Yoga as a Production Site of Social and Human Capital: Transcultural Flows from a Cultural Economic Perspective

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Abstract From a cultural economics perspective, transcultural flows in yoga are analyzed using field study data from German yoga institutions and an international Anglophone resort in Thailand. Yoga is seen as a production site of value creation. Through the internalization of the mental model of yoga, several forms of human capital are built up. An eminent external effect of regular yoga practice may be the production of public or social goods, such as a more attentive attitude towards the human and natural environment. On a macrolevel, the partial yoga markets are characterized by diversification dynamics and path dependency. Within the dimension of informal structures, like accumulated body capital, reflexive belief systems are established that also influence, for example, behavior at work or health prevention strategies. Here, materialist interests regularly interrelate with postmaterialist aims, such as increased autonomy. However, the community of practitioners is transient and with a low level of commitment, the experience of like-mindedness is important for the subjective quality of the courses offered.

Introduction

Recent mass mobility, cheap long-distance transportation, diasporas, new media, and global firms build up a constant background noise of worldwide information flowing in narratives, through experiences, and in everyday media consumption. How have these forms of communication and this environment changed today's globalized yoga? "Yoga" here refers to the practices and discourses which arose at the end of the nineteenth century out of the encounter between Western subcultures

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in Europe and North America on the one hand, and Indians conversant with transnational Anglophone debates on the other. The Western physical culture of that time with its gymnastics and proprioceptive therapies played an important role in this process, in addition to many other influential cross links with (oriental) dance, esotericism, and psychological schools, such as the early humanistic psychology of William James.[1]

The contemporary cultural study of religion frequently conceives of its objects in terms of discourse theory, in the tradition of Michel Foucault, as a conglomeration of practices, declarations, and power positions. From this perspective, yoga, as "spiritualized relaxation"[2] at the interface between esotericism and physical training, is also a part of the European history of religion.[3] This European history of religion goes beyond the geographical confines of Europe and takes into account transcontinental exchange, as well as inner-European religious pluralism and interferences between functionally distinct sub-areas of society, such as science and religion, or everyday life and religion. With this interest in interferences, the concept of a European history of religion prepares the way for the concept of transcultural flows by seeking such flows not only transnationally but also within the dynamics of modern societies. These interferences between social sub-areas are constitutive for the formative phase of the modern yoga discourse. Religious convictions from the esotericism at the end of nineteenth century found their way into the yoga discourse and the self-image of yoga actors: The equality of all religious systems, the centrality of intuition and experience, and the goal of individual self-realization. The dynamic of the yoga discourse today can only be explained through its embeddedness in other discourses or, in religio-economic terms, partial markets.

This article examines the push-and-pull factors affecting flows in the yoga discourse at the beginning twenty-first century. The material is taken from two field studies carried out in several yoga studios in Munich, Germany, and in an international Anglophone yoga resort on the island of Koh Samui in Thailand. Cultural transfer theory has long been a common tool for tracing the history of modern postural yoga. Transfer in this case is understood as the selective recontextualization of practices in the target culture.[4] Conceptualizing contemporary yoga using the notion of transcultural flows may offer a means of reconstructing

[1] De Michelis (2004), Singleton (2005, 2010).

[2] Singleton (2010, 289), who borrows Vishnudevananda's "spiritual relaxation."

[3] A fundamental concept introduced in 1993 by Burkhard Gladigow, a scholar of religion. He assimilated the reconstruction of religious history to the paradigm of cultural history, as developed by historians in the early modern period. Gladigow (1995) recently described in Kippenberg et al. (2009).

[4] Schnäbele (2009, 53–56).

back-and-forth exchange dynamics. Cultural transfer theory, network theory, and globalization and migration theories are undergoing their third or fourth round of elaboration to keep pace with the flows. In the study of religion, the push-and-pull factors of religious flows have been discussed in connection with general "secularization phenomena." Economic and social developments have been put forward as factors influencing this alleged secularization: changed production conditions, the altered status of gainful employment, consumer orientation, detraditionalization, and bureaucratization were, and still are, parameters that are seen as determining the importance of spirituality, and the demand for "salvation goods" (Weber).

Going beyond the variants of the secularization narrative, the methodological approach followed in this article will, with the aid of religio-economic concepts, enable us to show flows between the sub-areas on the basis of the available data. Unlike ideological narratives of increasing or decreasing religiosity action formations in the area of yoga will be studied as places of production. In order to follow up this production and the way it is affected by push-and-pull factors, an approach has been chosen that is inspired by NIE (New Institutional Economics). Economics of religion is a very recent specialization within the study of religion, which in the past has almost exclusively followed the neoclassical rational choice paradigm.[5] On the application of NIE to religion, as attempted here, there exists only one monograph, written by an economist.[6] This work is problematic for two reasons: It is based on an essentialist understanding of religion, and it uses the example of the institutionalized religion of German Christian churches. This means that any economics of religion study with a discursive understanding of religion, having as its object religion that is not organized as a church, is entering new and uncharted territory. The great advantage of the economics of religion approach is that it can profit from an empirically based economic action theory. Moreover, this approach is relevant in the case of flows, since in economic theories, besides the recently discovered interest in action as transaction, the idea of exchange in markets has been a central concept for a long time. This is also a reason why we can expect that economic theories may help to shed light on transcultural exchange, for instance regarding what is exchanged, what goods flows exist, what circulates in the opposite direction to the goods, what are production factors, or what determines demand.

We will first outline some basic features of the cultural economic approach, which shapes the religio-economic approach followed here, and then present some material from our two field studies. We will focus on the production site, on shared mental models, path dependence, and on the forms of human capital that are created. In the concluding section, the yield obtained from the cultural economic approach will be discussed from the perspective of theories of modernity.

[5] For an overview of recent research, see Koch (2010, 2011).

[6] Brinitzer (2003).

