



Economy + Democracy

Sourcing Solutions Stories about Community Ownership,
Wealth, and Labor

May 2023

Today's Speakers



Aria Joughin
(they/them)
**Founder &
Principal**
MakeWith



**Oscar Perry
Abello**
(he/him)
**Sr. Economic
Justice
Correspondent**
Next City



Ashton Lattimore
(she/her)
Editor-in-Chief
Prism



Jaisal Noor
(he/him)
**Democracy
Cohort Manager**
**Solutions
Journalism
Network**



Angela K. Evans
(she/her)
**Labor Cohort
Manager**
**Solutions
Journalism
Network**

Economy + Democracy

What is Economic Democracy and Why Should Solutions Journalists Care?

The Problem

Narrow Definitions = Narrow Possibilities

Home Page

World

Business

Politics

U.S.

Sports

Health

N.Y.

Opinion

Tech

Science

Q

BUSINESS

DealBook

Economy

Energy

Markets

Media

Small Business

Your Money

Automotive

Business

Debate

11, could

ould

the

al debt.

Screenshots of the New York Times online homepage on 5/22/23 at ~9:30am PT

BUSINESS

Economy

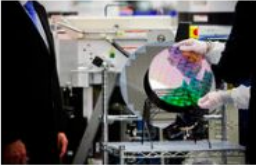
DEALBOOK | MARKETS | **ECONOMY** | ENERGY | MEDIA | TECHNOLOGY | PERSONAL TECH | SMALL BUSINESS | YOUR MONEY | MUTUAL FUNDS & ETFs

Latest

Silicon Valley, Cradle of Computer Chips, Gains Big New Research Center

Anticipating federal subsidies, Applied Materials said it planned to invest up to \$4 billion in the semiconductor project in Sunnyvale, Calif.


By DON CLARK



The U.S. Needs Minerals for Electric Cars. Everyone Else Wants Them Too.

The United States is entering an array of agreements to secure the critical minerals necessary for the energy transition, but it's not clear which of the arrangements can succeed.


By ANA SWANSON



May 21, 2023

Biden and McCarthy Set to Resume Negotiations on Debt Limit

Discussions aimed at avoiding a default have bogged down as Republicans press their demand for spending caps, work requirements for public benefit programs and other proposals in exchange.



Subscribe

Search

Home Page

Politics >

Opinions >

War in Ukraine

Investigations

Climate >

Well+Being >

Tech >

Election 2024

Courts & Law

Democracy in America

Fact Checker

The Fix

The 202s

The Biden Administration

Polling

White House

Screenshots of the Washington Post online homepage on 5/22/23 at ~9:30am PT

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Subscribe Sign in

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

Groups settle Arizona lawsuit over voter intimidation at ballot boxes

The lawsuit alleged that activists, sometimes while armed, illegally intimidated voters by filming them at ballot drop boxes.

By Daniel Gilbert



(Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

Ahead of 2024 election, several states overhauled voting laws
By Matthew Brown

Inside the Tennessee legislature, where a GOP supermajority reigns
By Kevin Sullivan

In some GOP-dominated statehouses, Black and trans lawmakers punished
By Patrick Marley and Kimberly Kindy

Six months after midterm losses, election deniers mount new efforts
By Matthew Brown

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/05/21/arizona-lawsuit-voter-intimidation/>



