

Steal This Co-op Talk

History, Discussion, and Toolkit

<https://coopguide.org>



Solidarity

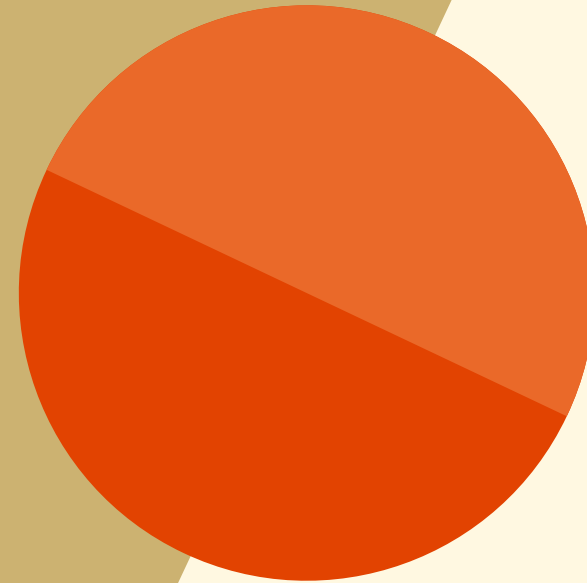
We meet today on the unceded territory of the Ramaytush Ohlone. We affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples. The process of colonization is ongoing in the Bay Area.

Cooperatives seek to build an alternative economic and social structure that bring communities together in solidarity.

You may individually express solidarity by paying the Yakult (Village) Land Tax: <https://www.ramaytush.org/donate.html>

