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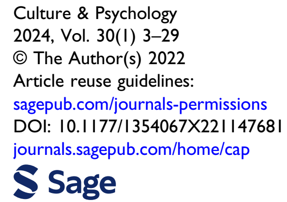

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Community versus society: The normative vision of sociality in joint self-education

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Abstract

In this theoretical essay, I argue that the normative sociality – i.e., a normative way of being together – for joint self-education is *society* based on pluralism and tolerance of culturally and educationally diverse communities and individual educatees, their synergy, voluntary participation, and acceptance of the final sovereignty of their educational decision-making. I rejected a widespread proposal that *community* (e.g., "community of learners") should be the vision of this norm for such educational sociality. At the same time, I accept that an empirical community can be a very important part of a normative notion of society as applied to joint self-education. Balancing between communal, often centripetal, and societal, often centrifugal, processes is often necessary for maintaining a successful joint self-education endeavor.

Keywords

Community, society, transcendence, freedoms, joint self-education, progressive education, democratic education, normative educational sociality

Introduction

In a series of my recent philosophical articles, I argued that genuine education is always self-education in which an educatee decides with or without help from other people whether to study, what to study, why to study, how to study, with whom to study, when to study, where to study, and so on (Matusov, 2020b, 2020c, 2021b; Shugurova et al., 2022). My major argument is that a particular insight or learning becomes educational only if,

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when, and until the educatee positively appreciates it. Further, I developed and discussed the five major types of self-education: (1) *autodidact,* when the educatee studies alone, (2) *symdidact,* when the educatee studies with more or less equal peers-educatees, (3) *autodidact with advisement,* when the educatee asks for advisement of a trusted person about the study's matters, (4) *odigosdidact,* when the educatee studies under the guidance of a trusted educator, (5) *autopaternalism*, when the educatee asks a trusted person to push the educatee to study what the educatee wants to study (Matusov, 2022a, 2022b). These five major types of self-education can mix in different configurations. Except for the exclusively autodidact type, all other types and their mixtures involve educational sociality, the social relationships facilitating (or, at times, hindering) the involved educatee's self-education. This sociality of joint self-education is based on the conditional relationships of trust and consent, which can be withdrawn by the educatee at any moment.

What is the nature of this educational sociality, a way of being together for the participants of a joint educational endeavor? In the mainstream, *conventional* foisted education that does not recognize self-education, the educational sociality is normatively viewed as modeled after *a hierarchical institution* with the teacher at the top of the classroom. The teacher is assigned the task of the main manager by this hierarchical institution, e.g., "classroom management." In this hierarchical institution, normatively, the teacher makes all educational, organizational, and relational decisions, often justified by meritocratic and paternalistic ideologies. In practice, the teacher's power is limited and structured by the hierarchical educational institution – the teacher is viewed as a conduit of institutional power. Inside the classroom, the teacher often employs impersonal rules and arbitrary decisions that are met by students' resistance, conformity, smuggling, and so on (Matusov, 2011). It is rather obvious why a hierarchical institute as educational sociality does not fit the joint self-education. Firstly, the institutional hierarchy would prevent the educatee from educational self-determination. Secondly, the institutional hierarchy prevents educatees' collective meta-decision-making about how to make collective decisions about whether to study, what to study, how to study, and so on. Thirdly, the teacher's educational paternalism violates the teacher's fiduciary duty toward the educatees, which is so necessary for self-education: it is not based on the educatee's trust and consent (Matusov, 2022a, 2022b).

In innovative, *progressive* manipulative education, which also denies self-education (Matusov, 2021a), educational sociality is normatively modeled often after a *community* that has shared cultural and educational values, practices, traditions, routines, lifestyles, and goals. It is expected that this community, which is shaped by the progressive teacher, would regulate all educational, organizational, and relational decisions in "a community of learners" (Brown, 1997; Brown & Campione, 1994, 1998; Matusov et al., 2012). Although the community as a model is normative sociality for progressive education, so far, it has not been examined whether it fits, what I call, joint self-education.

Neither conventional nor progressive education recognizes the legitimacy of self-education. Progressive education mistrusts the student's ignorant, capricious, and immature decisin-making about whether what, and why to study. It employs the teacher's manipulation of the student's subjectivity to make them study what the teacher wants them to study: "let [the student] always think he is master while you are really master"

advised the father of Progressive Education Jean Jacques Rousseau to a progressive teacher (Rousseau, 1979, p. 120).

My overall inquiry here was to figure out the normative sociality of joint self-education. I propose here that the normative sociality of *joint self-education* should be modeled by its organizers after *society*, which involves individual strangers and strange communities with their distinct and different cultural practices, lifestyles, values, and traditions that peacefully co-exist with each other, benefit from each other's self-studies, recognize the spaces of each other privacy and sovereignty, and organize itself for joint educational enterprises and management of expected unavoidable and even beneficial disagreements and conflicts. I got this insight from Jim Rietmulder, a co-founder of a democratic[1] school "The Circle School" near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, when he described his democratic school as "a scaled-down society[2]": "In democratic schools, kids practice life in a scaled-down society, with relative independence from parents and home" (Rietmulder, 2019, p. 222). However, later, Jim admitted to me that he did not see much difference between the notions of "community" and "society," often using them interchangeably, when he coined this wording (Rietmulder, personal communication, January 1, 2022).

In the rest of the paper, I will examine the relationship between community and society as possible norms for educational sociality for joint self-education.

A community of learners in a progressive school

This section represents the rebuke to my previous, ten-year-old, theoretical work with my collaborators (Matusov, et al., 2012) arguing that educational sociality of joint self-education normatively fits a "community of learners." In this article, my colleagues and I offered a typology of the existing normative projects of a "community of learners" (CoL). We came to the two major types of CoL: (1) instrumental CoL and (2) ontological CoL. In the instrumental CoL type, there is a discontinuity between educational and communal natures. Education is often defined conventionally, non-communally, as the students' arrival at the curricular endpoints preset by the teacher, school, and/or state (e.g., so-called educational standards or learning outcomes) that can be instrumentally used for some other, often remote, ends (e.g., employment, democracy, upward social mobility). Meanwhile, the community is defined non-educationally as caring, division of labor, or engagement: each of the listed aspects constituting subtypes of instrumental CoL. For example, in the Fostered Community of Learners project developed by Ann L. Brown and her colleagues, the students were asked to discuss texts assigned by the teacher in small groups. Each student in the group had a particular division of labor role, also assigned by the teacher. Although Brown acknowledged that comprehension and interpretation of a text involves a communal nature (Brown, 1994), the assessment of the students' learning was based on the tests developed by the researchers in advance outside of the communal processes of comprehension and interpretation. It was expected that the group must come to a conventional or normatively "correct" consensus. Also, the authors of the 2012 article challenged Brown and her colleagues about the nature and quality of the students' engagement in the assigned learning tasks.