Wage Labor

Commodity & Financial Markets

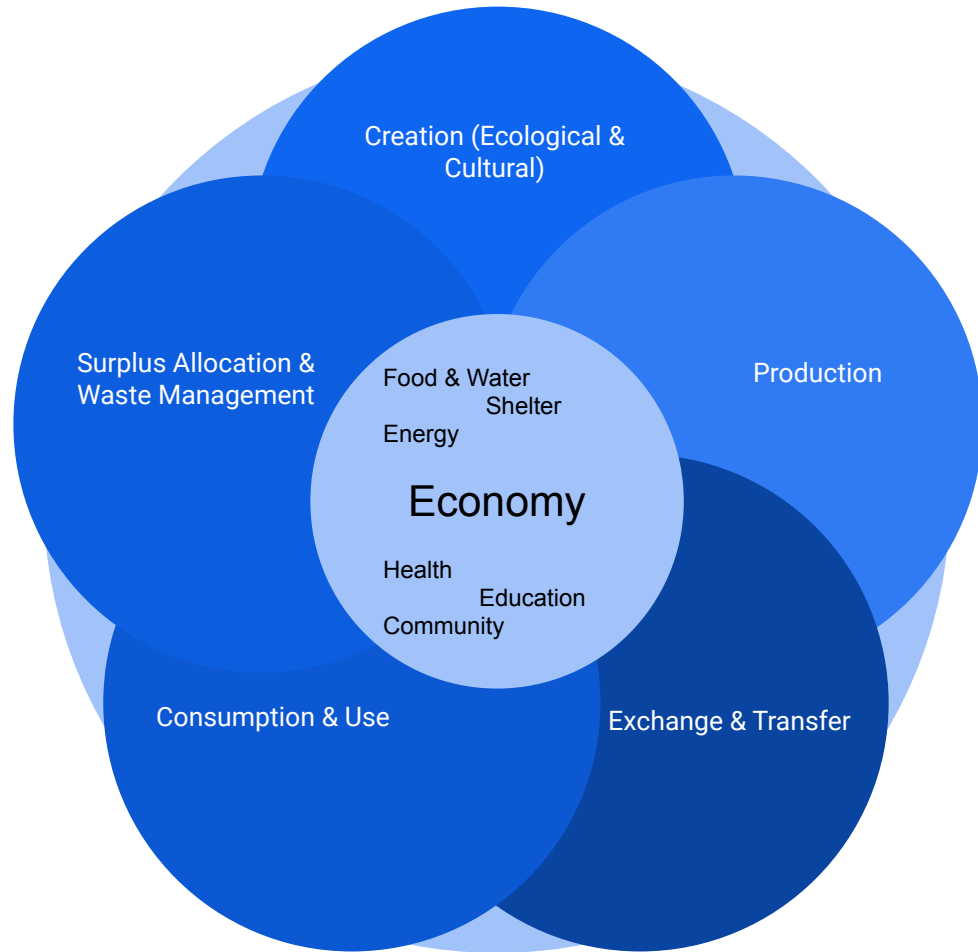
Financial Policy

Everything else we do to meet our material/social/spiritual needs as a society

Photo by Jean-Christophe André

An economy is...
**a socially constructed system that
manages how we as a society generate,
distribute, and exchange resources**

Or, put another way...
“the way humankind copes with the problem of provisioning for itself.”



Economic Democracy is...

a framework for (re)organizing economic and social life to better meet our collective needs through processes of **shared decision-making, shared ownership and shared management of resources**

**Agricultural
Cooperatives**

**Health & Childcare
Cooperatives**

Worker Cooperatives

Housing Cooperatives

**Community Land
Trusts**

**Community-led
Planning**

Credit Unions

Public Banks

**Local Currencies &
Time Banks**

Participatory Budgeting

**Public or Cooperative
Utilities**

**Media & News
Cooperatives**

**People-Powered
Journalism**

What Economic Democracy Solutions Have in Common

- 1. Shift decision-making power and (financial) benefit from a small group of stakeholders to a larger group of stakeholders**

What Economic Democracy Solutions Have in Common

1. Shift decision-making power and (financial) benefit **from a small group of stakeholders to a larger group of stakeholders**
2. Designed to address patterns of **exploitation, extraction, and displacement** by prioritizing **dignity, self-determination, accessibility, and sustainability** for both those directly involved and the wider community

What Economic Democracy Solutions Have in Common

1. Shift decision-making power and (financial) benefit **from a small group of stakeholders to a larger group of stakeholders**
2. Designed to address patterns of **exploitation, extraction, and displacement** by prioritizing **dignity, self-determination, accessibility, and sustainability** for both those directly involved and the wider community
3. Emphasize redistributing decision-making power and (financial) benefit for **those who have been (and continue to be) denied access**

Economic Democracy + Solutions Journalism both believe
**those closest to a problem or decision are
best equipped to define solutions.**