Agenda

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



MINISTRY
of
VELOCITY

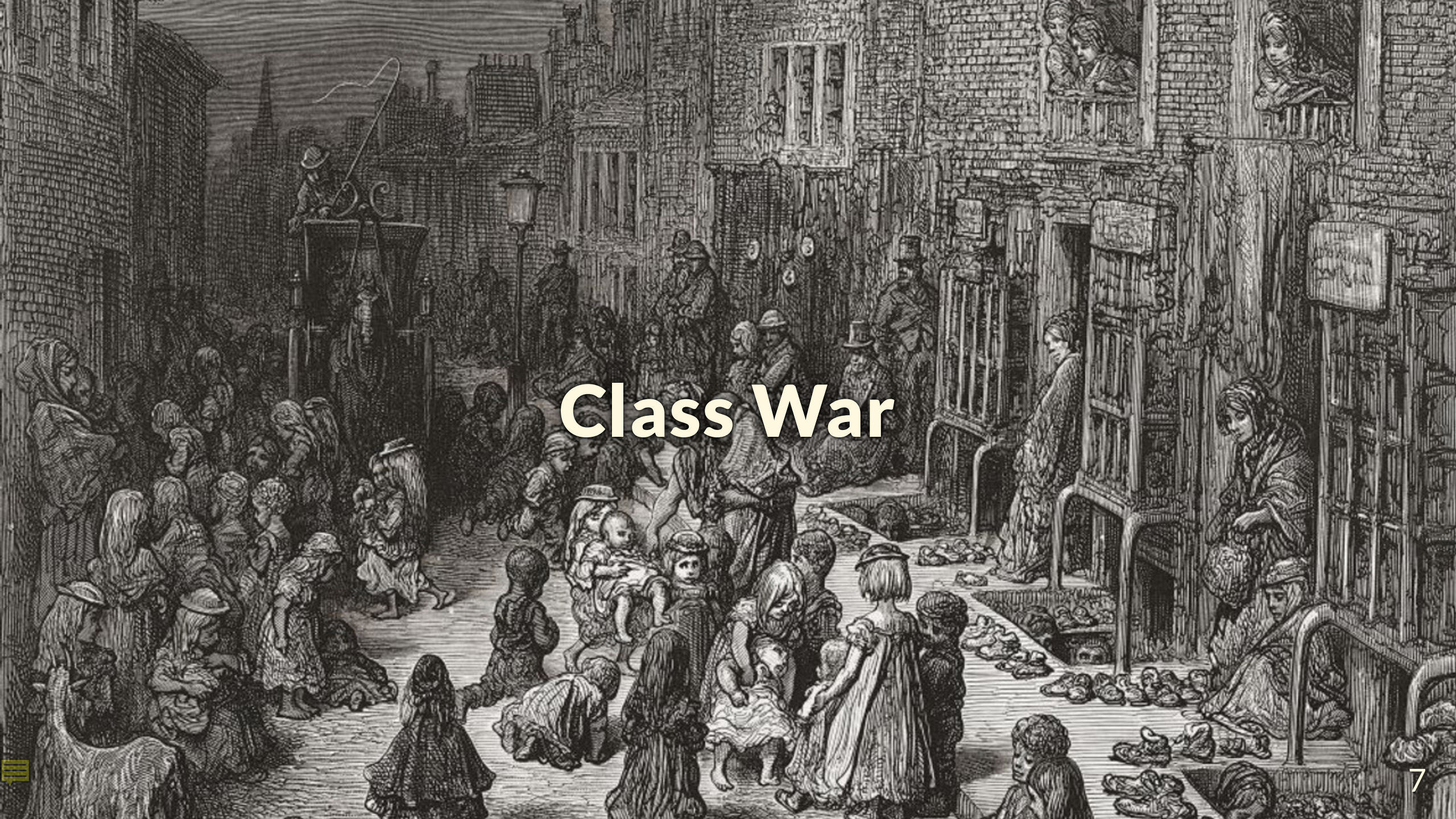


Familiarity



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.

