OUR ECONOMY!
Economic Democracy and System Change

Friday, April 12th
8:30AM-6:00PM

CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
25 W. 43rd Street, 18th Fl. New York, NY 10036
OUR ECONOMY!
Economic Democracy and System Change

Hosted by the Urban Studies Department

Each year, the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, formerly the CUNY Joseph S. Murphy Institute, hosts an academic conference exploring current debates and innovative strategies within the fields of labor and urban studies. Under the auspices of the Urban Studies department, this year’s conference focuses on economic democracy (EconD). Sometimes referred to as the “solidarity economy” or the “cooperative economy,” economic democracy extends shared authority and collective determination in political life into the economic sphere. Shared governance and shared ownership (or stewardship) are the two core principles of this framework, applied from the home to the neighborhood to the region, nation, and globe. The purpose of this conference is to explore current experimentation and theory advances, as well as obstacles relevant to the work of researchers and educators, legislators and analysts, lawyers, planners, workers toward greater economic democracy.

Notes:

The program, session information and speaker biographies can be viewed online at: https://slucuny.swoogo.com/OurEconomy

Papers and other related resources that have been submitted can be viewed on our Dropbox: http://bit.ly/OurEconomyConference

Speakers that have written or submitted papers for the conference have been identified with an *

A special thank you to all of the conference committee members:

Kafui Attoh, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies;
Evan Casper-Futterman, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative;
James Defilippis, Rutgers University; Paula Finn, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies;
Jessica Gordon Nembhard, CUNY John Jay College; Carmen Huertas-Noble, CUNY School of Law;
Michael Lalan, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies; Steven London, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies;
Stephanie Luce, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies; Rebecca Lurie, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies;
James Mandiberg, CUNY Hunter College; Michael Menser, CUNY Brooklyn College;
Catherine Mulder, CUNY John Jay College; Samantha Valente, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies
8:30-8:45AM Welcome

8:45AM-9:30AM: Keynote Presentation: The Origins and Relevance of the Struggle for Economic Democracy in the U.S. (18A-D)
   J. Philip Thompson, New York City Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

9:30-10:30AM: Opening Plenary: Strategies for Urban Transformation: The Co-City, the Commons, and a Sectoral and Regional Approach For Economic Justice and Well Being (18A-D)
   Sheila Foster, Professor of Law and Public Policy, Georgetown University
   Roger Green, Co-founder, Interfaith Coalition and Co-Founder of Citizen Share Brooklyn & Society for Effective Economic Democracy
   Moderated by: Carmen Huertas-Noble, CUNY School of Law

10:45AM-12:00PM: Concurrent Panels-Session A
   A2: Labor, Activism, and New Solidarities (19 Conf Room)
   A3: Solidarity & Relationships in a Transforming World (19A)
   A4: Cooperative Strategies for Immigrant Workers (19B-C)
   A5: Financing Economic Democracy (19D)

12:00-1:15PM: Lunch with Film Screening: Building the Democratic Economy, from Preston to Cleveland (18A-D)

1:15PM-2:30PM: Concurrent Panels-Session B
   B1: Municipalism, Corporate Accountability, and Labor Rights (18A-D)
   B2: Building an Inclusive Economy: What is the Role of Business? (19 Conf Room)
   B3: Cooperative Economics and the Food System in a Changing City (19A)
   B4: Community and Labor Fighting Forward with Economic Democracy (19B-C)
   B5: Degrowth, Energy Democracy, and Worker Coops (19D)

2:45PM-4:15PM: Concurrent Panels-Session C
   C1: Municipal Policy and Economic Democracy: Lessons and Questions For NYC (18A-D)
   C2: Seeing Scale From the Grassroots (19 Conf Room)
   C3: The Opportunities and Challenges of Community Land Trusts (19A)
   C4: Democracia Económica: Building Economic Democracy Across the Americas (19B-C)
   C5: State Strategies: A Comparative Analysis and Overview (19D)
   A6: Democratizing New York State (19 Comp Lab)