Reporting on Economic Democracy Solutions

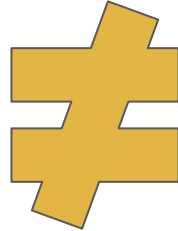
The Status Quo

Economic Democracy Framing

Labor, Economy, and Democracy are all separate beats	→→	Stories look at where labor, economy, and democracy intersect
Stories (unintentionally) limit understanding of where the public should “look for” information or opportunities to engage & transform	→→	Stories expand the public’s understanding of where labor, the economy, and democracy can and do happen
Stories take for granted the systems that govern each sphere	→→	Stories highlight projects that are attempting to transform systems

CAUTION

Collectively-
owned



Social or
Economic
Justice

Next City's Oscar Perry Abello

Oscar Perry Abello

He/him

Born in NYC. Raised in Philadelphia. Child of Filipino immigrants.

B.A. in Economics from Villanova University

Freelancer -> Next City Fellow -> Next City Editor -> Next City Correspondent

Based in NYC (Washington Heights)

Next City

Established by urban planning students in 2003 as an all-volunteer publication, print and online

National coverage, headquartered in Philadelphia

All-virtual, currently all POC newsroom led by two WOC

Current reporting focus on solutions to advance social, racial and environmental justice in cities

How does economic democracy show up for me at Next City?

On the economic justice beat at a solutions-oriented publication

“What are communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ communities, other systemically marginalized groups doing about economic injustice?”

It's a lot of what they're doing

Colored by my own personal interests and proclivities

The Seeds Of Economic Recovery Are Already Sprouting Roots In The Bronx

A tiny credit union in the South Bronx is punching above its weight as an active small business lender, even as banks nationwide brace for a credit crunch. Here's how.

SHARE GIFT

STORY BY
Oscar Perry Abello

PUBLISHED ON
May 23, 2023

It's not common for bank CEOs to walk around a neighborhood in the South Bronx, knocking on doors of local businesses to say hello and start getting to know them and their owners or employees. But what if it was?

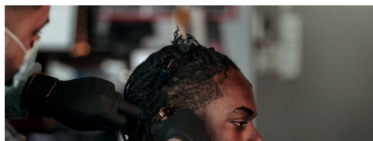
That's what Rachel Macarthy is looking forward to doing later this spring and over the summer. Born and raised in the South Bronx, with a business degree in finance from Howard University, she's the CEO of [New Covenant Dominion Credit Union](#). At 1185 Boston Road, the Black and Hispanic-serving credit union sits at a busy crossroads in the heart of the borough.

As a credit union, it's not just any bank, but a financial cooperative owned and

This Black Barber Opened The First Credit Union In Arkansas Since 1996

After years of making loans from his Little Rock barbershop, Arlo Washington has chartered the state's newest credit union - offering a blueprint for communities to create their own financial institutions.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO FEBRUARY 7, 2023 SHARE GIFT



Somebody Actually Started A New Credit Union. Here's How They Did It.

A rare new credit union embodies the original, long-forgotten vision for community development finance.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO AUGUST 30, 2022 SHARE GIFT



First New Black Bank In 20 Years Breaks The Mold For Raising Startup Capital

Adelphi Bank in Columbus, which raised \$24 million in startup capital, marks the country's first new Black bank since 2003.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO FEBRUARY 14, 2023 SHARE GIFT



How Chinatown's Community Bank Has Survived Crisis After Crisis

Banks founded by marginalized communities aren't a panacea, but they do offer an important refuge from exploitation.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO MARCH 30, 2021 SHARE GIFT



The First Democratically Managed Investment Fund Launches in Boston

Investment approvals will be made collectively by Boston residents who identify as working class and/or as a person of color.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO DECEMBER 28, 2018 SHARE GIFT



East Bay Activists Unveil New Blueprint for a Regional Public Bank

The bank would make loans to support more affordable housing, small businesses owned by Black, indigenous and other people of color, and potentially do infrastructure lending for municipalities.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO APRIL 26, 2022 SHARE GIFT



The East Bay plan is modeled after the public Bank of North Dakota (Photo courtesy of the Bank of North Dakota)