The Cultural Economic Approach

By cultural economics I understand a transdisciplinary field of research in which culture is studied using economic models.[7] Among these models, the religio-economic position I intend to adopt here is that of New Institutional Economics (NIE), which developed out of the older rational-choice paradigm of neoclassical economics. Institutions theory investigates how institutional structures, regional und cultural, influence behavior and what costs are incurred by the transactions.[8] The term "institution" covers a continuum of regulations, from internalized rules for good manners, to what is customary, to organizations having a particular legal form. In most institutions there is an overlap in these levels of knowledge regulation about how to proceed. The introduction of transaction costs, essentially through the economist Oliver Williamson, opposes notions of a transparent market with omniscient, non-opportunistic actors, and points to the fact that procuring information and controlling employees, for instance, are not cost neutral. Applied to yoga, we could say: The institution of physical exercise requires regular training, and the produced good is temporary: it is created during practice and ends together with it. Making the good durable and repeatable is thus an important requirement in respect of the transaction. This is achieved by a large number of low-threshold offers by yoga teachers in decentralized studios, and empowerment of the individual to continue practicing outside the teacher-pupil structures through the learning of a method, entailing habitualization. The yoga practice becomes part of every day life through the series of yoga postures on a material level and through an aestheticization of a way of life.

It makes a difference whether yoga is offered in a democratic market economy or a social market economy, in a socialist or an oligarchic context, and how high the cost of living and the wage level is in the country. A Philippine yoga teacher observes that in Manila young professionals practice at Bikram Yoga studios, whereas Ashtanga Yoga is mainly practiced by married women.[9] How can this be explained, or why is Hot Yoga very popular in Japan right now? Is it the demand for high performance in a post-Fordist society? Is the hot steam attractive to a hot-bath culture? Is the collective drill of the Hot Yoga teachers familiar to Japanese pupils? Or is this a global trend towards kinds of Power Yoga that started in California and have by now reached Japan?

For some people, the diffusion of yoga in industrial countries is related to forms of labor. In the first modern age– the second half of nineteenth century–the

[7] Robertson (1992). From the perspective of economics of anthropology, see for instance Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and Gudeman (2001); from the perspective of economics of sociology, see Bourdieu's general understanding of sociology as economics of practices (1992, 1997), and on new sociological economics, see Swedberg (2007).

[8] For a general introduction see for instance Richter and Furubotn (2005). Other strands of the theory relate to agency (principle-agent relation) and property rights.

[9] Interview with J. C., 12 April 2010 at Yoga Thailand.

historical relaxation therapies movement (harmonialism) especially in the US explicitly conceived of yoga as a response to the perceived acceleration of the world, a world in which "nervous illnesses" were on the increase, in order to make labor more efficient. Singleton speaks of the "ideological dyad of harmonialism and labor."[10] In the second modern age–the second half of the twentieth century–therapeutic cultures of self-help and self-improvement that had emerged from psychology and management consulting at the beginning of the 1920s became increasingly popular.[11] Towards this background yoga was now perceived of as a technology of the self and care of the self, as defined by Foucault. It was debated whether this practice supports post-Fordist working conditions (flexibility, mobility, broad job descriptions, involvement of the whole person), or whether it may also lead to a distancing from these demands and even to an exit from gainful employment in late capitalism.[12] In other words, individual labor conditions and general economic conditions were recognized as important factors in the shaping of discourses on general (religious) forms of life. The religio-economic approach is a specialized approach that includes these economic factors in any interpretation of religion.

In order to profile a religio-economic approach within cultural economics, Max Weber's much misunderstood concept of salvation good (*Heilsgut*) must be clarified. For Weber, anything that leads to the goal of salvation is a salvation good. But such purposive relations exist for most activities, so that there is no additional descriptive value in introducing recreation as a holiday good or enjoyment as a theatre good, etc.[13] Rather, used in this way, the term salvation good is a symbolic-contextual ascription. From the point of view of economic goods doctrines, however, the salvation good is not a "good." These theories either start from subjective preferences and the relative value of certain goods leading to them (in the rational choice tradition), or they start from the labor needed for the production of a good. What Weber means by the term is an overall end goal for a whole sphere of action, in this case a life goal which for its realization requires a particular kind of behavior, in other words a whole range of actions (the *habitus* in Pierre Bourdieu's reception of Max Weber).[14]

[10] Singleton (2010, 301).

[11] Illouz (2007).

[12] Altglas (2008) and Singleton (2005): Yoga is popular in the educated middle class as a means of coping with modern life. See also Schnäbele's contribution in this volume and Schnäbele (2009): Yoga as a means of coping or as an optional exit from capitalism.

[13] The delayed obtaining of salvation in the next world as the "salvation good" in many religious doctrines is no reason for postulating a special kind of good, since there is such a delay in many areas, for instance bringing up children, investing in further education, or providing for one's old age.

[14] Merz-Benz (2008). For this "number of actions" aiming at salvation several life styles are possible: The mystical, the ascetic, the experiential etc.

A further fruitful concept was that of human capital.[15] In recent discussions on neo-capital theories, human capital includes several types of capital building, such as cultural and social capital.[16] Bourdieu understands social capital as the reliability of social networks. It is therefore a resource for attaining goals, and depends on how many friends one can stir into action to support oneself, and on how influential they are. James S. Coleman's understanding of social capital is more formal: It is not personalized, but established through the relationships as such.[17] These enable, impede, or facilitate the attaining of goals within a society. So it need not be friends but general societal norms of relationships and behavior that hinder or help one's actions. Robert D. Putnam goes a step further in anchoring the social capital in a "community" or society beyond personal or structural relations. Social capital and the effectiveness of a society in dealing with its tasks depend on its members' willingness to cooperate and this is deeply rooted in trust. The discussion of "religious," "sacred," or "spiritual" capital involves the same problems as the concept of salvation goods.[18] As we saw above, it does not make sense to claim a "type" of religious capital beside the "token" of manifold practices in religious contexts.

The Creation of Value in the Partial Market of Munich Yoga

The *Yoga Guide* for Munich, first published in 2010, lists 80 yoga providers.[19] The yoga styles found in the city, which has 1.3 million inhabitants, are extremely diverse. For most studios, the *Yoga Guide* explains the combination of styles that is practiced there, and offers short introductions to Anusara Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Hormone Yoga, Integral Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Jivamukti Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Luna Yoga, Prana Vinyasa Flow Yoga, Power Yoga, Sivananda Yoga, Tao Yin Yoga, Tri Yoga, Viniyoga. Most studios charge between 12 and 20 euros for a yoga class lasting one and a half hours. Tickets are normally sold in blocks of ten or as annual tickets. Websites are the usual form of communication for presenting the studio's yoga lineage, the teachers' qualifications, the regular program, and special offers. Some teachers give classes at more than one studio, so that there are plenty of institutional cross links at this level.