In contrast, in the ontological CoL type, education and community mutually define each other:

> …In this ontological communal approach, learning is viewed as students joining and transforming the targeted practices and their attending discourses, developing their specific voices in these practices, and becoming competent participants in these practices and discourses (C. A. Brown & Borko, 1992; Chinnappan, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991) through transformation of the students' subjectivities and reshaping their knowledge (Chinnappan, 2006; Jonassen, 1997; Matusov & Smith, 2007). In an ontological CoL paradigm, learning is understood as ill-defined, unlimited, relational, authorial, personal, polycultural, contested, non- limited in time and space, involving multiple emergent goals, eventful, and distributed in diverse times, spaces, people, networks of practices, discourses, and topics, and through diverse mediums (Cuthell, 2002; Heath & McLoughlin, 1994; Matusov, 2011; Matusov, St. Julien, Lacasa, & Alburquerque Candela, 2007; Owens & Wang, 1996; Wenger, 1998). It contrasts with a non-CoL vision of learning common for conventional mainstream schooling in which learning is often seen as well-defined, self-contained, agreement-based, objective, non-problematic, proprietary, monocultural, limited in time and space, involving one preset goal, and lesson-, classroom-, one medium- and one topic-center, and occurs in the individual head of the student. Consensus, agreement, and shared understanding are not seen as a desired outcome or markers of learning in the ontological CoL paradigm (Kerka, 1996). Instead, the goal of the school is not just to promote learning in the students but also to note the students' growing pleasure and deep personal interest in learning and intellectual reflection as becoming essential to their lives (Barth, 2000; Kerka, 1996). A learner is viewed in the CoL paradigm as the final agent of their own learning (Fullan, 1993; Klag, 1994; Matusov, 1999). The ontological CoL's definition of learning contradicts the conventional school definition of learning (Matusov, et al., 2012, pp. 53–54).

The authors defined learning in the ontological CoL dialogically: as promoting the students' creative and critical authorship, voice, and socialization in the targeted practices, and/or critical examination of these practices (they developed this point further in their article). They distinguished two subtypes of ontological CoL: (a) dialogic (in a narrow sense) where the students mainly learn in response to the teacher-initiated provocations and (b) polyphonic (the term borrowed from Bakhtin and developed by Morrison and Emerson, see Bakhtin, 1999; Morson & Emerson, 1990) where students set themselves on self-initiated "learning journeys" assisted by the teacher and by the peers.

According to the authors of the 2012 essay about CoL, ontological CoLs are not based on shared understanding or consensus but rather on "the consciousnesses with equal rights" (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 6) and on taking each other contributions seriously even when they disagree with or not fully understand one another. In a way, in ontological CoL, community becomes "community behind" for developing the students' unique voices (Matusov, 2009): "The students do not only become recognized by others as legitimate by how they participate but also by how they transform the practice and its discourse. The quality and success of the students' contributions – their replies and challenges – are judged and defined by the community itself (that often extends beyond the limits of the

classroom) in evaluative dialogic replies of the involved proponents, opponents, and those who have to be convinced about the importance of the unfolding tensions (Latour, 1987; Matusov, 2009)" (Matusov, et al., 2012, p. 58).

However, with the 10-year distance, now I can see many blind spots in the notion of ontological CoLs that I developed back then with my colleagues. The first problem with this notion is that it is the educationalist, not an educatee, who defines what (good) learning is, which goes against the authors' claim that the educatee is the final agency for their own education. An educatee might define learning differently than the advocates of the ontological CoL. For example, an educatee might define their desired learning as training, closed socialization in practice without much creativity, or attaining credentials (Matusov, 2020c; Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2012). Meanwhile, in the 2012 article, the authors defined desired learning as the critical examination of life, self, world, and society. The imposed nature of the definition of good learning is a birthmark of conventional or progressive education (Matusov, 2021a).

The second, related, problem is that the ontological CoL requires an agreement or shared understanding of the definition of learning and of the need for learning as such. An educatee does not have the right of freedom to reject learning at any time in the concept of ontological CoL. If a learner cannot legitimately choose non-learning, it means that learning (and education) is imposed on them.

The third problem is that the authors' claim of the polycultural nature of ontological CoL contradicts the notion of community as the sociality of culture (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017). Community is the socium[3] in which a particular culture – a set of practice, behavioral, communicational, and relational patterns and values constituting its community – lives. Culture enacts, identifies, defines, and organizes a community and contrasts it with other communities. Thus, the authors' insistence on the polycultural nature of the ontological CoL means that, as a matter of fact, they called for transcendence of the community as CoL's normative sociality. A polycultural community is a misnomer – a contradiction of the terms. A community is a melting pot of cultures on their way to becoming a monoculture.

The fourth problem is that self-education can happen outside any immediate sociality, outside any community, – for example, in the form of an autodidact. Autodidacts can cooperate with others without forming any community.

The fifth problem is that the authors did not distinguish between the notions of "learning" and "education." Not every learning is educational. Not every education is learning-based (Matusov, 2021b).

Finally, the sixth problem is that my previous, 2009, notion of "community behind" (Matusov, 2009) promoting an educatee's unique and solid voice is metaphorical and not conceptual. People who take an educatees' contributions seriously do not necessarily need to constitute a community: they do not need to know each other or be united by any culture to develop their unique voice.

What is amazing is that the authors sensed most of the problems in their 2012 article. Their article ends with a list of unresolved problems with their notion of ontological CoL in the Conclusion section: "We see potential problems with our polyphonic ontological CoL as well. For instance, in a sense, we may be forcing a particular form of enculturation

of students' subjectivities (Osberg & Biesta, 2010) normalizing a form of agency not desired by some students or communities (Kukathas, 2003). We have positioned learners as 'inquirers' – a characterization that deserves to be problematized" (Matusov, et al., 2012, p. 63). They sensed that they were imposing the definition of learning not only on the educationalist society (NB!) but also on educatees, "As a reader may suspect by now, our own bias is toward ontological CoL in general and polyphonic ontological CoL more specifically. The reason for that is because we are committed to education for agency and critical dialogue focusing on transcending any known norms, values, and practices and testing ideas (Matusov, 2009; 2011; Matusov et al., 2016)" (Matusov, et al., 2012, p. 63). In listing the conditions for the polyphonic ontological CoL, the authors actually promote a legitimate possibility for an educatee's divorce from a community: "*Legitimacy of and respect for the students' non-participation and non-cooperation*, at least at some point (otherwise, participation is always suspected to be forced, and this can be a burden for the students for their initiatives)" (Matusov, et al., 2012, p. 61).

In sum, the authors' notion of "ontological CoL" is contradictory and unstable. There are two possible attractors in which this notion can collapse, in my view. First, if the notion of community as the normative of its educational sociality of education prevails over the authors' calls for plurality and the educatee's self-determination, the ontological CoL will collapse into Progressive Education. In Progressive Education, the educatees' subjectivity is manipulated by the teacher OR by the other educatee – i.e., by the community – in believing that the educatee makes a free choice in defining their own education. As the father of Progressive Education, French philosopher Jacques Jan Rousseau advised a progressive teacher with regard to their student, "let him always think he is master while you are really master" (Rousseau, 1979, p. 120). In essence, community as the normative sociality of education denies self-education.

The second possible attractor for the contradictory and unstable notion of ontological CoL is to abandon community as a normative educational sociality of self-education altogether. A further section is my effort to develop an alternative normative sociality for joint self-education. But before that, I want to comment on the legitimate role and importance of the notion of community in joint self-education, when the community is NOT normative for this educational sociality.

