

Worker Cooperatives

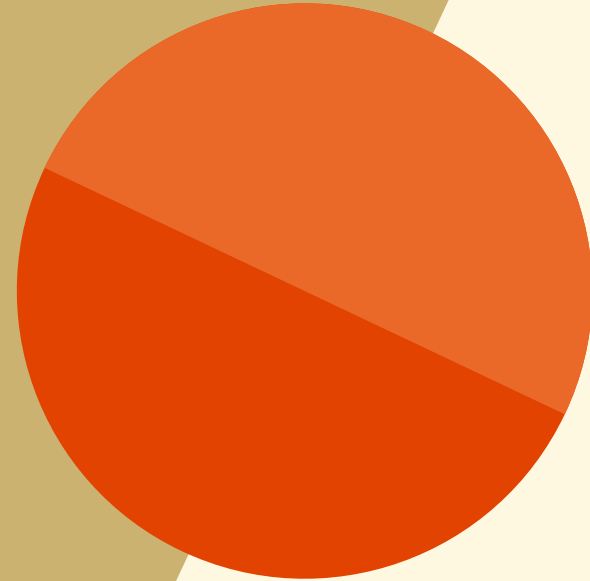
History, Discussion, and Toolkit

<https://coopguide.org>



Agenda

- [Cooperative History](#)
- [Definition](#)
- [Patronage](#)
- [Democratic Workplace](#)
- [Governance](#)





Familiarity



Cooperative History





Class War



Owenism

Rochdale



Co-optation



AL, 2016
MAY 1
INTERNATIONAL
WORKER

Here and Now

Definition

A cooperative is an autonomous **association** of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled **enterprise**.

The 7 Cooperative Principles

- 1 Voluntary and Open Membership
- 2 Democratic Member Control
- 3 Members' Economic Participation
- 4 Autonomy and Independence
- 5 Education, Training and Information
- 6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- 7 Concern for Community

The Enterprise



Power





Jeff Parr

“ Co-ops require knowing business: accounting, reviewing contracts... all the business stuff.

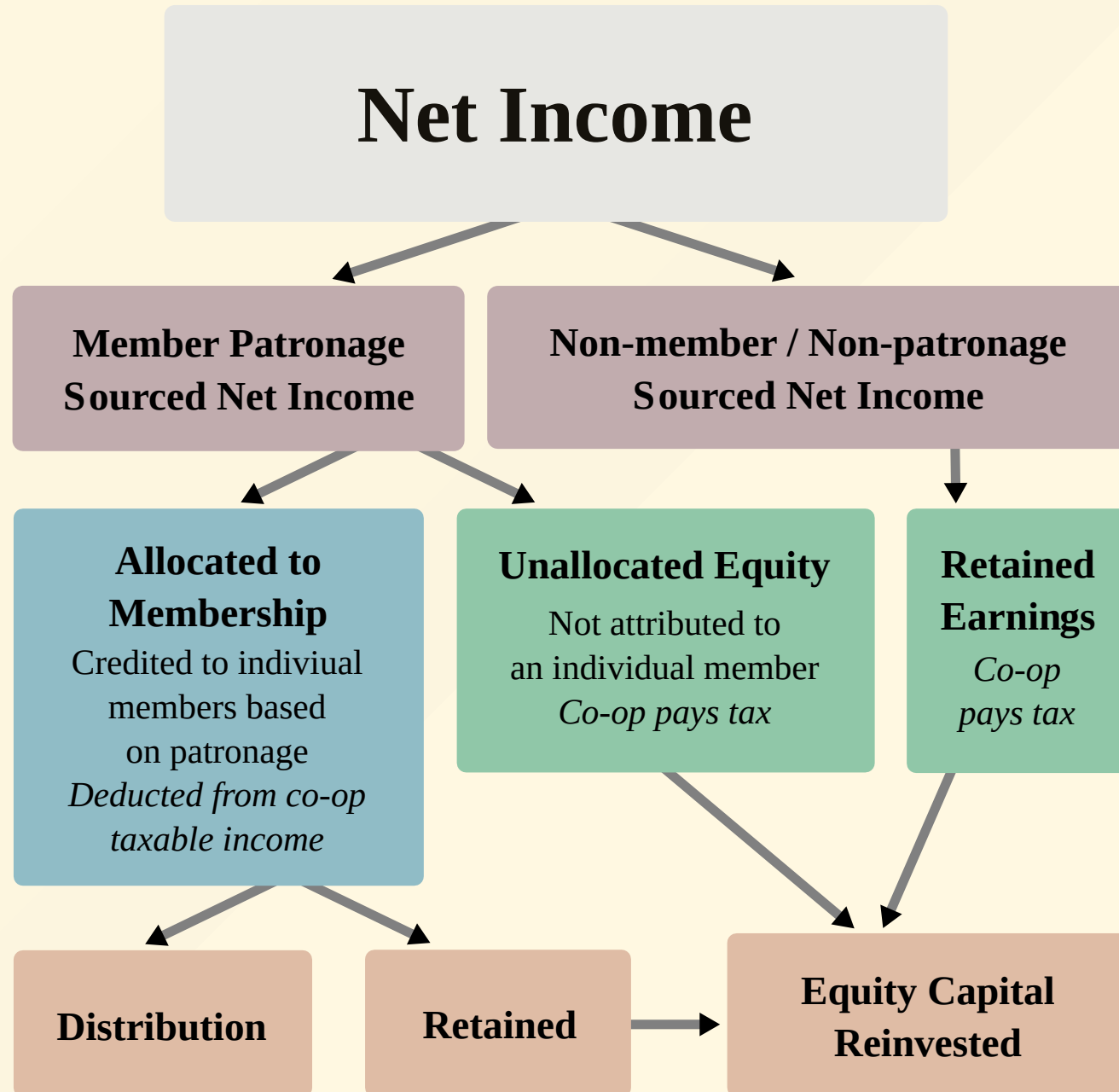
Missing that knowledge can make these topics uncomfortable. Your co-op lives or dies based on your how you respond as a group.