[15] See Becker (1976), who was one of the first economists to apply it in a neoclassical framework to families as households.

[16] Bourdieu (1992), see also Esser (2000) and Putnam (1993).

[17] Coleman (1988).

[18] Iannaccone (1995), Urban (2003), and Verter (2003) (for an overview see Elwert 2007). The Metanexus Foundation's spiritual capital project is very reminiscent of the phenomenological endeavor to describe religion as *sui generis*.

[19] The Yoga Guide is a free brochure assembled by Evi Eckstein and Annet Münzinger and distributed by Munich yoga studios.. It can be assumed that a number of semi-private yoga classes provided by yoga teachers independently from the institutionalized studios can be added to the list.

In 2007 and 2009/2010, my students and I carried out field studies in about a dozen Munich yoga studios representing different traditions and styles.[20] The guided interview was designed in light of Laurence Iannaccone's religio-economic theory construction in the rational choice tradition, and supplemented by NIE.[21] It produced data with which forecasts arising from these two approaches can be tested, and the explanatory value of the two can be compared. Questions were asked relating to the following clusters: (1) initial investment and search costs, (2) diversification, (3) motives of practitioners, (4) internalization of the mental model, (5) human capital building, (6) maximizing strategies, (7) competition and cooperation, (8) the production of a public good.[22] Without presenting all the results here, we may select a few which characterize a local yoga market and its special production from the perspective of cultural economics, and which show the exchange processes between studios, yoga traditions and life spheres, in line with the theme of this volume.

The high degree of social capital building on the demand side, i.e. the construction of a network of supporters, is striking.[23] The data from the Munich field show that the majority of people have "good friends" who also practice yoga. The number seems to rise significantly with the time of practicing. In the questionnaire, we first asked for the names of the person's five best friends, and then how many of them practice yoga (Fig. 1). These friends meet outside the studio, organize joint yoga workshops, and help each other, for instance with removals. This factor must be seen as an "external effect"[24] of yoga practice with regard to the yoga doctrine that does not propagate socializing.

[20] By means of about forty guided interviews and around twenty questionnaires, data were collected from the following Munich providers: A private yoga teacher, Yogavision (yoga and yoga therapy following the Desikachar school), Yoga-Atelier, Münchner Yogazentrum, Luna Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Jivamukti, Wojo, Hier und Jetzt, Elixia Fitnessstudio, Air Yoga, Bikram Yoga.

[21] Iannaccone (1998).

[22] The guided interview was based on the principles of grounded theory and contained the following initial question per cluster: (1) How did you start practicing yoga? (2) What do you do apart from yoga? (3) Why do you practice yoga? (4) How has practicing yoga affected your daily life? (5). Do any of your relatives or friends practice yoga? (6) What are your future yoga plans? (7) Which yoga studio would you not go to? (8) Who, in your opinion, should practice yoga? Yoga teachers and studio managers were asked additional questions concerning the history of their institution and their interaction with other partial market participants, for instance with regard to pricing or joint marketing.

[23] Bourdieu (1992) and Iannaccone (1995).

[24] External effect means unintended side effects, e.g. when the social utility is higher than the individual utility.

Fig. 1 Number of friends practicing yoga for 31 Munich yoga practitioners from nine yoga studios in Munich (2007–2009)

Diversification and Path Dependency in Partial Market Dynamics

Yoga consumption is diversified in manifold ways, for instance through sports, mountain climbing, fasting, Feldenkrais, or Qi Gong. This diversification is connected with individual motives, in other words whether yoga is seen as a sport or as a spiritual practice, and also on the local institutional setting. Yoga is embedded in various other partial markets, depending on what else is available in the way of sport and recreation or spiritual events. Our study showed that those people for whom yoga is bound up (over time) with spiritual motives, also have a portfolio of other spiritual activities. The same applies to the providers. Depending on how the goal (the salvation good, as some would say) is characterized in a yoga tradition or local studio, the studio interacts with other partial markets. Yoga therapy in the tradition of Desikachar, for instance, competes, overlaps, or cooperates with therapeutic partial markets (body therapy, physiotherapy), whereas Hot Yoga competes with gyms.

Independently of the diversification of demand for yoga as a healing or a sporting activity, it can also be observed that there are two levels within the yoga institutions. On the formal level of their self-representation in brochures or on the internet, yoga institutions are fairly indistinguishable. On the individual level, mechanisms of heterogenization have a strong influence. On this latter informal level, friendly yoga teachers are crucial to the decision to join a class and come back on a regular basis. This means that while on the formal level certain yoga myths are relevant, on the informal level these are of no interest or only marginal interest for rates of participation. For example, the allusions to India or specific aesthetics of flowers, colors, and symbols, which appear on the homepages of most of the studios, are often lacking in the everyday practice of the studios, or are dependent on the taste and choice of the teachers. Some practitioners want the "magic" of incense, for example, while others don't.[25]

[25] De Michelis (2004, 187–189) roughly separates more postural and more meditative strands of modern psychosomatic yoga that still have to be distinguished from what she calls modern denominational yoga, like Transcendental Mediation or ISKCON.

But even with a broader trend of "Asian spirituality" in terms of aesthetics and lifestyle, or international networks of yoga schools, the regional yoga field is more dependent on the regional path of modernization. "Path dependency" means that the repetition of certain ways of proceeding becomes fixed as an organizational structure, which then often continues to exist even when it is no longer efficient and productive.[26] The economic concept of the path-dependent partial market can be developed with the aid of the cultural schema presented by Bruce Knauft to obtain a cultural economics concept capable of explaining cultural mechanisms of path dependency.[27] The anthropologist Knauft sketches a coordinational system of formal relations to grasp these local constellations of modernity. The coordinates are "culture" on one hand, and "political economy" (x) on the other, while proceeding from the pole of "tradition" to "modernity" (y)—modernity being understood as innovative, changing, technological, capitalistic, and having a high degree of political participation. We might supplement a third coordinate that opens up a range from poverty to wealth, or hope for wealth. The pole of modernity "can" often be characterized by a deepened gap between poor and rich and at the same time the accumulation of immense riches for some. This model might explain why one and the same yoga practice can be so differently positioned in a society: As a way of improving work performance, as wellness, as a women's emancipatory movement, or as an ascetic religious exercise.