4:30PM-5:30PM: Closing Plenary: System Change and the Green New Deal (18A-D)
   Sean Sweeney, Director, International Program for Labor, Climate, & the Environment, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies
   Anthony Torres, Campaign Strategist, Sierra Club and member of Sunrise Movement
   Johanna Bozuwa, Research Associate, Democracy Collaborative
   Moderated by: Alan Aja, Professor, Department of Puerto Rican & Latino Studies, CUNY Brooklyn College
Welcome and Introductions

Kafui Attoh, Assistant Professor, Urban Studies, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies
Rebecca Lurie, Program Director, Community Worker & Ownership Project (CWOP), CUNY SLU

Keynote Presentation

The Origins and Relevance of the Struggle for Economic Democracy in the U.S.

J. Philip Thompson, New York City Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives

Opening Plenary

Strategies for Urban Transformation: The Co-city, the Commons, and a Sectoral and Regional Approach For Economic Justice and Well Being

How can we create a new political economy that includes everyone, promotes equity, considers the environment and the deep history of exploitation and oppression that currently surrounds us? How can a future state for healing and living well be created now? This plenary will explore the notion of “the Commons” and allow our speakers to draw from their study, practice and planning to illustrate a way forward. Dr. Foster looks at Co-City as a model that emphasizes how the services and resources that belong to us all belong in “the Commons”. Roger Green will paint the picture of what is being crafted for Central Brooklyn, using an approach based on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) to create community wealth, community health, justice and well being.

Sheila Foster, Professor of Law and Public Policy, Georgetown University
Roger Green, Co-founder, Interfaith Coalition and Co-Founder of Citizen Share Brooklyn & Society for Effective Economic Democracy

Moderated by: Carmen Huertas-Noble, Founding Director, Community & Economic Development Clinic, CUNY

Break
This panel will examine the growing movement for public ownership and its intersection with economic democracy. Panelists will discuss efforts to democratize public ownership in the U.S. and U.K. in the energy, water, telecommunications, and banking sectors, as well as efforts to defeat or reverse privatization schemes.

Moderated by: Thomas Hanna, Director of Research, The Democracy Collaborative
Cat Hobbs, Founder and Director, We Own It
Andrew Cumbers, Professor in Regional Political Economy, University of Glasgow
Shahrzad Habibi, Research and Policy Director, In the Public Interest

A2: Labor, Activism, and New Solidarities (19 Conf Room)
This panel will explore the implications of three models of economic democracy in the workplace. Panelists will examine a coop school run by unionized teachers and students; democratic decision-making models for non-profits; and a public sector union’s plans to develop cooperative, worker-owned businesses.

Moderated by: Missy Risser, Visiting Professor and Supervising Attorney, Community and Economic Development Clinic, CUNY School of Law
*Alexander Kolokotronis, PhD Student, Yale University
*Michael Haber, Associate Professor and Attorney-in-Charge, Community and Economic Development Clinic, Hofstra University
*Deborah Groban Olson, Founder, The Center for Community Based Enterprise (C2BE)

A3: Solidarity and Relationships in a Transforming World: How do we live liberation, love and justice? (19A)
Examining experimentation in various settings, such as a unionized hospital; a small, democratic school; the Burning Man event; as well as models that challenge competitive frameworks. This panel explores what principles and practices most firmly embed solidarity and the common good in contemporary efforts aimed at radical social transformation.