Philadelphia Bill Would Establish First Ever Municipal Public Bank Entity

The stated mission of the proposed Philadelphia Public Financial Authority is to support Black-owned businesses and other businesses in neighborhoods that have historically lacked access to credit.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO FEBRUARY 17, 2022 SHARE GIFT

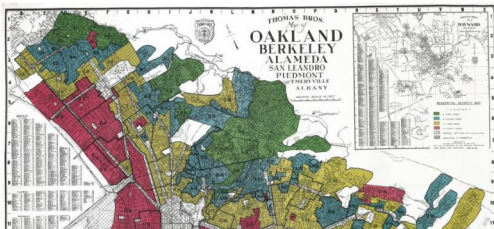


A New Kind of Cooperative in Oakland Fights Against Speculative Development

Californians can now invest in a new co-op that goes against prevailing racial and social hierarchies.

 OSCAR PERRY ABELLO DECEMBER 3, 2019

 SHARE  GIFT

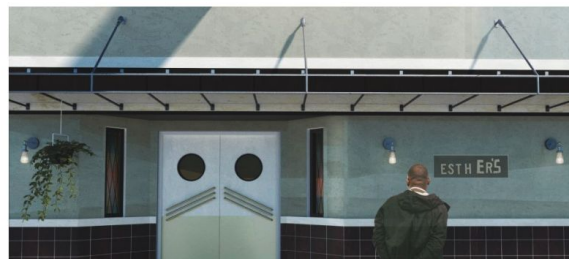


This Real Estate Co-op is Looking for Investors Who Want to Put Community First

The East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative is reviving a legendary jazz club as a culture hub.

 OSCAR PERRY ABELLO APRIL 13, 2021

 SHARE  GIFT



This Community-Controlled Real Estate Co-Op Is Proving Its Value

Investors who took a chance on a unique Bay Area-real estate cooperative are now receiving their first dividend checks. They may be small, but they carry an important message.

 OSCAR PERRY ABELLO DECEMBER 20, 2022

 SHARE  GIFT



Worker-Owned Industrial Conglomerate Makes First Acquisition

The group has a big, bold vision.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO JUNE 11, 2020

SHARE GIFT



The Co-op With Forty Years of Making Loans to Co-ops

Most banks and financial institutions are built for conventional businesses, not cooperatives, which means co-ops have a hard time accessing the money they need to grow.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO MAY 9, 2019

SHARE GIFT



Can a Private Equity Model Build Wealth for Workers of Color?

An El Paso landscaping company is one of the first employee-ownership conversions facilitated by a new Black-led private equity fund.

SHARE GIFT

STORY BY
[Oscar Perry Abello](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
[Jorge Salgado](#)

PUBLISHED ON
Aug 2, 2022

If you're looking for work in El Paso, Texas, and you don't mind being out in the sun digging trenches, planting trees and succulents, lifting and spreading rock, or moving around other heavy materials in 100-degree temperatures, Joe Aguilar definitely has a job for you at Accent Landscape Contractors.

"We've got about 15 projects going right now," Aguilar says. "In the last eight or nine years, it's been up, and up, and up. I can't remember the last time we had any

Closing the Funding Gap for Worker Cooperatives

New ecosystem puts capital under local worker control.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO JULY 8, 2016

SHARE GIFT



Worker-Owned Cooperatives are Building Their Own Investment Network

Very quietly below the radar, workers have been building a new kind of investment network for themselves.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO JANUARY 28, 2021

SHARE GIFT



A Worker Cooperative and a Community Land Trust Bought a Building Together

Through a raft of clever tactics, the worker-owners of Hasta Muerte were able to acquire the building in partnership with the Oakland Community Land Trust.

OSCAR PERRY ABELLO JUNE 18, 2019

SHARE GIFT



Four pillars of solutions journalism + economic democracy

Economic democracy stories are often responses to the little problems that comprise the big problems — racial inequality, climate change, etc.

Economic democracy sources or characters have insights into how their response to the little problem fits into the big picture.

Evidence in support of economic democracy solutions can be scarce.
Evidence that current economic structures are killing people and the planet is not scarce.

Limitations are often obvious. But don't let that take anything away from your platform to uplift the agency and vision of the people or communities behind these solutions.