Local modernization paths remain to some degree accidental. In 2010, for instance, only very few opportunities to practice Ashtanga Yoga can be found in Munich. One of the reasons for this could be the success of three big Jivamukti Yoga studios. Accidental does not mean inexplicable. The success of Jivamukti Yoga may be related to the chronology of the dissemination of yoga in Germany and the establishment of this tradition there by central agents.[28] In cultural economic terms, the market phase and market shares of traditions are crucial for success.[29] Every market phase of a partial market is characterized by specific challenges. The many contingent decisions taken by a studio give it a certain institutional structure and orientation. Embarking on this particular institutional path has consequences in respect to customer target groups, flexibility, and further investment costs. If Jivamukti Yoga is a market leader in the local Munich market, with products that are well developed and tested on the local level, it will be more risky and expensive for new investors to find a footing in this regional market.[30]

[26] Reasons for this rigidity are discussed for instance in Brinitzer (2003, 76–106).

[27] Knauft (2002).

[28] On contemporary yoga in Germany, see Fuchs (1990) and Schnäbele (2009, 77–87). There is to date no historical account of the Munich yoga scene.

[29] Worldwide chronology, De Michelis (2004, 190–194), Schnäbele (2009, 48–77), and Singleton (2010).

[30] One could go into details and compare the products of the different studios. Jivamukti, for instance, offers an "integrated product" consisting of posture practice, singing, meditation, and mantras in every class, while some studios only open the class with a chant and some completely renounce neo-Hindu elements.

The initial investment of Jivamukti Yoga—to stay with this example, without any data on investment sums—will pay off today, whereas a new entrepreneur will have to invest more in marketing, reputation, teachers, networking, and equipment to enter the market at this phase of development.

Internalization of the Mental Model and the Production of Public or Social Goods

Sport or pursuing a kind of physiotherapy are common initial motives for practicing yoga. With time, people's motives change and include positive consequences in other spheres of life, such as work-life balance or performance at work. At least two people who attend a Friday evening class report that they can leave the week's workload behind them and enjoy a "free mind" and a "good start to the weekend."[31] For them yoga is like a weekly rite of passage of cleansing. From the practice they can "take relaxation and meditation with them to their free-time."[32]

Another aspect of physical training according to the informants is the balancing of body and soul. They say that a psychological balance is established and maintained through regular yoga practice. This happens in an atmosphere where there is no pressure to perform well. Instead, the creative way a female yoga teacher treats her body is admired. Creativity is thus more important than high performance. A repetitive, but not stressed, feature is the need for frequent practice. This helps the person to feel improvement and makes practice less strenuous and painful.[33] Informants report that they are "more focused in general," that they "feel more energy, and are more relaxed and happier in general."[34] Yoga is said to be a "release from everyday stress."[35] The ritualization of everyday life has already been mentioned in connection with the Friday evening class. In a similar way, some people profit from morning practice. They call it "greeting the day" or a "very different start to the day."[36] A change in mental condition is also very frequently reported. The new power acquired through yoga is emphasized. The gaining of calmness is commented on by means of a critical diagnosis of modern life: Calmness is seen as neglected in our culture.[37] Another practitioner reports that she observes other people with more interest and in more detail.[38] She notices the bad posture of

[31] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 30 March 2009, age 33.

[32] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 6 March 2009, age 32; interview at Jyotir Yoga, 30 March 2009, age 33.

[33] Interview at Anett Yoga, 17 January 2008, age 30.

[34] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 30 March 2009, age 33.

[35] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 6 March 2009, age 32.

[36] Interview at Anett Yoga, 17 January 2008, age 30.

[37] Interview at Anett Yoga, 17 January 2008, age 30.

[38] Interview at Anett Yoga, 19 January 2008, age 58.

most people she meets in the street. She regrets how few people have blinking eyes and mentions her intensified perception of nature. Others describe their new perspective and mode of thinking in everyday life.[39] They feel somehow enriched, intensified, and that they are growing personally or profiting from yoga practice. The experience that the practice of yoga is important for and connected with one's own way of life is a "turning point." All this indicates internalization of the mental model of yoga and the production of a so-called social or public good. The goods produced in yoga belong to several different categories.

On one hand, the goods produced during practice and in the teacher-pupil relationship are extraordinary experiences, or "experience goods." Their benefit can be experienced in the consuming of them: The practice of yoga improves a person's sense of wellbeing. This means that the goods do not have to be described as uncertain or risky, as is regularly done in the case of salvation goods.[40] From the description of salvation goods as uncertain, it is concluded that trust is necessary in the sphere of religion.[41] But, as we have seen above, trust is less important in yoga practice then it is in buying a second-hand car. On the other hand, the goods produced in yoga are to a certain extent public goods. A public good is accessible by a collective. No one is excluded from its consumption and the good cannot give rise to rivalry. Examples of public goods are peace or a clean environment. It is true that there is exclusivity in the production of yoga, since money is normally charged for courses, although it is possible to teach oneself yoga from YouTube videos or books. But the whole of society benefits from healthy yoga practitioners who have a caring attitude towards their environment and other people. However, this is not a generalizable interpretation, but one that is derived from individual comments. The public dimension shared here is the attention on the human and natural environment.

Transcultural Flow Through Embodied Practices: A Form of Human Capital Building

When we consider transcultural flows we have to be aware of informal regimes in which rules sprawl via informal structures to other subsystems. A predominant means of sprawling is altered body perception. We have already discussed social capital in the context of yoga, and will complement human capital by taking into account its embodiment, so that we may talk of "body capital" as a new and supplementary type of human capital. Body capital is different from social capital

[39] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 9 March 2009, age 31.

[40] For instance Brinitzer (2003, 161), who considers the uncertainty of existence in another world and of God to be the distinctive feature of religious goods, thus merely repeating the sacred-profane distinction.

[41] Seele (2009).

insofar as it helps one to stay with oneself, to be stable in oneself, and to gain independence from others by being aware of oneself. Body control, which is identical to cognitive and emotional control in yoga, is a strong tool for mastering life's challenges. To create bodily awareness is central in yoga.