The role and importance of community as a particular educational sociality for joint self-education

A community can be a particular form of educational sociality to organize joint self-education. A group of educatees can unite together to study some particular subject or inquiry or practice. They can consciously involve themselves in collaborative learning (Matusov & Pease-Alvarez, 2020). They may want to deliberately involve each other in developing a shared understanding and consensus on a particular issue of their shared interest. They may want to stick with a particular topic. They may want to be productive. They may want to commit to a particular collective organization. They do not mind forming a particular unifying and distinguished culture offor their collective studies. They

may want to negotiate the tension between the centrifugal nature and the centripetal nature of the community (Bakhtin, 1991) through a series of agreements.

This empirical ontological community of learners has its beginning and end. A community can emerge and can die. It can be a supernova explosion of the collective exploration of freely chosen interests that happened to be overlapping with or inflicted on each other. It can also fade by either extinguishing an educatee's self-education or diffusing the sense of community. This is an organic community, Gemeinschaft (Tönnies, 1887). The organic community is an event. Alternatively, the community can be imposed on the participating educatees (e.g., through sociocracy, see Shread & Osório, 2018). In this case, the community can become mechanical in its nature, sliding into Progressive Education. The purely mechanical community is an organization,[4] Gesellschaft (Tönnies, 1887). The organic and mechanical community can oscillate or even go hand-in-hand as a hybrid.

In developing a sociocultural notion of trust, Sztompka (1999) specifies that the moral, spiritual community is a special form of relationship with people, whom we define as "us." There are three types of moral obligations: trust – the expectation of virtuous behavior on the part of others in relation to us; fidelity – the desire not to abuse the trust placed on us and to fulfill the duties assigned to us as acceptance of someone else's trust; solidarity – the concern for the interests of other people and willingness to act in the name of others, even if it is contrary to our interests.

Phenomenologically, I, as a participant, feel "a sense of a community" when my thinking, ideas, feelings, perceptions, emotions, experiences, worldviews, values, concerns, worries, pains, and joys are unconditionally, but genuinely, supported and shared by "my people," – i.e., people whose responses I value as significant for me, constituting "my community." The community nurtures my actions, deeds, contributions, half-baked thoughts, and so on. The community soothes my wounds and disappointments – it comforts but also conforms me to the community. The community accepts me as its child. The community chooses me over truth or justice. The community provides kinship without necessarily having blood or family connection. The community amplifies me. The community collaborates with me. The community mobilizes over my interests, concerns, needs, and aspirations. The community trusts in me. The community is proud of me. In a community, I "very much need[] not only to be liked but to be thought well of" (Ryan, 2013, p. 61). Of course, my relationship with my community is mutual. I am expected to support, collaborate, accept, and be mobilized by the people of my community – unconditionally and genuinely – as I expect it from them. The community and I are interdepended on each other. Through this interdependence, the community stabilizes, secures, and disciplines me and other participants in the community.

Of course, another side of the community can be dark or grey. The community can generate groupthink. The community can create an echo chamber. The community can produce illusions and delusions (i.e., a distortion or rejection of reality), corruption, and injustice directed at outsiders or the communal outcasts. The community can promote xenophobia. The community can naturalize its own culture, making outsiders lesser humans. The community often produces "naïve" ethnocentrism: everything that is non-communal is abnormal, perverted, and non- or, at least, lesser humane. For example,

Ancient Greeks called non-Greeks “barbarians” because Greeks seemed to believe that non-Greeks could not humanely talk but produced incomprehensible sounds “bar-bar-bar.” Similarly, Slavic people call Germans literally “mutes” – people who can’t speak (немцы, nemtsy, in Russian). In many cultures, the name for their ethnos in their native language is “humans[5],” implying that outsiders are non-humans or lesser humans.

Although some communities may allow a rather extensive range of normative degrees of freedom for their members where members of a community can have a legitimate and tolerable diversity of their views, practices, and norms (see for examples: Graeber & Wengrow, 2021), it is still difficult for a community member to transcend or disagree with the community’s core culture, while remaining in the community because all the communal support can be withdrawn and hostility, leading to ostracism may start. A Chinese-American writer Amy Tan demonstrated the power of community for a person’s voice in her autobiographical novel “The joy luck club” (Tan, 2019). In the book, Tan told a story of a little girl, her cousin Waverly Jang, who lived in San Francisco in the late 1950s. The girl started playing chess when she was 6. Quickly, her mastery of chess, supported by her mother, attracted local and then national attention. Waverly won contest after contest. She learned to see traps and opportunities for her attacks and distractions through the chess pieces’ positions on the sixty-four black-and-white squares. Her mother recognized the importance of the game. She released Waverly from any home choirs, transferring the choirs to Waverly’s older brothers, giving Waverly the best room in the house, and securing her chess studies.

The mother was very proud of Waverly. She kept the trophies clean and polished, cut and saved all articles in the local and national press about Waverly’s achievements, and did not hesitate to inform all her neighbors and relatives about Waverly’s chess successes. Waverly had an enormous power to believe in herself to be better than anybody although often her opponents were bigger, older, and more experienced – it did not matter for Waverly. When Waverly played with much-much older opponents during chess contests, she often glanced at her mother sitting among the audience for confidence and support. Although the mother did not know much about chess, she gave Waverly a piece of philosophical advice and life secrets on how to defeat her opponents. The chess community expected that Waverly would become the first woman to achieve the title of a chess grandmaster. The title was within Waverly’s reach.

When Waverly Jang was 9 or 10, she started feeling embarrassed by her mother bragging about her chess successes in front of neighbors and relatives. Also, Waverly felt that, at times, her mother was stealing her successes and attributed them to herself through her support, her advice, and her smartness. Once, when they bumped into a neighbor, the mother showed the neighbor the cover of *Life* magazine with Waverly’s photo – Waverly publicly rebelled. Waverly yelled at her mother that she was using her to show off. It created a breakdown in their relations. The mother demonstratively stopped talking or noticing her daughter. Waverly announced that she had stopped playing chess to win her mother back. However, her mother did not get in. Agonizing, Waverly retreated and promised to play chess again:

> "I am ready to play chess again," I announced to her. I had imagined she would smile and then ask me what special thing I wanted to eat.
>
> But instead, she gathered her face into a frown and stared into my eyes, as if she could force some kind of truth out of me.
>
> "Why do you tell me this?" she finally said in sharp tones. "You think it is so easy. One day quit, next day play. Everything for you is this way. So smart, so easy, so fast."
>
> "I said I'll play," I whined.
>
> "No!" she shouted, and I almost jumped out of my scalp. "It is not so easy anymore" (Tan, 2019, p. 190).

After Waverly got seriously sick, her mother apparently reconciled with her, but still, she stopped supporting Waverly's chess playing. Waverly continued playing chess but, without her mother's support and interest, she lost all her self-confidence and power. She stopped seeing opportunities on the chess board but only could see her doubts, mistakes, and weaknesses. At 14, Waverly stopped playing chess for good[6].