Co-op developers, vendors, and technical assistance from peers can help build that knowledge. ”



Patronage





Democratic Workplace





Rae Bonfanti

“ You might ask how much time to expect to spend on co-op duties.

There's no getting around it. If you aren't handling business today, taking on co-op tasks will be a transition.

We managed our time with committees, where a smaller set of members handles one concern, then report to the board. ”



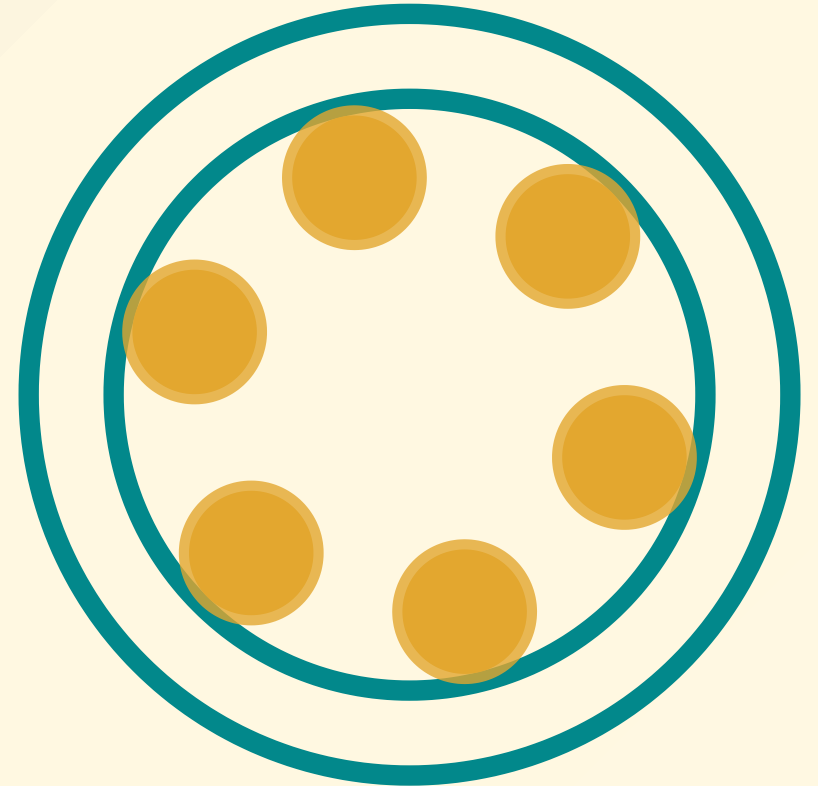
Operations

Governance sets strategic vision and policies

Management handles day-to-day operations and implements policy

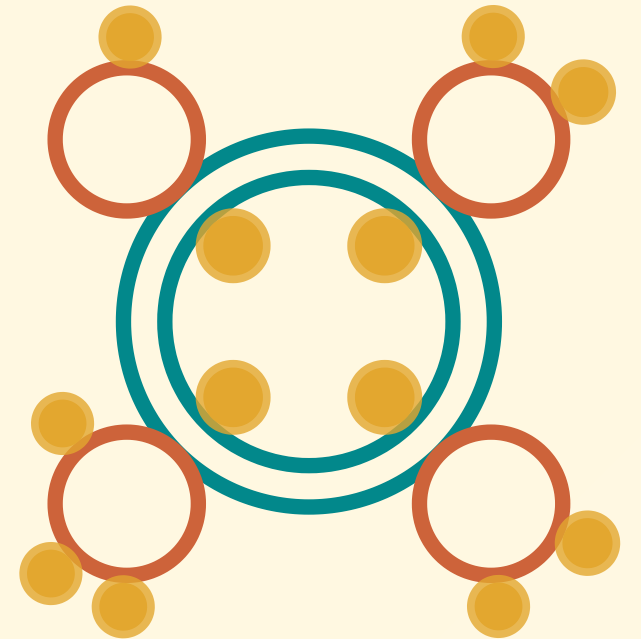
Collective

- All members are on the governing board
- Every member has equal governance power
- Every member handles some aspect of management
- Collective or flat management structures