To characterize bodily perception, the concepts of a postural model and of somatic modes of attention from Thomas Csordas' phenomenology of the body are helpful.[42] He employs these concepts to explain the efficacy of healing. Therapeutic processes of healing can alter the somatic mode of attention insofar that they can direct vigilance toward one's own body. This can also contain an active mode of response, like praying for instance when a nerve hurts again. Csordas explains: "What is ostensibly a reminder to the deity that he has granted a healing is pragmatically a self-reminder to monitor one's physical state."[43] We have already seen that the main features of relaxation in modern yoga were invented in connection with Western relaxation therapies.[44] According to my field data, practicing yoga also changes a person's perception of time (stress, acceleration, pace) and of the environment (nature, detailed perception, attractiveness of people, their inner glowing, etc.). Furthermore, some of the body techniques are used as a strategy for self-distancing in various contexts outside of yoga. Before an exam yoga helps one to calm down, before a hard working day it gives increased fitness or greater concentration at work. The benefit of calmness is undoubtedly the most frequently mentioned benefit of yoga. Several informants talk of their altered body perception in general. Some say that they take more care of their body. Most of the practitioners started yoga because of back problems. For one, it was a memorable moment when she felt an improvement after her first class.[45] Others talk of fitness, of feeling refreshed and more alert afterwards. One practitioner, a woman over 50, described her body as stiff. Practicing yoga gives her more flexibility and mobility. She talks of what she calls an addiction to yoga, and the astonishing experience it gives her of feeling alive: "The body lives."[46] This altered body perception and mode of attention deeply influence everyday life. Sociologists describe this as the normalizing effects of gainful employment. They are infiltrated by yoga body practices. This self-experience gives rise to a subjectivity that withdraws from post-Fordist demands and causes social change.[47] Thus we can say that these informal structures of the prediscursive body experience establish reflexive belief systems that have system-overlapping consequences. They not only have spiritual effects, but also influence, for example, behavior at work or health prevention strategies.

[42] Csordas (1993, 1994, 67–70).

[43] Csordas (1994, 69).

[44] Progressive muscle relaxation, working with images in autogenic training, moving-breath correlation for calming down, etc., Singleton (2005).

[45] Interview at Jyotir Yoga, 17 March 2009, age 27.

[46] Interview at Anett Yoga, 19 January 2008, age 58. See also Schnäbele (2009, 191–194), whose data also bear witness to this specific experience.

[47] Schnäbele (2009, 249).

An International Yoga Resort: A Pivotal Production Site

My second period of fieldwork took place at Yoga Thailand on the Thai island of Samui in 2009, 2010 and 2012. This remote beach resort on the south side of the island gives insight into an internationalized yoga scene in the Ashtanga Yoga tradition. The founder of Yoga Thailand is Paul Dallaghan who was born in Ireland and is one of the rare non-Indian certified teachers of Sri K. Patthabi Jois (1915–2009), the disciple and successor of Krishnamacharya (1888–1989), both of whom were based in Mysore, India. At the resort in Thailand, people from Europe, Southeast Asia, English-speaking countries including Australia and New Zealand, and some South American countries, take part in residential teacher-training courses, retreats, or wellness programs. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon dominance at Mysore,[48] the clientele at Yoga Thailand is very mixed, making it a typical laboratory of transcultural encounter. Dallaghan is an example of cultural translocation: Born in Ireland, he travelled through France, Germany, and Israel, and settled for a few years in New York, then went to India, and now lives in Thailand. He teaches around the globe. Together with his wife, he founded Yoga Thailand in 2004. After his initial Sivananda Yoga practice in the mid-1990s, he joined Sharon Gannon's Jivamukti Yoga Center in the East Side of Manhattan, New York, around 1998. There he met the Indian Ashtanga Yoga master Jois in 2000. Soon after, he traveled several times to Mysore in India. He practiced Ashtanga Yoga regularly from 2001 to 2004 at the K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute and obtained the teaching certificate in 2007. Dallaghan calls his specific approach, which is taught at the resort, "centered yoga". This school also belongs to the lineage of Sri O. P. Tiwari who is repudiated for his pranayama teaching from the Kaivalyadham Institute, a yogic hospital and college at Lonavla near Pune, India, one of the earliest modern yoga institutions, founded in 1921.

Koh Samui is a popular tourist island with several harbors and an airport located only 1 h by air from Bangkok. Besides Yoga Thailand there are other yoga centers on the island and yoga is offered in many hotels. Retreats are offered during holiday seasons such as Christmas and Easter, and residential courses lasting for periods from a few days to several weeks are available all the year round. Special teacher training is also held regularly. The yoga courses are complemented by special offers such as wellness retreats with detoxication. One week with lessons, single room, and full board costs between 850 and 1,090 euros, depending on the course. Since there are both guided classes and Mysore classes, all levels from beginners to advanced are catered for.[49] Additionally yogic knowledge is actualized and transmitted through the medium of daily lectures. These teachings translate the concepts of yoga philosophy and apply them to today's world of practitioners.

[48] Burger (2006, 93), footnote 36.

[49] In so-called Mysore classes every student practices in his own pace the series of Ashtanga as far as he is capable of performing them. The teacher supervises this by correcting some postures and breathing.

Dallaghan can be considered a typical actor and producer in international yoga. I heard many of his sayings from other international yoga teachers who took courses at Yoga Thailand. In Dallaghan's autobiographic narrative, as reconstructed from his website and from our interview, he does not see himself as wandering between different cultures. He employs the typical metaphor of the inner path and calling that he followed.[50] This is a frequently observed inwardness and focus on self-transformation that is typical of modern spirituality, not only of yoga adepts.[51] The focus that gives identity and stability is on the continuity of the practice or path. In the typical yoga discourse it is also a path with moments of understanding and moments of blindness. Despite the fact that Dallaghan practiced meditation or Tai Chi in the past, he "didn't understand" at that time. At the age of 16, Dallaghan spent some time alone on a farm in France. He says that this was a "yogic experience" and that "the change started then but the practice came 8 years later," in New York in 1995, when he physically came into contact with yoga for the first time at the age of 24. The change is characterized by him as a shift from one self to another self. It means changing one's attitude from the self-centeredness of "me Paul" who is learning something from someone, to a fluid self that figuratively "bows" down in humility and thinks of itself as knowing nothing and making no progress. The altered self then can be a self that "listens and exactly applies" what is learned in order to become a "real student." The virtues required are receptiveness and openness towards the teacher and strictly following his orders. In the interview I gained the impression that the shift basically evolves through developing a relationship with the teachers on a personal level.