Apparently, Waverly's mother constituted "a community behind" for Waverly's chess education. She gave her daughter confidence, security, protection, resources, pride, and the meaning of the chess play. These conditions helped Waverly develop her own unique and powerful "chess voice" – authorship in the chess play practice. The community behind nurtures one's voice. When Waverly refused to share her victory triumphs with her mother, the mother withdrew her support, her "community behind," and Waverly "chess voice" collapsed. When a person (e.g., a student) does not feel such a community behind a particular educational practice, the person faces difficulty and discouragement in developing their voice in the targeted practice and, in turn, often tries to resist, disengage, and/or exit out from the alienated practice. The unity of the actions and the mobilization for the actions collapse. Like in Waverly's case, this person usually hears hostile internal voices challenging and undermining their confidence. Waverly noticed her own weaknesses and mistakes instead of seeing opportunities for an attack on the chessboard as it was before. It is very consuming to reply to hostile internal voices rather than express yourself in a unified and solid way (cf. the notion of "excessive dialogism," in Bakhtin, 1999). In my view, Tan's story about Waverly Jang and her mother represents a cautionary tale about the recognition of the community behind in a person's unique voice. At the same time, I think that Tan's entire novel "The Joy Luck Club" also points out at the suffocating effect of the neat community life.

Society as a normative sociality

Historically, "society" (or "civilization") has emerged as a voluntary union, coalition, of diverse communities that come to live together in peace, eventually forming a city. Society involves mutual aid, social cooperation, civic activism, hospitality or simply caring for others among its culturally and even politically diverse communities and

individual members. Society provides a synergy of culturally diverse communities and individual participants (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021).

Societal pluralism and diversity

The marker of society is pluralism: the expectation, tolerance, and legitimacy of cultural differences. This pluralism is based on acceptance of disagreements, acknowledgment of a lack of understanding, and expectation of (positive and negative) prejudices about each other's cultural values, practices, ways of communication, traditions, and norms. For example, in a democratic school "The Circle School" (TCS), which runs as "a scaled-down society," pluralism is the central principal of school life:

> Some alternative schools want to impose their own ideology or worldview on everyone, or at least everyone in their school. Or the school attracts ideologically similar families and repels others. Some schools encourage parents to adopt a certain child-rearing practices at home. In contrast, The Circle School explicitly welcomes a spectrum of worldviews, ideologies, and lifestyles – related to child-rearing, politics, religion, education, food, health, and so on – including many that may not seem to align with the school's methods. This principle of worldview pluralism seems essential for democratic education – and also essential for education in national democracies.
>
> We're very clear about saying The Circle School is intended as a public space for kids. It's not an extension of home and family. The school does not intend to be in collaboration with parents to engineer their children's education. This is a "public" space for kids, and we call attention to that. And that might create friction between parents and students. At home, parents may expect their children to do X, Y, and Z, or even expect them to do certain things at school. But life at school is different. We don't expect continuity or consistency of expectations of kids between home and school, and the school doesn't enforce parents' preferences on their kids at school. For students, their Circle School experience is practicing life – autonomy "out in the world" apart from home and family, navigating the "real world" on their own terms, given their own interests, hopes, burdens, and joys. Being explicit about this upfront with families helps to open up conversations between the school and parents and also within families, maybe making it less difficult to navigate points of friction when they come up. By the way, both the talking about and the actuality of this separation between home and school tend to enlarge kids' awareness of what's possible in their lives, and the cognitive ability to step back and see a bigger picture partially freed from the norms and expectations of life at home.
>
> The Circle School calls itself a scaled-down rendition of the larger world. This stance as a society or platform or venue, rather than a curricular program, makes the school not simply another flavor of schooling to be compared side-by-side, apples-to-apples, with other alternatives. It's what Integral Theory calls "second tier," because, in a sense, it's not in competition with other alternative educational methods. Instead, the venue approach – a post-curricular meta-alternative – accommodates and embraces all the others. It's inherently pluralistic. Just as a concert hall (a venue) can host any genre of music, The Circle School can

> host any “genre” of education and can support the needs, hopes, and aspirations of a wide variety of families and children.
>
> The Circle School’s pluralism applies in another, subtler way, too, not about society or family, but within the school day, having to do with children’s development and the characteristic worldviews they hold at various points in their development. Just as the world at large is layered with several worldviews, the school, too, includes several discernible worldviews in its population of students from 4 years to around 19 years old. Although each child’s growth processes and timing are unique, patterns emerge, as developmental studies have shown. Generally, our youngest children arrive at school with a developing or developed concrete and literal way of understanding the world perhaps focused on rules and roles and authority figures, which later gives way to less literal understandings and then, typically around adolescence, a greater orientation to peers and social persona. Some teens develop consciously principled ways of seeing and being in an even wider circle of attention and care. In our age-mixed one-space school – no sorting of students by age or grade, and everyone sharing the same space and resources – every student must navigate among others who see the world differently. This intramural pluralism is multidimensional – in cognition, emotion, intellect, physicality, school politics, and much more – and cultivates development along many lines. Immersing kids in pluralism in school seems exquisitely right for America’s pluralistic, democratic, contentious society (Jim Rietmulder, personal communication, September 3, 2022).

Societal pluralism is not just another worldview, another cultural value, among other worldviews or cultural values because it accepts its opposition, – ideological-philosophical monism, – as a particular, but limited, way of legitimate societal being in the society, while not allowing this opposition to take over the society and, thus, turn it into a community. Societal pluralism is a meta-relational principle, a meta-value of the legitimacy, tolerance, synergy, and peaceful co-existence of diversity, disagreements, and lack of understanding among individual people and communities. This societal pluralism of normative acceptance of the diversity of paradigmatic cultural values affords (but does not guarantee) safe opportunities for students to become curious about and explore the rich diversity of worldviews, ideologies, world perceptions, values, and cultures that exist inside their society-school, at home, local communities and the world as a whole.

The word “civilization” relates to the Latin word “civitas” or “city.” This is why the most basic definition of “civilization” is “a society made up of cities.” *Civility* (Latin) or *politeness* (Greek) means to be kind, nice, supportive, tolerant, respectful, and peaceful to a stranger despite non-understanding, rejection, disagreements with their cultural values, practices, traditions, language, views, and so on. Both come from the word “city” (in Latin) or “polis” (in Greek)[7].

Society allows people to stay outside of any community or form new communities inside of it. For example, society also often accepts foreigners (i.e., friendly strangers, “friengers”) temporarily or permanently, who are outsiders of the communities (e.g., tribes) constituting the city, without the necessity for them to be adopted by and socialize in any community of the city[8]. Society recognizes the sovereignty of its communities and

individual citizens. Of course, such societal relations preexisted with the emergence of cities and were apparently common among tribes establishing a union (e.g., the Five Nations – a confederacy of Iroquoian Indians). However, cities brought this peaceful coexistence of culturally diverse communities to a new, much more intense, and prolonged level (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021).

Dialogue-disagreement and promoting a unique voice

In contrast to the community, society promotes both dialogue-agreement and dialogue-disagreement (Kurganov, 2009). Dialogue-agreement involves mostly nurturing, supporting, collaborating, and building on each other's ideas. Dialogue-agreement unconditionally[9] nurtures a participant's voice (cf. "community behind" discussed above). Although disagreements may occur in dialogue-agreement, they are viewed as temporary to be eventually overcome by arriving at an agreement. Dialogue-agreement is a normative discourse of community. While the community is defined by its highest values put on agreement and collaboration, society is defined by its highest values placed on disagreement and pluralism (Matusov & Pease-Alvarez, 2020).