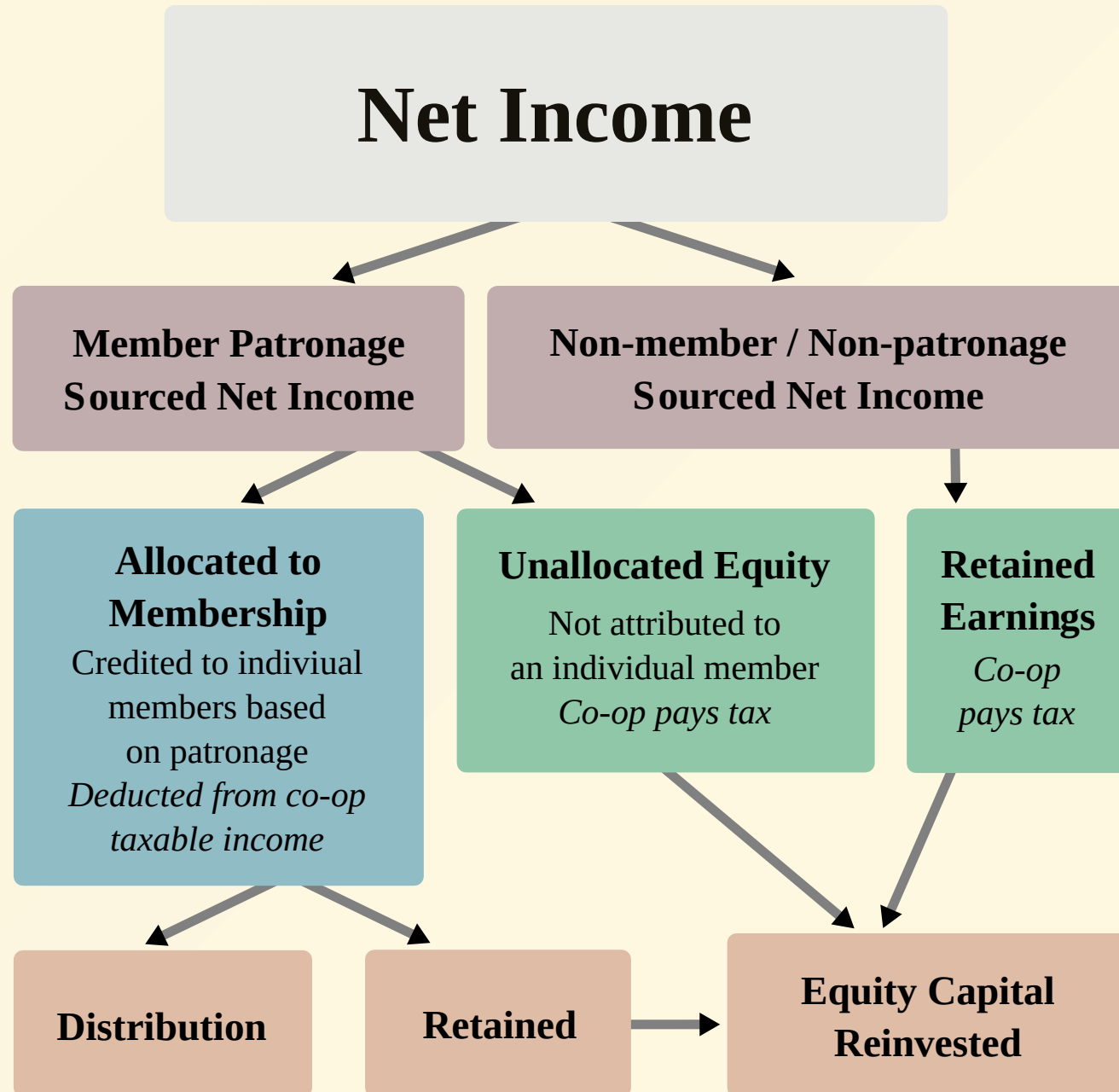
Missing that knowledge can make these topics uncomfortable. Your co-op lives or dies based on your how you respond as a group.