The founding of the resort is understood as a "vehicle to allow people to step into it [yoga]," as he himself "started off ignorant." Dallaghan is deeply convinced that anyone who is really interested will find a place to practice. As a result of this attitude, he speaks disparagingly of yoga networks, which "talk about yoga on a commercial level." Dallaghan clearly expresses his concept of the resort as compromising "halfway." His "true desire" is to teach the very interested in a "very simple, private, hidden" place with a special routine, a desire he may realize in the future. But "that's not ready yet." He founded Yoga Thailand because, in his opinion, no such place existed with such food, cleanliness, and certain principles such as no alcohol, no smoking, no meat, and funky programs. He interprets his entrepreneurship as yoga practice according to the *Bhagavadgīta* citation: "Yoga is skill in action . . . how you take care of what you do is part of yoga." If the business does not succeed, he won't mind and will feel free to do something else. His business concept, halfway between a five-star hotel and an ascetic cave in the woods, is also reflected in the pricing policy. Westerners would not value a yoga course that is offered for free or for a donation. And a resort located in a secluded

[50] This and the following quotations: Interview with Paul Dallaghan, 8 April 2010 at Yoga Thailand.

[51] See for example De Michelis (2004, 184, 186), Gebhardt et al. (2005, 243–244), and Schnäbele (2009, 239–248).

place in the countryside would not be so popular or suited to the idea of offering a yoga place with fair prices for both advanced practitioners and for beginners who just want "to check out." Yoga Thailand produces value through "good facilities, good teaching, good prices," and "integrity" as expressed, for instance, in the above-mentioned principles. It's neither free, nor can you pay by working for the teacher, as in ancient yoga teaching systems. There is a price because "there has to be a level of respect in trade," but it is meant to be fair. From the perspective of cultural economics, respect is translated into currency. In sum, Yoga Thailand offers an innovative yoga product in a holiday-beach context with supplementary options like healing or cleansing. Thus, a yoga resort in Thailand produces not only a body practice, but also, because of the local atmosphere, the climate, and the seclusion, a holiday good and a healing good, with low transaction costs.

International Demand Side

Due to the high demand for strength and discipline in Ashtanga Yoga many of the people who go to Yoga Thailand have an athletic background. Some have taken part in competitive sports, at least at school, and some were even members of national leagues. But, as a former triathlete told me, the good thing about yoga is the lack of competition.[52] Supplementary to Schnäbele's results, where the emancipatory body experience is central, in the international resort setting we also find a joy in body mastery and progress. This would be in line with the capitalist logic of maximizing. However, it may be due to another factor, namely the system environment alone, which encourages body mastery to grow.

Regarding sociality, an international resort offers opportunities for a cooperative feeling, even if this is transient. Some or most of the yoga practitioners will never meet again, at least outside Facebook. The temporary association is enough to feel socially enhanced and still free to concentrate on oneself. The like-mindedness or common spirit of the resort community was stressed by most of my informants as the most important attraction, besides the yoga itself. This like-mindedness should not be exaggerated. It is not really proved by long discussions of similarities in everyday life, life experience, financial situation, or values. The sense of like-mindedness is as vague and open as modern notions of yoga philosophy in most of the yoga teachings. In Yoga Thailand for instance, it is established by rules of politeness, calmness or silence, and above all through the ritualized practice and its inherent value of "letting go." Like-mindedness can therefore be seen as a transnational space, in which face-to-face meetings are transient, rather than as a medium of transcultural exchange. For this reason, I cannot agree with Singleton who claims that in yoga "the individual moves away from community and towards

[52] Interview at Yoga Thailand, 6 April 2010.

self-management and market individualism."[53] Rather the form of community has changed and includes individualistic aspirations.

Self-empowerment through knowledge acquisition has been elaborated as a typical feature of modern religious subjectivity. The agent in this late capitalist spirituality is conceived of as "spiritual wanderer."[54] This agent forms his own opinion cognitively by reading and attending lectures, and through (embodied) experience of spiritual methods. He or she is an expert of his and her own experience and spiritual needs, and always "on the road," with a strongly pluralist outlook with regard to the importance of religions. On the other hand, this autonomy also results in personal developmental work: There is a path to be followed in order to become oneself. This attitude of the spiritual wanderer is seen for instance in the holiday behavior of more dedicated yoga practitioners. During their holidays they travel from retreat to retreat, seeking famous masters and gathering specialized knowledge on breath control, anatomy, or detoxification. India and Asia are global places, as well as the Miami Life Center in the United States, depending on where the masters have their base.[55] The masters are invited to yoga studios around the world and a regional as well as transnational scene emerges, consisting of people who attend these high-level workshops. These masters are also present at Yoga Thailand insofar as the dining area has wireless access to the web. Facebook pictures from other workshops or YouTube videos of these masters are often discussed or viewed in order to clarify a specific posture or breathing technique.

An often neglected site of yoga service production is the teacher-pupil relationship. Through the ritual of the yoga lesson, this service provides yoga convictions or the feeling of belonging with an incremental familiarity.[56] But important for healing is that the teaching service provides a space for psychodynamic processes which eventually lead to improved psychic wellbeing, or help to maintain psychic health.[57] Focusing on "one's own center," the dissolution of blockades and disturbing patterns are named by practitioners as a means of returning to health.[58] Dallaghan describes a gradually developing personal connection that opens the self of the pupil as a key service in this relationship. He even compares it to the deepening love relationship of a couple.[59] Besides instruction and the provision of an "oasis" of relaxation, the creation of personal relationships has to be mentioned as a part of this outstanding production site in yoga.

[53] Singleton (2005, 302).

[54] Gebhardt et al. (2005).

[55] In the Miami Life Center, for instance, the famous yogi Kino McGregor has her home base.

[56] On the ritual character of yoga classes see De Michelis (2004, 252–260) and Schnäbele (2009, 117–127).

[57] Appl (2010). Unlike psychoanalysis, negative emotions are not treated in the yoga relationship and transferences are not consciously worked with.

[58] Schnäbele (2009, 248–251).

[59] Interview with Paul Dallaghan 8 April 2010, Yoga Thailand.