One relevant discussion has been going on among educators involved in promoting "self-directed education" is the organization of decision-making: e.g., democratic decision-making by majority through voting (democracy in a narrow sense, "democracy" with small "d") or by consent (sociocracy) (Shread & Osório, 2018). In a democracy (small "d"), people develop, discuss, deliberate, and persuade each other about diverse solutions, actions, decisions, and approaches and then vote on the emergent or presented options. Majority votes defines the winning solution which is imposed on the dissenting minority. This democratic imposition is viewed as legitimate in a democracy. When someone stops seeing it as legitimate, they can leave society or split and start a new one. In contrast, in sociocracy, the participants deliberate on the emergent or presented option until either ALL give their consent on the dominant solution, indicating either they agree or, at least can live with this option, or one person can veto it. The veto returns the participant either to an impasse or the generation of a new solution. I argue that democracy is a societal organization of collective decision-making because the societal disagreements are legitimate, unsuppressed, and clearly enunciated in a public space among frenemies (i.e., friendly enemies). Meanwhile, I insist that sociocracy is a communal organization of collective decision-making because societal consent – a form of agreement – is prioritized, disagreements are suppressed, while harmony among friends is restored. Sociocracy (literally, power of the socium) hides impositions making the execution of power invisible and informal[10]. Sociocracy transforms dialogue-disagreement into dialogue-agreement.

Dialogue-disagreement involves mainly challenging each other ideas to test them. Although it may lead to an agreement, this development is not normative and is viewed as accidental rather than desired. Dialogue-disagreement often involves diverse irreconcilable paradigms based on radically different values (Kuhn, 1996). The goal of dialogue-disagreement is not to convince each other and not to come to an agreement (although it

may occur occasionally) but rather to provide each other with a challenging perspective outside of the presented paradigm to provoke a response that may strengthen the challenged paradigm (or destroy it). Dialogue-disagreement strengthens a participant's voice by responding to hostile but honest, well-intended challenges. One's voice is taken seriously, respected, challenged, and tested by a paradigmatic opponent (i.e., a freinemy) – this can be called strengthening one's voice "according to the Hamburg account[11]." Dialogue-disagreement involves the agonistic relationship of freinemies (i.e., friend-enemy) (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015; Mouffe, 2000). Society promotes both types of dialogue, but it legitimatizes and prioritizes the latter. Again, here I am talking here about society as a normative, rather than empirical, notion.

Let me provide a case of the relationship between the "community behind" and "according to the Hamburg account" processes in promoting a student's unique voice in a particular practice. Once, a doctoral graduate student asked me to help with his "writer's block" during his dissertation writing – he could not write his dissertation in "Academese" (a highly structured, typified, and formalized academic genre of writing). I tried to assure him that he did not need to do that – writing in his own voice would also be appropriate. He could not accept my advice. I suggested writing after his dictation, and he agreed. Thus, I became his scribe, writing diligently after his oral presentation of a fragment of his dissertation findings. When we finished, he read the text with disapproval. He disliked the text based on my transcription of his oral speech. He did not recognize and approve of the text as "academic." He dismissed my praise of his text as coming from an outlier, a "liberal" professor. The graduate student saw me as having too much of his community behind, too biased to be real. The community behind promotes a community-suitable, not fully unique, voice. I suggested he show the text to "more conservative," "no-nonsense" professors. He liked this idea and followed my advice. When they highly praised the text, he got very excited and started writing "on the wave" by himself – he wrote the first draft of his dissertation of several hundred pages in a week. In this advisement, I helped him legitimatize his unique and powerful academic voice by professionally backing it up, and amplifying it by acting as his "community behind." However, it was not enough for him. He wanted his unique authorship to be tested and recognized by his paradigmatic opponents as professionally valuable, "according to the Hamburg account" (Matusov, 2022a, 2022b). Thus, both a community and a society are needed for the process of the development of a student's voice.

Societal tensions

Society has two major pitfalls that may lead to its collapse: centripetal and centrifugal. Centripetal pitfall involves the danger of society collapsing into a community. For example, a particular community of a society may try to dominate society by trying to impose and monopolize its cultural values, practices, and norms – essentially trying to transform society into a community. Alternatively, a society may try to establish a mechanical community (e.g., institution) or develop an organic "hegemonic community" or a "compromise community." Legitimacy of cultural domination by a community is often challenged and questioned in a society unless a community completely destroys a

society through the cultural swallowing of the other communities in the city. The opposite pitfall for the existence of society is centrifugal – the disintegration of the society when the societal plurality stops being respected or when the societal synergy stops being appreciated. The two pitfalls are constant threats to the existence of society.

Freedoms of society

Genuine solo or joint self-education requires freedom for the educatees. In their discussion of what constitutes "a free person," historical anthropologists Graeber and Wengrow (2021) refer to the three primordial freedoms: "the freedom to move," including the freedom to move within, from, and in any particular human sociality (e.g., community, society, state); "the freedom to disobey orders," duties, and obligations (e.g., debts); and "the freedom to reorganize social relations," including making promises and imagining and enacting "other [apparently, better] forms of social existence."

> We also noted how the English word 'free' ultimately derives from a Germanic term meaning 'friend' – since, unlike free people, slaves cannot have friends because they cannot make commitments or promises. The freedom to make promises is about the most basic and minimal element of our third freedom, much as physically running away from a difficult situation is the most basic element of the first (Graeber & Wengrow, 2021).

In addition to their three types of freedom, I propose two more. After Aristotle, I would add the fourth freedom: the freedom from necessities, colonizing the totality of human life (Arendt, 1958; Matusov, 2020). Finally, society promotes a new, fifth, type of freedom: the freedom to transcend the communal values, practices, and norms while staying in the society, without being ostracized, suppressed, expelled, or even killed by the community whose culture is being transcended (and, thus, violated). German philosopher Max Stirner insisted that the freedom of thinking is rooted in personal safety from communal persecution, when the pursuit of an inquiry can be prioritized over the harmonious communal relations[12], "The thought is only my *own* when I have no hesitation about putting it in mortal danger at every moment, when I don't have to fear its loss as *a loss for me*, as a loss of me" (Stirner, 2017, p. 354, italics original). These five freedoms open a sociopolitical possibility for genuine education – self-education – when a person decides whether to study, why and for what end to study, what to study, when to study, with whom to study, and how to study (Matusov, 2020b, 2020c, 2021b).

Society as a normative sociality for joint self-education: In two examples

Here I provide two examples of how society as a normative sociality for joint self-education has been implemented in my university teaching at macro and micro levels. My first example of a diversity of educational regimes involves a macro level of education organization, while my second example of addressing paradigmatic differences within the classroom discourse involves a micro level.