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. ”



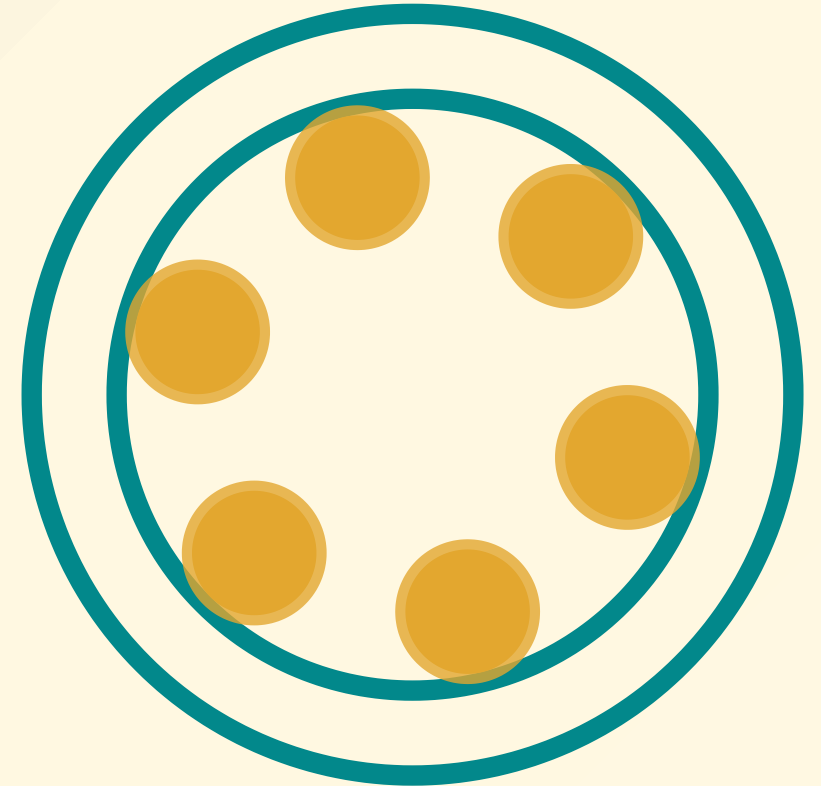
Operations

Governance sets strategic vision and policies

Management handles day-to-day operations and implements policy

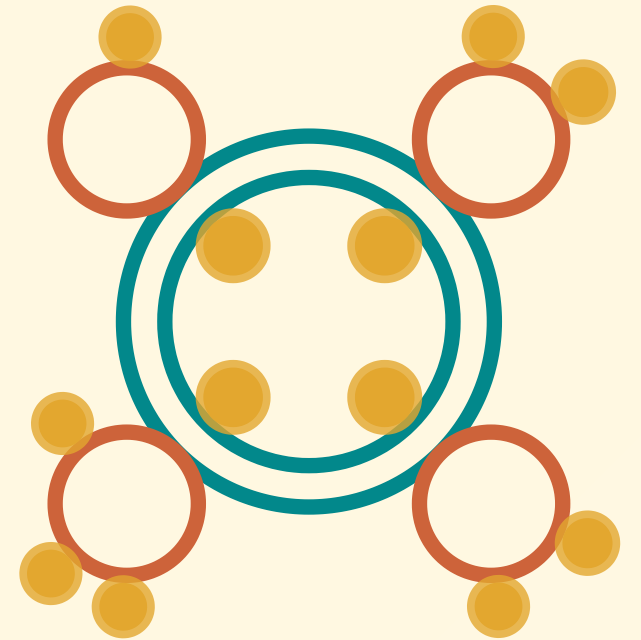
Collective

- 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



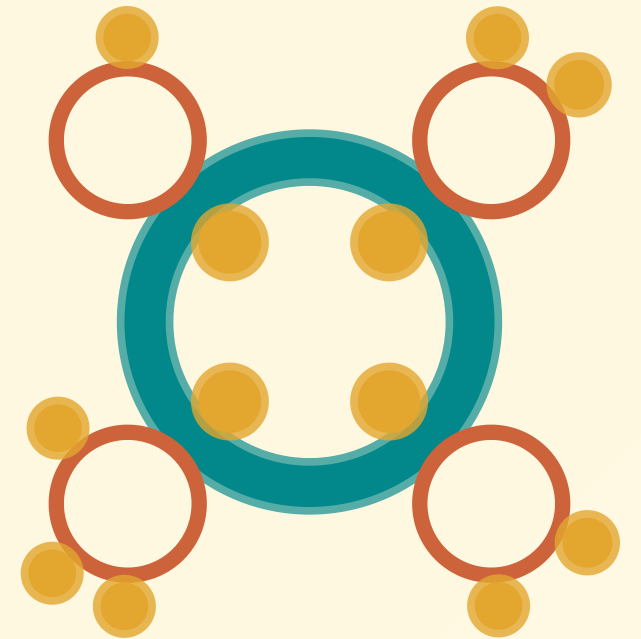
Sociocracy

- 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



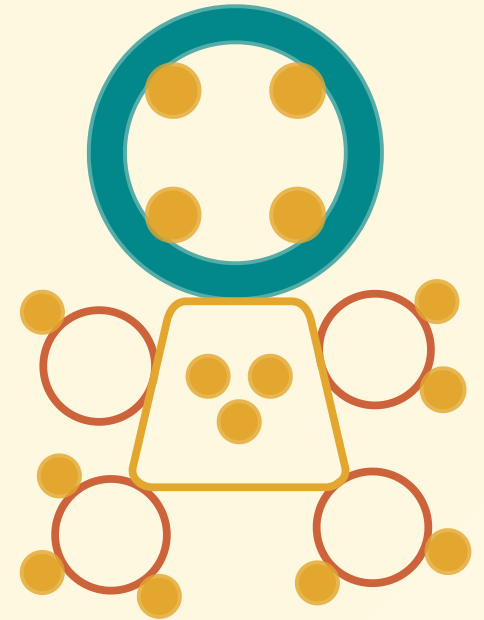
Elected Board with Shared Governance

- 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. Hiring and firing

Report Back

What were your decisions?

Who makes those decisions?

How is power shared?

Questions and Answers

Community Connections

- US Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC)
<https://www.usworker.coop>
- Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI)
<https://institute.coop>
- Agaric Show and Tell
<https://agaric.coop/show-and-tell>
- Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (NoBAWC)
<https://nobawc.org>

Thank you
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@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](#)