Postmaterialistic Values or the Postmaterialism of Wealthy People

What motivates yoga practitioners who practice regularly and have already mastered a certain degree of yoga? Are they motivated by postmaterialistic values? Postmaterialistic values indicate a shift towards goals like the quality of life, self-realization, cultural activities, political participation, freedom, nature and animal protection, etc. Due to the economic crisis in the early 1970s on one hand, and the growing material security and progressive elimination of personal, physical, and societal risks in industrial societies on the other hand, Inglehart developed the theory that wealthy societies tend to postmaterialistic moral values.[60] These values are conceived as less absolutist and more relativist. From this perspective, relativism might make transcultural flows and their adaptation in new surroundings easier. Given the openness of societies for plural options, flows of goods, beliefs, and habits can be enriched with meaning, references, and directional changes. Is there such a liberating and postmaterialistic side to yoga? Leaving aside the question if the correlation of wealth and postmaterialism can be applied to all countries worldwide, we might ask how consumerist or postmaterialist yoga practitioners are.

Regarding income distribution among yoga practitioners in Munich, a majority of the clientele is not wealthy, even in an expensive city such as Munich, although it must be said these findings are related to a high proportion of very young practitioners (some of them are still students or pursuing some form of education) and women (who earn on the average less than men): Forty-eight percent of yoga practitioners earn less than 1,500 euros a month (see Fig. 2).

The situation is different at an international resort abroad. The initial investment for flights, holiday time, and retreat expenses is much higher than with the Munich example. I have no quantitative monetary data for the Thailand sample, but I have my own experience from participant observation. Most of the people are highly educated, fluent in English, have lived or been educated abroad, and work in specialized jobs, for instance as managers, lawyers, doctors, real estate agents, coaches, etc.[61] They buy supplementary wellness services and products in the resort. Shoe fashions are revealing as a statement of values and consumerism: No eco-minded sandals, but Diesel, Gucci, and other hip labels predominate. Even if these are fake brands their owners could afford to buy originals. Peace and love can be combined by this postmaterialistic materialistics with "juicy couture" (see Fig. 3).

Remarkably, five out of 30 yoga practitioners at Yoga Thailand were temporarily unemployed. They had left high positions due to exhaustion. The yoga retreat or

[60] Inglehart (1977). The materialist-postmaterialist dichotomy and the newer dyad of traditional-sacred versus secular-rational (Norris and Inglehart 2004) has been widely criticized (methodologically, for its linear historical thinking, and its reception of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, according to which postmaterialist needs arise only when material needs have been satisfied).

[61] I did not observe a majority of people coming from helping professions; see Strauss (2005, 83).

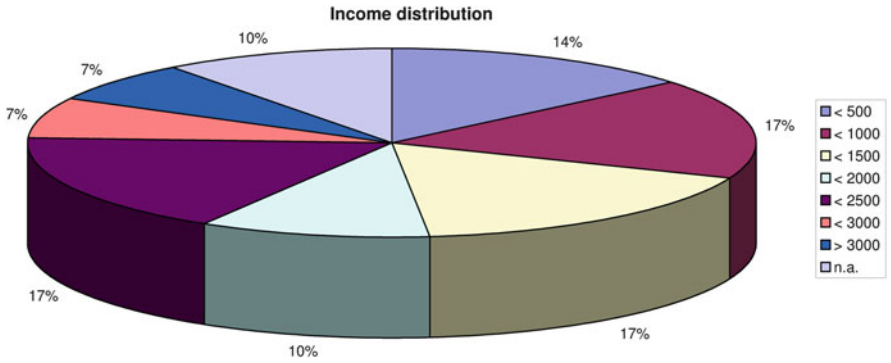

Fig. 2 Income distribution of 31 Munich yoga practitioners from nine yoga studios in Munich (2007–2009)

Fig. 3 "Peace, Love & Juicy Couture" on high heels does not necessarily imply postmaterialistic values (Photo: Yoga Thailand, March 2010, A. K.)

residential stay is intended to help them regain their strength before reentering high and demanding positions, or realizing their own business ideas in order to have more autonomy and creative time. Yoga is not an exit from capitalistic and post-Fordist working conditions. It is a product used by this group of people to enable them to compete again in the commercial world, as Strauss has described in her study on today's yoga travelers to Rishikesh in India.[62] According to Strauss, yoga balances the demands of risk societies for a societal subgroup (that has the financial means to practice yoga, as Schnäbele adds).[63] This fits Dallaghan's observation that the flow of Western practitioners to India has been encouraged by the change in global communication. In 2002 it was difficult to get online with a laptop in Mysore. Only 4 years later, in 2006, access to the Internet was possible anywhere in Mysore. Dallaghan stresses the ambivalence of this intensified and facilitated global communication and travel: "That change seems to allow the lifestyle to get in the yoga, right, allows it to fit. That does not necessarily mean that more [real, A.K.] yoga is done." But even if he criticizes the trend towards facilitating yoga, which is consumed like a holiday or after-work recreation, this is a necessary condition for creating demand among a global elite, enabling them to combine it with demanding jobs. If we think again of the coordinational system of Knauft, this use of yoga practice is not so much a way of just managing a work-life balance, but a marker of post-materialist capitalism, which tends towards the pole of modernity by following the goals of self realization in the job, and the self determination of work time, free time, and sabbaticals.

Conclusion

In transcultural studies several options of possible channels for transcultural flows are discussed: ideas, goods, human capital, institutions, and lifestyles. For Stanley Tambiah, it is mainly people, financial capital, and information that coalesce in transnational movements.[64] People and social networks, for sure, play a momentous role in spreading yoga geographically, for instance when Karma Yoga practitioners stratify yoga by going to orphanages, clinics, or schools to do social work for better karma. Life cycle rituals may also be crucial for transcultural flows, for example when young Israelis travel around the world after military service, before going to university, and end up in an Indian ashram practicing yoga. An Israeli informant explained to me how this habit accounts for the high number of Ashtanga Yoga institutes in Tel Aviv. Strauss sees a pull factor in cultural patterns.[65] Using Shmuel Eisenstadt's and Immanuel Wallerstein's concepts of periphery and center, she

[62] Strauss (2005, 58).
[63] Schnäbele (2009, 114).
[64] Tambiah (2002, 163).
[65] Strauss (2005, 51).

describes the early late nineteenth century flow of yoga from the periphery of the colonized subcontinent of India to the core of economic and political power in Europe as an exceptional countercurrent of flows in that epoch due to the idealization of Eastern wisdom in European romanticism, and Asia's view of the Western world as materialist. To explain transcultural flows, we should take into account these culturally bound expectations that materialize in cultural patterns. It was also Western talk of secularization and of living in a crisis that created a need for spirituality.[66] A discourse on technological biomedicine and on economically booming and accelerating cultures creates a pull factor for holistic medicine and a need for self-enhancement. "Being in a crisis" is easily transposed to more general figurations of an ill epoch or ill society. What was a figuration at the beginning becomes a "medicalized society" over time by a process of repetition and adaptation.