Diversity of educational regimes

To address the plurality of educatees' decision-making about their own education in my undergraduate and graduate classes, I provide my students with four choices for their educational regime at our first class meeting:

1. Open Syllabus for self-responsible learners and lurkers, where students can make all decisions about their own education – what to study, how to study, with whom to study, when to study, including their final grade. Some Open Syllabus students can choose to come to the class meetings, but some not, studying at home by themselves or in groups. Some Open Syllabus students can choose parts of the Opening Syllabus (see below), I had designed, that they like but reject other parts. But some can develop their own Open Syllabus from scratch. I always emphasize that the Open Syllabus design is not a learning contract either with me or with themselves but rather the beginning of the unpredictable learning journey – an object of their change at any moment without a need to coordinate with or ask for permission from me. My role is to help them when and if they needed my help.
2. Opening the Syllabus for "other-responsible learners," where I made the initial decisions about the class organization and then gradually transferred responsibility to the students. In each class, the students decide what to study next by selecting a topic from the Curricular Map – a list of possible topics to study developed by previous students, my colleagues worldwide, my current students, and me. The students participating in this pedagogical regime can choose "virtual attendance" instead of attending the class meetings, which, in fact, generates possibilities for a variety of versions of the Opening Syllabus pedagogical regimes for the students based on their own choices, creativity, interest in the subject, and life circumstances. The students' participation in the class and its learning activities is imposed with the help of grades. In the middle of the semester, I schedule a "Mid-term Town Hall meeting" where the students can reflect on and improve the class using their democratic decision-making. The Opening Syllabus is the default pedagogical regime from which the students could switch.
3. Non-traditional Closed Syllabus for credential students who just want to be certified via passing exams, similar to receiving a driver's license. I provide support for the students' self-studies to pass the credential exams or, alternatively or in addition, they can attend the class meetings.
4. Non-Syllabus for "Prisoners of Education[13]," i.e., students who were forced to take this class by the university but felt that the course was unnecessary and painful. They were given any grade of their wish and said "goodbye" to avoid education being a "cruel and unusual punishment"[14] for them (Matusov, 2021c).

These four choices are aimed at promoting diverse forms of students' self-education – sole and/or joint. The students may choose to study solo (autodidact), in groups with each other without me (symdidact), or with me (odigósdidact or autodidact with advisement) if they select the Open Syllabus. They can choose a form of self-education that I call

"autopaternalism" – conditional, trust-based, forcing the student to study what they want to study by the teacher, – if they select the Opening Syllabus or Non-traditional Closed Syllabus. Finally, if a student finds that our class imposed on them by the university is useless for them, they can escape it via the Non-Syllabus for prisoners of education (see the description and discussion of the five diverse forms of self-education in Matusov, 2022a, 2022b).

I have noticed that my students reinterpret and, thus, redefine my four choices of educational regimes, actually, multiplying them. For example, some of the students who chose the Opening Syllabus educational regime attended the class virtually on a systematic basis: either synchronically via Zoom or asynchronically by submitting weekly mini-projects on the topics of their interests, using my guidelines, and participating in the class forum discussions. Some students who chose the Open Syllabus or the Opening Syllabus were apparently Prisoners of Education who did not feel comfortable admitting so. They did not want to study anything, but they viewed grades as transactions for assigned "work" done regardless of how meaningless this "work" was for them – that was probably why they did not choose the Non-Syllabus for Prisoners of Education. My anonymous surveys of the students support my suspicions. Some students interpreted their studies as the development of their often uncritical and uninformed opinions – what my colleague and I called "opinionship." In contrast, others were interested in testing their dear ideas against the alternative, often conflicting, ideas (Matusov & von Duyke, 2010). I had at least one clear case when a student of mine chose the Open Syllabus to study a completely different academic subject of her interest (the Python computer language) on her own because she lost her interest in education while she was still required to take my class by the university (Matusov, 2022a, 2022b). Often a student's choice for their educational regime is a result of negotiation among diverse concerns and tensions inside of the student: the student's own educational interests, the student's life circumstances and anxieties, the perceived institutional, economic, and societal pressures, the invisible colonization by the conventional educational institutions, the student's own cultural values about education, and so on (Matusov, 2021c). Their engagement in self-education may or may not reveal and address critically address these concerns for them.

The organized and emerging plurality of the educational regimes leads to the emergence of diverse communities and diverse foreigners in our class. Diverse communities were constituted by study groups that met without me outside of our class meetings, by clusters of students sitting together in the classroom, by our classroom community, by our online class forum, and by paradigmatic groups emerging in our classroom on a more or less permanent basis (see the subsection below). These communities generated their own distinct cultural values, norms, practices, collective decision-making, and communications. For example, in one of my past classes, a student raised an issue during our Mid-term Town Hall meeting that her peers in the cluster did not discuss issues at hand during their groupwork but mainly engaged with their gadgets. She was dissatisfied and bored by her cluster group. Our discussion of this issue in the class led her and some other students to move to different cluster groups in the classroom with different tacit (cultural) agreements about their groupwork (Matusov, 2022a, 2022b, submitted).

By diverse "societal foreigners" – i.e., friendly strangers, friengers, or even freinemies, benefiting by association with the society, – I refer to some of my students who did not participate or participated very loosely in any of the diverse communities in our class. Nevertheless, the existence of those students and the legitimacy of their choices influence other students. For example, in one of my past classes, an Open Syllabus student who chose not to attend our class meetings asked me to design a special place on the class website for her "educational diaries" to help her reflect on her autodidact self-studies. Initially, I suggested she place them on our class forum, but she refused because she did not want her peers to discuss her diary entries, but she wanted them to keep visible and readable by her peers and me. Some other Open Syllabus students liked the idea and started adding their entries to their "educational diary." The class website becomes the societal territory of our classes, visible to the class participants.

Yet, I have encountered the tension between the societal and the communal norms regarding the students' choices of their educational regimes in my overall societal classes. Recently, my volunteer Teaching Assistant Lexie, a student in a previous class herself, formulated it well. Lexie argued that my societal organization of the class might harm some students because it encourages them to make uninformed decisions about their educational regime at the beginning of the course. Most of the students had a strong conventional educational background. When they were confronted with deciding to choose their educational regime, some of them tried to get away from any study when their good grade could be guaranteed in exchange for their shallow work. Lexie hypothesized that if I postpone their choice-making for a few weeks in the semester, students may experience a very different education and make different choices about their pedagogical regime in our class, which might be more informative and thoughtful than before. Translating Lexie's critique of my four educational regime choices into our discussion here, Lexie argued that the societal processes I have inbuilt into my pedagogical design undermine the important communal and personal educational processes. In gist, Lexie proposed the two-stage arrangement for the class: first, as a normative community for all (i.e., the mandatory Opening Syllabus) and then, after a few weeks, as a normative society with the four offered choices of educational regimes that students can redefine. Currently, I am experimenting with her idea while still being uneasy with too much paternalism at the first stage of the course.

Paradigmatic differences in the classroom

A society often is constituted by diverse distinguished communities of different cultural values and interests. In the context of education, it may mean that the students may commit to different scientific paradigms. Once I had a 3-hour graduate seminar for future educational researchers on the contexts for learning, and about 20 doctoral students enrolled. At some point in the semester, I noticed dissatisfaction within a small group of students about the topics for the class discussions that their peers chose democratically by majority votes from the Curricular Map. Actually, after 4 weeks in the semester, a student Sharell visited my office and told me that she did not want to go to the class anymore because she was not interested in discussing the topics her peers chose to discuss.

