Bradley (Chelsea) Manning (Bumiller 2010), Edward Snowden (Shane 2013), and more recently Jonathan and Diana Toebbe (Montague and Barnes 2021).

²³ Prospects for achieving this outcome appear increasingly feasible given the massive and intricate FinTech systems that are being developed by central banks in support of launching digital currencies.

engaging in dollar denominated transactions. If a secure IT system can be developed for this purpose, then development of an IT system for cyber governance should be on the horizon.

Turning to the complexity of legislative processes, there are two aspects. First, there is the contention that the congressional seniority system permits representatives and senators to develop expertise required to comprehend and write legislation concerning very complex topics—including science and technology (Oleszek, 1970). Second, complexity is raised in connection with the US Budget process. In both cases, a logical response is that legislation generally, and budgets in particular, can be simplified. It may not be that these processes have become increasingly complex willy-nilly; rather it may be that increasing complexity has been imposed to exclude or serve as a barrier to entry for the uninitiated.

As for legislative complexity, if the legislative process is too complicated for an electorate that has absorbed a minimum of 12 years of schooling, then why does the educational system produce an electorate incapable of understanding the workings of its government? It is a “Catch 22.” Either the “complexity of legislative proceedings” argument is a smoke screen, or the educational system is producing an inadequately trained electorate that cannot understand the governance process. If either situation exists, then it is time for a transformation of the system.

When it comes to developing and approving budgets for US Government agencies, as already indicated, the process can be simplified. For example, detailed budgets for agencies can be developed through cyber governance on a periodic or rotating basis. This instead of the *status quo* annual budgeting process. The cyber governance budgeting process could entail extending, augmenting, and updating existing budget line items in line with inflation (a cost-of-living adjustment approach). New, reduced, or cancelled

budget line items could be considered as necessary by the electorate through the above-explained issue proposal process.

Now to the electorate's disinterest in legislative matters. It is true that, under *status quo* governance, much of the electorate expresses a general disinterest in the policy formulation process in large part because of its contrived complexity, the misperception that elected representatives are fiduciaries, and due to the negative or very low net benefits associated with becoming informed of the issues and voting. Under the clarity and transparency of cyber governance information and voting costs are reduced and net benefits of participating in the political economy rise (see Appendix I). The electorate should come to comprehend the critical nature of its role in the policy formulation process and should be willing to play that role effectively. Of course, this should be especially true for individual issues of interest. Given the diversity of interests in the population, the policy formulation process under cyber governance should not suffer from severe inattention.²⁴

Notably, if a current proposal by the Republican Party in the State of Ohio is adopted, then the electorate may soon be well trained in the regular review and analysis of formal content unrelated to employment via the Internet. The Associated Press (Smith and Smith, 2022) reported on the proposal, which states that parents should be required to review, analyze, and comment regularly on course curriculums prepared by their students' teachers. If this proposal is approved and becomes a national norm, then it will help prepare the electorate well for policy formulation activities under cyber governance.

²⁴ If policy formulation processes suffer from severe inattention, then adverse outcomes are likely to arise for inattentive electorate groups. Such adverse outcomes should spur affected electorate groups to resume attention to policy formulation processes.

Conclusion

This monograph juxtaposes two political economy paradigms: *Status quo* governance that reflects violations of certain democratic principles against future cyber governance that facilitates the operations of a purer democracy. An ideal democracy features one-person-one-vote principles. Cyber governance is designed to operate on this principle much more so than *status quo* governance. Black Americans, who represent a relatively small component of the total US electorate, stand to benefit more favorable under cyber governance than under *status quo* governance because Black American often serve as the median voter on important political economy issues. This median voter role is expected to accrue to the Black electorate more opportunities to extract economic rents under cyber governance than under *status quo* governance where those rents are extracted by elected representatives. Moreover, under a cyber governance paradigm, the Black electorate is expected to raise its level of interest in policy formulation processes because the net benefits of doing so are expected to rise. High issue information acquisition and voting costs experienced under *status quo* governance are reduced substantially under cyber governance leading to a rise in net benefits from participation in the political economy. In addition, the Black electorate may find success by operating entrepreneurially under cyber governance by logrolling and forming coalitions to gain approval for self-benefitting issues. Beyond these benefits to the Black American electorate, the entire political economy should experience administrative costs savings and reduced inflation under cyber governance.