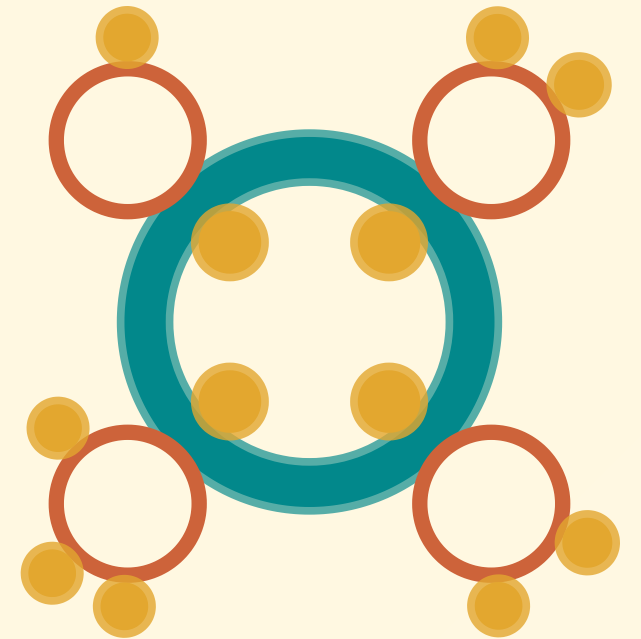
Sociocracy

- Governance is performed by circles or committees for specific topics
- Can include a governance circle
- Management is performed by circles
- Decisions are made via modified consensus



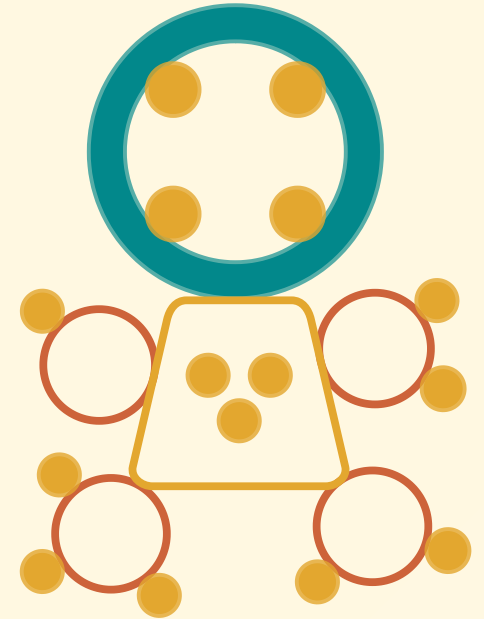
Elected Board with Shared Governance

- Members elect a board of directors
- Members retain a form of membership-wide governance
- Regular (monthly/quarterly/annual) member meetings
- Managed by empowered committees



Elected Board

- Members elect a board of directors
- Members ratify big decisions at member meetings
- CEO and managers accountable to membership
- Majority rule (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order)



Governance

Decision	Executive Director	Board of Directors	Worker-Owners	Management Council	Recommended places or people where you can provide input
Financial					
Create Annual Budget	D	R		I	Department head
Change Annual Budget > 7%	D	R		I	Department head
Out of Budget Borrowing > 15% of Equity	D	R			OED, Board member
Allocate Annual Class A Patronage Rebate	I	D	I		W/O Coordinator, Board member
Allocate Annual Class B Dividend	I	D			Investor Council, OED, Board Member
Personnel					
Set or Amend Personnel Policy	I	D			Personnel Committee, OED
Change Salary Max. to Min. Ratio	I	D	I		W/O Coordinator, Board rep
Define Compensation Structure	D	R			Department headm Board member
Define Compensation Philosophy	I	D	I		
Corporate Organization					
Amend Articles of Incorporation		D	D		W/O Meeting, Board Member
Amend Bylaws		D	D		W/O Meeting, Board Member
Elect Directors to the Board			D		W/O Meeting
Elect Chair of the Board of Directors		D			Board member
Hire Executive Director(s)		D	I		Board member
Elect Company Officers		D			Board member
Appoint Education Committee Chair			D		
Appoint Personnel Committee Chair		D			

Sample Decisions

1. Changing family leave policy
2. Changing retirement benefits
3. Admitting a new member

Report Back

What were your decisions?

Who makes those decisions?

How is power shared?

Questions and Answers

Community Connections

- Tech Workers Coalition
<https://techworkerscoalition.org>
- US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC)
<https://www.usworker.coop>
- Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI)
<https://institute.coop>
- Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (NoBAWC)
<https://nobawc.org>

Thank you!
doc@minifast.co
@ohrite



Skill Building

- Democratic Management: A Practical Guide
[Democracy at Work Institute](#) · [PDF](#)
- Co-op Structure and Decision Making
[US Federation of Worker Cooperatives](#) · [PDF](#)
- Introduction to Sociocracy
[Sociocracy for All](#) · [PDF](#)
- History of Cooperatives (Dr. Brett Fairbairn)
[YouTube](#) · [PDF](#)

Workbook

- This Slide Deck
[PDF](#)
- Membership and Trial Period
[Excel](#) · [Google Docs](#)
- Governance Matrix
[Excel](#) · [Google Docs](#)
- Operating Agreement
[Excel](#) · [Google Docs](#)