In addition to these concepts from cultural studies, this article has considered cultural economic modalities of producing, spreading, and negotiating as important factors for flows. Burger counts as a benefit of the cultural economic approach:

> . . .the differentiation of yoga's international and local markets: yoga as an export market—teachers travelling to take yoga abroad, students travelling to search for yoga in India; yoga as a trademark—tradition as a criteria of authority; yoga and religious affiliation; yoga and its salvation goods—well-being, salvation, transformation, books, diplomas; and yoga and its customer profiles—Indian and Western.[67]

I appreciate how far Burger pushes the economic approach, compared to many in the field who remain on a figurative level.[68] I'm not sure if I follow Burger in understanding books and diplomas as salvation goods, in claiming that the Weberian economic approach via salvation goods does not fit the "highly complex situation of encounter" with "mixed world views" and "culturally bound interpretations," and that market logic is not a sufficient tool for cultural contexts. As we have seen, if a salvation good is used in correlation to a *habitus*, then it can very well open up pluralist solutions to modern tensions. From the perspective of NIE we have been able to describe specific effects of yoga in human capital production as a central means and medium of transcultural flow. These changes in human capital stand out because of their eminent external effects: Regular yoga practice has a permanent point of reference in the challenges of modern work. Modern postural yoga has to be seen as a coping strategy for middle-class, globally-minded people in open and risky societies.[69] They may use it to produce public goods, to gain experience goods as benefits of a psychosomatic practice, to accumulate body capital, and to profit from the teacher-pupil relationship. Internalization of the mental model of yoga can go hand in hand with moral values that are relativist. Figure 4 shows the partial market of yoga in some of its dynamics, drafted in terms of cultural economics.

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[66] On the topos of yoga as a reaction to a religious crisis, see Singleton (2005, 302).

[67] Burger (2006, 91).

[68] See Carrette and King (2005), Knoblauch (2007), and Zinser (1997).

[69] Altglas (2008), Schnäbele (2009), and Strauss (2005).

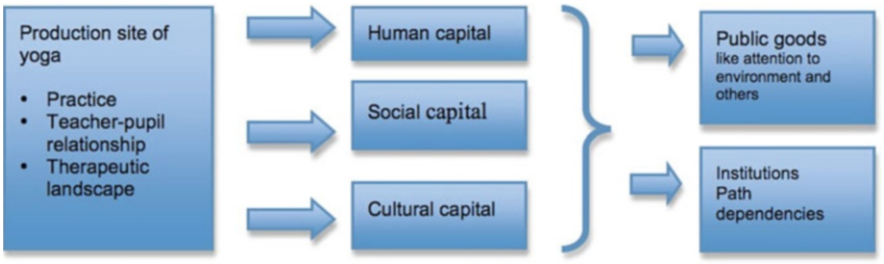

Fig. 4 The internalization of the mental model of yoga with some of its effects. Several sorts of capital are built up: human capital that also contains "body capital" (body awareness, techniques of relaxation, self-perception, techniques of calming down, strengthening and flexibility, self-care, and regeneration); social capital as a supporting network, an imagined community of like-minded people; cultural capital contains knowledge of the yoga tradition, songs, ethics etc. What some call "religious capital" may be seen as (embodied or habitualized) knowledge within social and cultural capital but not as a type of its own

Ashtanga Yoga, as well as other styles, is never monotonous, insofar as this product has a progressive logic. There is always a more advanced series or more sophisticated product supplement to attain for breathing, meditating, cleansing, or singing. For some high-performing business people, yoga retreats may function as breaks to enable body-mind regeneration after exhaustion and to prepare for the next professional startup or capitalist venture. The conceptual dichotomy of sacred-profane is inadequate here, but cultural economics can help to overcome this. All theories that, in De Michelis' words, interpret yoga as binding together "tradition and modernity, revelation and rationality, the sacred and the profane" have to take into account subjectivity ("transformation of the self") as the medium in which this binding appears.[70] The core doctrine of detachment and relaxation in modern yoga is a reaction to the enormous quantity of information in our society and unmanageable options for action. And in addition to these findings—which are part of an undercurrent in global yoga flows and need to be explored in more depth—not all yoga body practice can be seen as a means of resistance to modern economic systems, or even a counterculture of postmaterialism, but it is often a place of self-enhancement. Cultural economics of religion offers an opportunity to relate forms of late modern subjectivity, spirituality, modes of production, and work.

The idea of cultural flow can denote a space of encounter that is not characterized by exchange so much as a binding together through the fiction of "like-mindedness." This may be established through the yoga narrative and shared practice. But like-mindedness also allows each person to be him or her "self." In the light of these findings, Tambiah's assertion that flows intensify and sharpen socio-cultural diversity has to be reconsidered. It may be valid for the informal level of

[70] De Michelis (2004, 251). I doubt that yoga today should still be classified as part of the occultist endeavor to solve the sacred-secular crisis. Rather, this was on the agenda at the time of Vivekananda, bringing together diverging tendencies in late nineteenth century societies and helping people to cope with the intensified flows between East and West, colonizers and colonized.

yoga in regional partial markets, but it may be questioned with regard to very similar products in the shared practice. A formal homogenization can be observed of the organizational appearance of studios in local fields, and of tools, such as pricing. This adaptation goes hand in hand with a second, informal layer, the so-called "backstage" of regional modernity.[71] This backstage is very heterogeneous, as we found in our field studies. It is built up by combining body styles, and by interactive communication and the making of friends within smaller contexts of a subculture.

Recent theories of modernity stress the difference between local inventions and creative assimilations of modern institutions. They talk of multiple modernities and varieties of capitalism.[72] According to Eisenstadt, the diversity of modernity is due to the fact that modernity contains antinomies which are solved differently in different places and at different times. Yoga markets are a good example of this plurality of solutions. There is no unique market logic, but countless local and partial market logics and path dependencies. The regularities are not "logics," as rational choice assumptions might suggest, but empirically observable institutions in the sense of behavioral habits materializing in structures.

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[71] Holzer (2006).

[72] See Eisenstadt (2002) and Bornschier (2005).

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