Moderated by: Melanie Bush, Professor, Adelphi University and Research Fellow, University of South Africa
*Bruce Richard, Advisor, 1199SEIU
*Katherine Chen, Associate Professor, City College of New York and the CUNY Graduate Center
*Abby Scher, Member, Research | Action Cooperative
A4: Cooperative Strategies for Immigrant Workers: What Works, Where We Innovate, How We Celebrate (19B-C)

*Immigrant workers face a set of challenges along with opportunities that are unique in the creation of worker co-ops. These researchers and practitioners will describe the experiences of immigrant women in New York. Stories and studies discussed will include data from Cooperative Home Care Associates in the Bronx and the franchise model being developed for Cleaning Cooperatives.*

Moderated by: *James Mandiberg*, Associate Professor and Chair, Organizational Management & Leadership, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College
*Seon Mi Kim*, Associate Professor, Social Work, Ramapo College
*Emma Yorra*, Board Member, Cooperative Development Institute
*Anh Thu Nguyen*, Director of Special Projects, Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI)

**Worker-Owner and Board Member,** Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA)
**Maru Bautista,** Director of Cooperative Development, Center for Family Life (CFL)

A5: Financing Economic Democracy (19D)

*This panel will look at different strategies for financing communities and organizations based on principles of economic democracy. Panelists will explore revolving loan funds, crowdfunding, public banks and other financial innovations as they work toward advancing economic democracy. The role of government regulations and programs will also be considered.*

*Deyanira Del Rio*, Co-Director, New Economy Project
*Cliff Rosenthal*, Visiting Scholar, Milano School of Policy, Management and Enviroment, The New School
*Brendan Martin*, Executive Director, The Working World USA

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**Look out for Conference Synthesis, coming soon!**

The conference team has brought on community researchers, many of them practitioners and grassroots leaders in economic democracy and the solidarity economy themselves, to document the day’s proceedings. These will be collected and turned into a bilingual (English/Spanish) booklet for all those who were unable to attend today’s event. This will then be distributed to all conference attendees and made available online.
B1: Municipalism, Corporate Accountability and Labor Rights (18A-D)
This panel will explore how city government can successfully use its regulatory and purchasing power to enforce labor and human rights. Using a municipalist framework for citizen engagement and corporate accountability, panelists will explore some economic justice struggles here in New York City as they respond to multinational corporations like Uber and Amazon.

Moderated by: Chaumtoli Huq, Associate Professor, CUNY School of Law
Ron Kim, New York State Assembly Member
Brad Lander, New York City Council Member
Suzanne Adely, Regional Organizer, Food Chain Workers Alliance
Zubin Soleimany, Policy, New York Taxi Worker Alliance

B2: Building an Inclusive Economy: What is the Role of Business? (19 Conf Room)
With income inequality on the rise, race issues pervasive, and the country divided politically, what role can business leaders play in advancing economic democracy? What are the principles, practices and policies that should guide an inclusive and just economy? Panelists will discuss investment models, the nature of high road business practices, and issues of worker ownership, access to capital, and procurement.

Moderated by: David Levine, President, American Sustainable Business Council
Steve Sleigh, President, Sleigh Strategy
Mike Brady, CEO, Greyston Bakery
Carmen Huertas-Noble, Founding Director, Community & Economic Development Clinic, CUNY School of Law and Co-founder, 1Worker1Vote
Saru Jayaraman, Co-founder & Co-Director, ROC United, RAISE (Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment)
B3: Cooperative Economics and the Food System in a Changing City (19A)
What does a cooperative and democratic food system look like for New York City? Hear from New Yorkers who are running community gardens, starting food co-ops, and managing community supported agriculture in an effort to help their communities access and build a healthy, fresh, local, self-determined food system. A comparative view will be offered through the lens of the Seikatsu Club Consumer Cooperative Union in Japan, founded by housewives in the 1960’s, where women took charge of the supply chain as they collaborated to assure their consumption had political, social and moral impact.