It took me a while to realize that I had three more or less stable groups in the class. The groups were defined by the scientific paradigms (Kuhn, 1996) they espoused. The biggest group espoused the so-called "cognitive, information-processing" paradigm based on comparing the work of the human mind with a computer[15]. In contrast, another smaller group espoused the so-called "sociocultural" paradigm of insisting that the human mind is shaped by culture, society, institutions, and practices (Matusov, 2007). A graduate student, whom I call here Sharell, belonged to the second group. The third, the smallest, group was paradigmatically uncommitted – they were in-between. The accidental composition of the class gave a systematic prioritization to the cognitive paradigm over the sociocultural paradigm in selecting the class topics. My original unilateral pedagogical design of the course, based on a selection of one topic by a majority – i.e., my benevolent dictatorship (Matusov, 2021c) – was insensitive to the educational needs and interests of the second, smaller student group interested in the sociocultural paradigm and its particular curricular topics. When I realized that, I brought this problem up to the class. A student named Steve from the information processing group proposed individualization of class topics and corresponding readings, but although people liked this idea, nobody in the class, including me, could visualize how to do that. I was thinking about that at home for a while and then wrote the following email with the subject "Eugene's crazy proposal" to my students:

Dear folks—

I keep thinking about our class dilemma about weekly topics and readings. We have several interesting problems:

1. People have different interests;
2. People have different approaches to their own learning and traveling in a foreign land[16]: some like to spend more time in some places to engage deeply in some topics. In contrast, others try to cover as much territory as possible (we probably may have other approaches to learning as well).

I love Steve's suggestion of individualization of topics and readings. I want to push it even further. Here is my "crazy" proposal:

a. You can select whatever topic you want for the next class (including doing an old topic in depth). Practically, I am adding links to our Curricular Map so you can access readings any time you want (it will also solve a problem for Nicole, who reads on Tuesdays, right?).
b. For those of you who want to stay on a topic longer, I can make suggestions for these readings. For example, those of you who want to read more on Vygotsky in education (and in psychology) and not on cognition can read my two papers attached.
c. In class, you can ask for help from me and your peers to discuss the weekly readings you choose. I expect the class may split, wanting to discuss readings in small groups or individually. If I help with readings that you did not read, you have a choice to listen to this discussion or join any other discussions in the class.

d. I will try to balance and rotate among groups and topics in class. It is unclear to me how exactly we can do it but why not try and see.
e. For this model to work, you need to become "demanding" (in a good sense of this word) for help from your peers and me, as well as in proposing topics of your interest that may not be on the Curricular Map yet.

> We can try and see what will happen. Do you want to try this week already?
> What do you think?
> Eugene

Although several students highly praised my proposal via their email responses, the proposal was rejected at the class meeting. The reason for the rejection was that despite liking individualization, most students wanted to study together and were willing to compromise and negotiate their interests, at least within the two paradigmatic groups listed above. However, my proposal and our discussion of it inspired us to find another solution. We decided to have two topics for each class simultaneously, forming two groups who studied two different topics embedded in two different paradigms. The in-between students had a choice of joining either of these two groups. It seemed to solve the problem of the paradigmatic imposition of the class topics discussed above. Later, this issue on an individual rather than on a group level forced us to develop the notion of "asynchronous virtual attendance," where students could stay at home to study a topic of their own interest different from the interest of the class. Also, a student could come to class to study if they wished to do so (Matusov, 2021c).

Let me describe how these two distinct paradigmatic communities organized their studies in practice in the classroom. At the end of a previous class meeting, the two paradigmatic groups of students voted on the topic from the Curricular Map they wanted to study in the next class (students could add new topics to the Curricular Map). The students from the third group could join the first of the second groups during the voting at their wish. Each group elected a topic leader (usually a student who proposed the topic and tried to convince the others to vote) who was responsible for preparing the topic for the upcoming class discussion by developing dialogic provocations and finding instructional materials such as readings and videos and learning activities. Often, but not always, these topic leaders contacted me for help. Also, the class web had a lot of instructional materials for each topic that my past students and I had developed in the past.

During the class meeting, students arranged the desks into two big circles around which the two groups sat[17]. I was sitting away from both groups. The group leaders led the group discussions and provided guidance. When a group needed me, they called for my help or input. When both groups asked for me simultaneously, I put one group on hold. I compared myself with a bee flying to collect nectar from the flowers (the groups). The students from the third, in-between group often changed their alliance between the two paradigmatic groups. I could observe that, at times, students from one group attended an intense discussion or a video with the other group.

After trying this paradigmatic group separation, the students publicly reflected at the end of the class that they missed joint discussions. To address this problem, they decided

to have a 20-minute joint session at the end of our 3-hour class meeting where they shared what they discussed and learned in each of the two paradigmatic groups. Later in the semester, they extended this joint session to 30 minutes because, besides the sharing, they wanted to have discussions on the raised shared issues. These joint sessions and online forum discussions provided societal synergy to the class: mutual agonistic challenges and recognition of each other scientific paradigms. The students of both paradigmatic groups developed an agonistic interest in a friendly enemy in each other (Mouffe, 2000). They engaged in a critical dialogue with each other not so much to convince the other side but apparently to promote self-growth within their own paradigm (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015) by addressing challenges the other group raised – e.g., the issues of contextualism for the information-processing group, the issues of generalizability for the sociocultural group. They liked some of the challenges that they presented to each other – not to address these challenges to the satisfaction of the other paradigmatic group, but to themselves.

In my analysis, due to the students' preexisting paradigmatic differences, the initial class arrangement was skewed too much toward a community to the dissatisfaction of the sociocultural group. It was important that not only the students noticed the split, but we all publicly reflected on the paradigmatic source of the split[18]. Our reform of the class by splitting it into two distinct paradigmatic communities restored its societal component, but apparently, the pendulum swing went too far toward society and away from a community. The joint session at the end of the class meeting restored the balance between the communal and the societal aspects through inclusive separateness (Salgado & Valsiner, 2010), while the normative class sociality remained to be societal overall. In society, as a normative sociality for joint self-education, the dynamic tensions between societal and communal aspects of the society are always present and must be managed/governed by its participants.

Conclusion

In this theoretical essay, I argued that the normative sociality of joint self-education is society, based on pluralism and tolerance of culturally and educationally diverse communities and individual educatees, their synergy, voluntary participation, and acceptance of the final sovereignty of their educational decision-making. Society legitimizes its members' pluralism and transcendence of and disagreement among cultural values and practices, thus making a critical examination of life, self, society, world, and education itself normatively possible. I rejected a proposal that community (e.g., "community of learners," "learning community") should be the vision of this norm for such educational sociality. The latter leads to Kantian educational paternalism of Progressive Education which manipulates, imposes, and forces the learner to accept a shared vision and goal of their education, collaborate with each other, and come to some final agreement (Matusov, 2021a). Although community can legitimize certain degrees of freedom for its members, it does not legitimize a member's transcendence of the communal core cultural values and practices in contrast to society. At the same time, I accept that an empirical community can be a very important part of a normative notion of society as applied to joint self-education. Balancing between communal, often centripetal, and societal, often centrifugal, processes is often necessary for maintaining a successful joint self-education endeavor.

One big issue that I left out from my discussion in this paper is the organization of a normative society in joint self-education. In contrast to community, a social glue of society is based on dialogue-disagreement, partial alignment of interests and concerns (synergy and cooperation), pluralism, solidarity, the legitimacy of no-fault divorce, and respect of the participants' personal and, to a lesser degree, communal authorial sovereignty.[19] The organization of society involves hierarchies; institutions; democratic governance; divisions of diverse powers; setting and imposing the procedural boundaries limiting personal and communal freedoms and sovereignty; and guaranteeing and protecting the rights and freedoms for members' diverse ways of being, thinking, acting, and realizing themselves. The organization of society creates tensions between the members' five freedoms, listed above (especially, the freedom not to follow orders or duties), and the successful functioning of the society in the face of the existing emergencies, necessities, demands, conflicts, threats, and limited resources. Further theoretical and empirical research is needed.