There is already opposition to cyber governance. However, this opposition often proves to be unfounded when the principles and operational features of cyber and *status quo* governance are compared carefully. It could be that

opposers simply want to avoid the pain—especially economic—associated with change.

It is difficult to predict precisely how the future will unfold. However, this monograph has shown that the US can ensure that its governance system reflects purer democratic principles by adopting cyber governance over *status quo* governance. Sheer inertia may sustain *status quo* governance for some time, but cyber governance’s purer democratic principles and the continued and expanded use of technology should inspire the future adoption of cyber governance. Irrespective of whether cyber governance is adopted by the US, it is certainly a political economy paradigm that should be entertained by Black Americans when they are able to establish their own independent political economy at some point in a favorable future. While we have provided theoretical and conceptual rationales for a transition from *status quo* to cyber governance, we leave it to other scholars to identify the conditions and factors that can motivate the nation to adopt a radical path of transformation from *status quo* to cyber governance.

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Appendix I

Cost and Benefit Assumptions and Expectations for Political Economy Participation Outcomes under *Status Quo* Governance versus Cyber Governance

Selected (non-exhaustive) costs and benefits experienced by a generally disinterested member of the electorate under *status quo* (*sq*) governance can be characterized as follows:

$$\text{Costs} = C(P(\text{tax}, \text{lob}, \text{vot}), NP(\text{spl}, \text{tbial}, \text{raal}, \text{lrcb}, \text{votd})) \\ \text{and Benefits} = B(P(\text{rent}, \text{sb}, \text{ot}), NP(\text{wem}, \text{weq}))$$

Where

P=pecuniary costs and benefits

NP=nonpecuniary costs and benefits

tax=tax payments

lob=lobbying costs (individually and through interest groups)

vot=cost of traveling to polls to vote

spl=cost of submitting proposed legislation

tbial=cost to become informed about proposed legislation

raal=time spent reading and analyzing proposed legislation

lrcb=cost of logrolling and coalition building

votd=time required to make voting decision

rent=economic rent payments received from agents involved in electoral or policy formulation processes

sb=social benefit payments received

ot=other transfers received

wem=well-being derived from a sense of empowerment

weq=well-being derived from a sense of equality in a democratic governance system

For generally disinterested members of the electorate under *sq* governance and the Public/Rational Choice school of thought, it is assumed that: **Costs** = $C(\cdot) > \mathbf{Benefits} = B(\cdot)$.

Given a transition from *sq* to cyber (**cy**) governance, costs and benefit elements are expected to exhibit the following outcomes: Increase ($\Delta > 0$), decrease ($\Delta < 0$), or remain unchanged ($\Delta = 0$). Specifically, it is expected that a generally disinterested member of the electorate would experience the following outcomes after the polity moves from *sq* to **cy** governance.

$$\Delta \text{Costs } (C) < 0 \begin{array}{l} \xleftarrow{\text{sq } \Delta \text{ cy}} \frac{\partial C}{\partial P_{tax}} < 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial P_{lob}} = 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial P_{vot}} < 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial NP_{spl}} \\ < 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial NP_{tbial}} < 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial NP_{raal}} = 0, \\ \frac{\partial C}{\partial NP_{lrch}} = 0, \frac{\partial C}{\partial NP_{votd}} = 0 \end{array}$$

$$\Delta \text{Benefits } (B) > 0 \begin{array}{l} \xleftarrow{\text{sq } \Delta \text{ cy}} \frac{\partial B}{\partial P_{rent}} > 0, \frac{\partial B}{\partial P_{sb}} > 0, \frac{\partial B}{\partial P_{ot}} > 0, \\ \frac{\partial B}{\partial NP_{wem}} > 0, \frac{\partial B}{\partial NP_{weq}} > 0 \end{array}$$

Given these expected outcomes, it is possible that: **Costs** = $C(\cdot) < \mathbf{Benefits} = B(\cdot)$ under **cy** governance because four of the eight cost elements are expected to decrease, while all five of the benefit elements are expected to increase. Consequently, generally disinterested members of the electorate could be transformed into interested members of the electorate.