Moderated by: Lauren Taylor Hudson, Solidarity NYC and Data Commons Collective
Jess Turner, Urban Farmer and CEANYC Peer Educator
Emilie Miyauchi, CSA and Farm Manager, Just Food and Board of Directors, Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City (CEANYC)
Mark Winston Griffith, Executive Director, Brooklyn Movement Center and Board Member, Central Brooklyn Food Coop
Michael Menser, Assistant Professor, Brooklyn College

B4: What Happens After “No”? Community and Labor Fighting Forward with Economic Democracy (19B-C)
The successful campaign to block Amazon HQ2 from locating in western Queens was a watershed moment of community power, but the underlying framework of trickle down economic development, now decades old, remains entrenched. Drawing on assets and experiences from their organizing work in the Bronx and Brooklyn, as well as inspiration from work around the US and around the world, community and labor organizers from the Kingsbridge Armory fight and Interfaith hospital crisis will share in this session the experiences that led them towards a vision of building economic democracy, pivoting from community benefit to shared ownership and control of the assets in their communities.

Moderated by: Katherine Mella, Program Director, Participatory Planning and Policy, Just Urban Economies Program (JUE)
Edward Garcia, Lead Community Development Organizer, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
Wendoly Marte, Board President, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI)
Bruce Richard, Advisor, 1199SEIU

B5: Degrowth, Energy Democracy, and Worker Coops (19D)
This panel will theorize on the strategic role of coops as non-reformist reforms. Panelists will provide an on-the-ground perspective on their role in constructing energy democracy in communities of color and then in regards to the big issue of switching to a degrowth model of “development.”

Moderated by: Laura Wolf-Powers, Associate Professor, Urban Policy Planning, CUNY Hunter College
*Andres Bernal, Adjunct Professor, Urban Studies, CUNY Queens College
*Mark Lachapelle, Lecturer, HEC Université de Montréal
Lynn Benander, Owner-Member, COOP Power

2:30-2:45PM Break
Concurrent Panels-Session C

C1: Municipal Policy and Economic Democracy:
Lessons and Questions For New York City (18A-D)

While New York City is home to many housing cooperatives, credit unions, democratic workplaces, and other inclusively owned institutions, the City’s public policy ecosystem supporting these initiatives is not as well developed as in other localities. This panel will explore what cities in the US and abroad might have to teach New York City, and will explore paths to building a more supportive “policy ecosystem” here.

Moderated by: Abby Scher, Member, Research| Action Cooperative
Zayne Abdessalam, Director of Policy and Research, Office of Financial Empowerment, NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
Christine Curella, Deputy Director, Business Development and New Economy Initiatives, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives
Deyanira Del Río, Co-Director, New Economy Project
Discussant: Jessica Gordon Nembhard, Professor, Community Justice and Social Economic Development, Department of Africana Studies, CUNY John Jay College

C2: Seeing Scale From the Grassroots: How Can Cooperatives Drive a Movement for Economic Transformation? (19 Conf Room)

With a turn toward envisioning cooperatives as part of a large social movement, there are growing conversations about the role of scale in economic change, along with debates about what it means to reach scale. What does scale mean to grassroots cooperators at the enterprise, the ecosystem, and movement levels?

Moderated by: Shilpa Nandwani, Founding Member, Khao’na Kitchen
Denise Hernandez, Director of Operations, Cooperative Home Care Association (CHCA)
Steph Wiley, Founding Member, Brooklyn Packers Cooperative
Maria A. García, Interpreter, Translator and Language Justice Worker, Caracol Language Cooperative
Discussant: Evan Casper-Futterman, Director of the Economic Democracy Learning Center, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative

C3: The Opportunities and Challenges of Community Land Trusts Within the Movement For Economic Democracy (19A)

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) have not been well connected to the other types of organizations that make up the movement for economic democracy. This panel will include both research papers and a roundtable discussion with practitioners on the theme of connecting CLTs to the larger movement for economic democracy.