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Notes

1. I refer to "democratic schools" using Democracy with capital "D" when people have the legitimate right to make decisions about their own life, including their own education (cf. "Democratic education" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_education).
2. In several places of his 2019 book, Jim uses the wording "a scaled-down world" instead of "a scaled-down society." I wonder if he wanted to emphasize that in democratic schools based on self-education, the educatees' sociality is not limited by the school itself and but open to the entire world, which is the ultimate society of societies. This vision of the world of society of society is radically different from the vision of the world as "the gloval villiage," such is the global community.

3. Socium is a set of people defined by their social relations.
4. Many institutions use euphemisms like “community,” e.g., a university often refers itself to its staff, administration, professors, janitors, and students as “the university community,” its members might not have any sense of sympathy, cooperation, mutual commitment, support, and so on.
5. For example, “Inuit” is the plural of “inuk” meaning “person”, and “Yupik” is a singular word meaning “real person” based on the root word “yuk” meaning “person” https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/resources/inuit_or_eskimo.php
6. You can watch the dramatization of this episode in the movie “The Joy Luck Club” (1993, directed by Wayne Wang, production by Hollywood Pictures): https://tinyurl.com/mryyn975. Another, this time entirely fictional, case of the power of the “community behind” is presented in the Japanese movie “Dodes’ka-den” by Akira Kurosawa (1970). In the movie, an orphan fourteen-year-old peasant girl, named Katsuko, comes to a city to live with her uncle who exploits and rapes her many times, making her pregnant. The only person with whom she could talk and relate was a sake delivery teen boy. Before meeting the sake boy, Katsuko does not speak to anyone. The sake-delivery boy talks to her, cares about her, and makes her at ease, so she gradually starts talking to him. At some point, Katsuko suddenly stubs the sake-delivery boy, fortunately not to death. The police investigate the case. They believe Katsuko who told them about systematic rape by her uncle. The uncle gets arrested. The girl is released from police custody. When the sake-delivery boy meets Katsuko again after recovery, he asks her why she tried to kill him. She replies that she tried to commit suicide. Killing the boy was killing her community behind that gave her voice – killing her voice. Watch this fragment here: https://tinyurl.com/2p8z56uy
7. https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/civilizations/
8. In this sense, there was an interesting difference between Ancient Athens and Ancient Rome with regard to their citizenship. In Ancient Rome, citizenship was much-much more open to join by friengers than in Ancient Athens. Also, in Ancient Rome, slavery was temporary, limited by 10–20 years and then they became Roman citizens, while in Ancient Athens slavery was permanently. Some historians argue that such an open citizenship was one of the reasons of the emergence political and military power of Ancient Rome (Beard, 2015).
9. As the autobiographical novel “Joy luck club” clearly shows (see above), *unconditional* communal support *is limited* by communal normative ultimate boundaries, defined by its cultural values, traditions, ideology, and practices, which can be rather rigid and limited or rather flexible and spacious, depending on an empirical community. Communities are never completely homogeneous. The community has its legitimate degrees of freedom and its legitimate internal diversity, but these internal freedom and diversity are normatively limited. “Limited unconditional support” sounds like a cognitive misnomer, but I argue that it is a phenomenological, emotional, and relational reality – a paradox – in the life of the community. In contrast, society does not have normative ultimate boundaries because it is open to transcendence. Society does not have its normative values, rather it has its only meta-value: pluralism. I call pluralism a meta-value because it includes its opposite in itself: monism. Pluralism is tolerant of its opposite: intolerance, illiberalism, monism, etc., although this tolerance of intolerance may also have its limits in order to protect the overall societal pluralism and, thus, not to collapse into a community.

10. Of course, dirty politics can work in a democratic organization of collective decision-making as well. But, because power and politics are publicly legitimate and visible, it is much easier to fight dirty politics in a democracy than in a sociocracy. Fighting dirty politics can be a public project in democracy normatively consisting of freinemies but not in sociocracy normatively consisting of friends.
11. Russian literary formalist Viktor Shklovskii described an interesting historical phenomenon. At the beginning of the 20th century, European wrestling contests were mostly rigged. In response to that, famous European wrestlers secretly met in Hamburg, Germany, away from the public eyes, to test and determine who the real champion was in Europe. Later this scheme was discovered and scandalized. Since then, the idiom "according to the Hamburg account" has emerged (Shklovskii & Sher, 1990).
12. Cf. Aristotle wrote in his book "Nicomachean Ethics": "Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas" translating from Latin as "Plato is my friend, but truth is a better friend (literally: Plato is friend, but truth is more friend (to me than he is))." This is a societal maxim involving the legitimacy of the transcendence of friendship. In contrast, in a community, the maxim is the opposite: keeping harmonious relations is often more important than truth. In some innovative schools run as a community of learners, there is a moratorium on any philosophical discussions among their educators to keep them from the ideological breakdowns of their innovative institutions through irreconcilable philosophical disagreement about the values and nature of their innovative pedagogical practices (Silberman, 1970).
13. I shared this terminology with my students.
14. Cf. the wording of the United States Constitution.
15. It is important to mention that these two paradigmatic groups were not internally homogenous. For example, the information-processing paradigmatic group involved different strains of the paradigm: constructivist and algorithmic. Similarly, the sociocultural paradigmatic group involved social justice, contextualist, praxis and some other paradigmatic strains.
16. That was a metaphor about our class that I offered to my students. The class represents their learning journey to the foreign land of their interest, while my role was as a travel guide. Together with my colleagues and former students, I created a travel brochure the Curricular Map of the foreign country that the students might want to visit (Matusov, 2015).
17. The groups developed different communicative norms: the information-processing paradigmatic group did not allow interruptions during a discussion: one person must talk at a time with clearly demarcated dialogic turns. In contrast, in the sociocultural paradigmatic group, interruptions were allowed and the dialogic turns were negotiated rather than always clearly assigned.
18. In one of my recent doctoral seminars, I was faced again with this phenomenon of paradigmatic differences among my students. Again, two groups of my students espoused two irreconcilable paradigms – this time pedagogical paradigms. One group, the dominant, was committed to the pedagogical paradigm insisting that the quality of education can be defined by the preset curriculum standards – i.e., education is a *poiesis*. In contrast, the other group of my students was committed to the pedagogical paradigm that teaching is an authorial practice defined by a unique professional author-educator – i.e., education is a *praxis* (Matusov, 2020a; Matusov & Brobst, 2013). However, in contrast to 2012, this time, the students did not publicly reveal their dissatisfaction. Unfortunately, I did not provide my leadership in an invitation of such a

reflection. This unreflected and unaddressed tension led to the creation of a mechanical community as an educational sociality of our class, in my observation. I think I hesitated to provide my leadership because I tried to avoid the imposition of the unsolicited reflection on my students. Now, I think it was my pedagogical mistake – in fighting educational paternalism, I endangered the emergence of a society in our class and neglected my fiduciary duty toward my students (cf. my discussion and analysis of "Case#1. Unsolicited guidance," in Matusov, 2022a, 2022b).

19. In the community, the social glue is based on dialogue-agreement; sharedness of the core cultural values, practices, and traditions; empathy; duty and emotional commitment; collaboration; loyalty; identity; interdependency; unconditional support; and fidelity.

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