Sourcing

Network, network, network. Find national, regional, local convenings around various components of economic democracy (money, land, labor). Virtual is okay, too. National groups (USFWC, DAWI, NCBA, Inclusiv etc.) useful to follow, can be helpful for background, willing to make introductions to members.

No business or project is an island. Every step of the way requires conversations, relationship building, characters in a story overcoming shared obstacles. Especially true when it comes to economic democracy stories.

The moment you meet someone may or may not be a good moment for a story. If it's not your beat make it part of your beat.

Prism's Ashton Lattimore

Case Study - How Prism's Reporting Led to Internal Change



The push toward a four-day workweek is gaining momentum

by Montse Reyes May 18th, 2022



Prism adopts a four-day workweek

by Ashton Lattimore September 15th, 2022

After a successful summer pilot, Prism staff members reported transformative results in their mental health, work-life balance, and productivity, and unanimously recommended to continue the schedule long term



Foundation and Backstory

- Summer 2020: Experimented with four-day workweek, using staggered schedules
- 2020-22: Half-day Fridays as status-quo (36 hour workweek)
- Prism has been reporting on workers' rights since 2020, including the workplace experiences of journalists
 - Freelance journalists are hanging on by a thread. Could organizing help? (Dec. 14, 2020)
 - Coronavirus has upended many lives, but immigrant journalists on visas face a grim reality (June 23, 2020)
 - Harassment and threats are 'part of the job' for women in media (Apr. 26, 2021)
- Organizational Culture: From the beginning, focused on work-life balance, mental health, and supporting staff as whole people



The Catalyst: Solutions Reporting by Montse Reyes

The story: [The push toward a four-day workweek is gaining momentum](#), published May 18, 2022, at the height of “Great Resignation” discourse

- **Problem & RESPONSE:** “With time to reevaluate their careers, working conditions, and quality of life, nearly 48 million Americans quit their jobs in 2021. ... Some people believe a four-day workweek could be the answer in the quest for a better work-life balance.”
- **EVIDENCE:** study found 20% increase in productivity; time and money saved on commute, mental health improvements; reduced barriers for employees with caregiving responsibilities (primarily women and BIPOC)
- **LIMITATIONS:** Most of the companies trying it are in “tech, finance, or other traditionally white-collar industries”; risk of impact to benefits
- **INSIGHT:** “ByteChek made its way to the shortened workweek policy gradually. First the company consulted with their team and analyzed their Friday workloads to maintain output with fewer hours. That started with “Quiet Fridays,” where employees didn’t schedule internal or external meetings, which gave way to half-day Fridays and now, a four-day workweek.”



Discovery: How Prism's Leadership Noticed the Story

#all-lateststories ▾

14



Prism APP 3:32 PM

May 18th, 2022 ▾



[After Buffalo, say 'no more'](#)

We can honor the lives of those who have been killed by abolishing the structures that allowed for their deaths
[After Buffalo, say 'no more'](#) is a story from Prism, a BIPOC-led nonprofit news outlet that centers the people, places, and issues currently underreported by national media. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our... (edited)

Prism

[After Buffalo, say 'no more'](#)

We can honor the lives of those who have been killed by abolishing the structures that allowed for their deaths

Written by William C. Anderson Est. reading time 7 minutes

May 17th, 2022



Prism

[Prism | Justice Requires the Full Story](#)

An independent, nonprofit newsroom led by and for people of color. Accurate, fearless reporting—because justice requires the full story.

Est. reading time 1 minute



[The push toward a four-day workweek is gaining momentum](#)

A federal bill that would reduce the standard workweek to 32 hours is headed to Congress

[The push toward a four-day workweek is gaining momentum](#) is a story from Prism, a BIPOC-led nonprofit news outlet that centers the people, places, and issues currently underreported by national media. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to... (edited)

Prism

[The push toward a four-day workweek is gaining momentum](#)

A federal bill that would reduce the standard workweek to 32 hours is headed to Congress

Written by

Est. r. Latest messages



The Four Day Workweek Pilot

Rather than jumping right into a permanent change, we designed a pilot to test it out and make a more informed decision once we had more data.