Moderated by: Julia Duranti-Martinez, Community Land Trust (CLT) Learning Exchange Coordinator, New Economy Project
*Allison Curtis, Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University
*Joe Pierce, Assistant Professor, Depart. of Geography and Enviromental Sustainability, University of Oklahoma
Athena Bernkopf, Project Coordinator, East Harlem-El Barrio Community Land Trust (CLT)
Concurrent Panels - Session C

C4: Democracia Económica: Building Economic Democracy Across the Americas (19B-C)

How are communities of color across the Americas building economic democracy and self-determination? What potentials exist for coordinating across geographies? This panel explores movements and strategies to build healthier, more just economies in the U.S. and Latin America, and will examine how thinking transnationally can strengthen economic democracy theory and practice.

Moderated by: Dayna Cunningham, Executive Director, MIT Community Innovators Lab (CoLab)
Sandra Lobo, Executive Director, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
Gonzalo Mercado, Executive Director, La Colmena Community Job Center and New York Coordinator, National Day Laborer Organizing Newtwork
Natalia Mosquera, Co-lead, Territorial Innovation Lab, MIT CoLab
*Alison Coffey, Research Affiliate, MIT CoLab and PhD student, University of Texas, Austin

C5: State Strategies: A Comparative Analysis and Overview (19D)

How can we leverage the power of not only municipal governments, but regional economic development, state legislation, and national legislation to support economic democracy and shared ownership?

Moderated by: Gregory Jost, Director of Organizing, Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
Melissa Hoover, Founding Executive Director, Democracy at Work Institute
*Peter Ranis, Professor Emeritus, Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center
*Jason Spicer, Assistant Professor, Geography & Planning, University of Toronto
*Robert Moore, Policy Analyst, Policy Matters Ohio

C6: Democratizing New York State: How Economic Democracy, Energy Democracy and Participatory Budgeting Are Tools for Our Time (19 Comp Lab)

With Democratic control of the NY State Senate, new programs are possible to promote and interconnect economic democracy and climate change. This panel will look at state legislation to support infrastructure for worker co-ops, participatory budgeting with CDBG funds and in schools, and Energy Democracy as outlined in NY Renews.

Moderated by: Brain Glick, Clinical Associate Professor, Fordham Law School
Adrien Salazar, Campaign Strategist, Climate Equity, Demos
Josh Lerner, Co-founder and Co-Executive Director, Participatory Budgeting Project
4:30-5:30PM (18A-D)  

**Closing Plenary**

**System Change and the Green New Deal**  
The rapid ascent of the Green New Deal into the national conversation finally gives us a chance to talk about system change at the scale required to address the climate crisis. But how do we make sure it responds to the socio-political economic crises? Anthony Torres will talk about how the Sunrise Movement and others helped bring such a sweeping set of policies to the fore. Sean Sweeney will discuss the role of labor in the green transition to energy democracy and the necessity of fighting against market driven approaches; and Johanna Bozuwa will talk about using existing powers of the state (especially the Federal Reserve) to break the fossil fuel industry and democratize the public. Alan Aja will bring it all together with themes from the morning plenary and other panels.

Anthony Torres, Campaign Strategist, Sierra Club and member of Sunrise Movement  
Sean Sweeney, Director of the International Program for Labor, Climate & the Environment and Director of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies  
Johanna Bozuwa, Research Associate, The Democracy Collaborative  
Moderated by: Alan Aja, Associate Professor, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, CUNY Brooklyn College

5:30PM-6:00PM  

**Closing Remarks**

Kafui Attoh, Assistant Professor, Urban Studies, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies  
Rebecca Lurie, Program Director, Community Worker & Ownership Project (CWOP), CUNY SLU

*Join the Resistance Revival Chorus as they sing us out into the future.*

6:00PM-8:00PM  

**Reception**

Join us at HB Burger, a employee-owned brewery, for more informal conversations, on your own tab. Located at 127 West 43rd St. between 6th and 7th Ave.
A special thank you to our co-sponsors that donated towards catering and travel expenses:

1199SEIU; Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative; 
Consortium for Worker Education; The Democracy Collaborative; 
MIT Community Innovators Labor (CoLab);
and the Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter

Thank you to the worker coops; 
Coop Cafe and Khao’na Kitchen 
for providing catering for today!