- Finite Length of Time: 12 weeks
- How would we measure success?
 - Hard Metrics: Story output, audience numbers/traffic (social engagement, pageviews, visitors)
 - Soft Metrics: Work life balance impact, mental health
- Measurement and evaluation
 - Audience metrics tools (Parse.ly, etc.), publishing stats on Wordpress, social media engagement metrics
 - Qualitative staff survey asking about mental health, productivity, work-life balance, with space for narrative answers on challenges, benefits, a yes/no question on whether they recommended a permanent shift; anything else leadership could do to support adjustment



Results and Reporting Out

The story: [Prism adopts a four-day workweek](#)

- Pilot was a resounding success, team unanimously recommended following through - but final decision rested with the leadership team
- Had to work through resistance, sometimes from surprising places
- Reporting out is part of being accountable to staff, board, funders, audience
- Needed to consider the function of reporting out - were we asking for permission or informing people after decision was made?



How Solutions Journalism Shaped the Report-Out (1)

RESPONSE to well-documented problem of journalist burnout

- “As corrosive as the 24-hour news cycle has been to our collective attention spans and the quality of news in our country, it’s been just as damaging to the journalists living and reporting on the day-to-day churn of news, much of it complex, difficult, and sometimes even traumatizing. At Prism, we couldn’t imagine a better time for our newsroom to explore different ways of showing up in this moment.”

INSIGHT that other newsrooms could consider in trying this out

- “Prism decided to pilot a 32-hour, four-day workweek for our full-time staff this summer. For 12 weeks, our staff kept a regular work schedule of Monday through Thursday. ... During the pilot, we adapted workflows to allow for rapid-response coverage of news that broke late in the week, followed by alternative times for our team to step away from work. In accordance with our ethics, we also ensured that editors remained reachable to swiftly address any necessary corrections or other urgent matters that arose on Fridays.”



How Solutions Journalism Shaped the Report-Out (2)

EVIDENCE in terms of audience metrics, survey results, editorial workflow, all documented and measured during the pilot period

- “In a survey ... team members reported improved work-life balance, mental health, and productivity. Staff have reported saving money on child care, finding additional time to attend medical appointments, starting therapy, working on creative projects, returning to hobbies, and spending more time with family.”
- “Even as we shifted into a four-day workweek, during the pilot, we hit our editorial production goals, publishing an average of eight stories per week. We also met and exceeded our audience growth goals, with traffic to Prism’s website exceeding projected targets (nearly doubling them in June, thanks to our coverage of the Dobbs decision), and our social media channels continued their upward trajectory, with our Twitter and Instagram growing 20% and nearly 7%, respectively, compared with Q2 of 2022.”

LIMITATIONS, i.e. naming some of the challenges and potential pitfalls, and noting why our newsroom was well-situated for this shift

- “While the shortened workweek did pose a few challenges—including smoothing out cross-team collaboration for stories published later in the week, coordinating meeting schedules with external partners, and occasionally feeling the need to work late—all staff felt the benefits far outweighed any concerns, which could be adapted to over time.



Q&A

Solutions for Economic Equity partnership

Next City and Prism have joined together to report stories that highlight how low-income and marginalized BIPOC communities are cultivating, building, and seizing economic justice in cities across the U.S. through labor organizing, worker co-ops or food sovereignty initiatives.

[An Appalachian Model For Regenerating Place-Based, Community Wealth](#)

[This Bay Area Marketplace Led By Immigrant Moms Offers A Global Model For Incubating Food Businesses](#)

['This is not charity': A congregation attempts reparations](#)

Interested in Learning More?

Let's Connect!

[Jaisal Noor](#) / [Solutions Journalism Network](#)

- jaisal@solutionsjournalism.org

[Aria Joughin](#) / [MakeWith](#)

- aria@makewithcollaborative.com

[Oscar Perry Abello](#) / [Next City](#)

- oscar@nextcity.org

[Ashton Lattimore](#) / [Prism](#)

- ashton@prismreports.org

[Angela K. Evans](#) / [Solutions Journalism Network](#)

- angela@solutionsjournalism.org