

DOI: 10.21847/1728-9343.2020.1(165).196776

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## **SOCIOCULTURAL CHALLENGES AS DETERMINANTS OF THE RECEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF MODERN YOGA**

The dynamics of modern life in its cultural and social diversity indicates a special interest in modern yoga and its active implementation. The authors of the article try to identify those determinants that contribute to the development of yoga in modern conditions. They emphasize that interest in yoga is being formed under the influence of special factors characteristic of a post-industrial society with new sensations of time. The spread of new intellectual sensitivity also poses certain challenges for humans. Thus, this complex of sociocultural determinants activates interest in the cultural representations of the East. The desire to create personal and social reality sets up certain receptions and practices, and yoga is called upon to fulfill its special mission: it encourages us to study our basic outlooks on life, to become aware of which ones are fruitless nowadays, to search for more suitable ones nowadays in order to substitute the first ones.

**Keywords:** *modern yoga; the social in yoga; cultural and social determinants of yoga; body culture; reception and practice of yoga.*

### **Introduction**

Sociocultural changes always act as the basis and peculiar determinants of various events and practices in a human being's life. The social, represented in the philosophy of yoga, in itself is of interest and can be the subject of analysis by modern researchers. In this article, we analyze the social and cultural foundations that contribute to the flourishing of the phenomenon of yoga in the modern culture of the West. The study focuses on the ways of correlation of Eastern and Western traditions in the understanding of the body as well as the question of how the social component in the philosophy of yoga relates to the contexts of the social and cultural nature of the modern culture of the West.

The reaction of science to the impact of yoga classes is also under close consideration as representatives of a new post-industrial society are becoming more and more interested in the attention of science to alternative medicine methods and its ability to use existing achievements in the mode of their synthesis.

It must be mentioned that the social challenges that always shock society when changing the type of management, and the culture of a desire to change both themselves and their worldview evidence a person's constant search. Modern sociological studies and statistics provide a wealth of material for possible analysis that demonstrates the huge interest in the practice of yoga. It can, therefore, be said that the organic combination of the culture of the East with the culture of the West is acquiring new transformations.

*The purpose of the study* is to examine those socio-cultural features of modern culture of the West, which affect the intensity of the implementation of modern yoga practices. One of the objectives is to outline the prospects for

the development of yoga practice in modern society, taking into account the challenges of modern social development and the cultural situation of today.

### **Methods**

The present article purpose is achieved with the help of an analytical method used to process statistical data and a historical-comparative approach to understanding the social in the tradition of yoga. The cross-cultural analysis method allowed us to search for mechanisms through which ideas, skills, books, and other things move from one culture to another, transforming and forming the meanings and new positions of things in society as well as in nature.

### **Research and Results**

#### ***Interest in Yoga in an Industrial Society: Statistics and Analysis***

In terms of social and cultural aspects it is possible to outline the course of transformations within large and small social communities, and, in combination with their philosophical justifications, indicate their expected possible results. The statistics data allow us to describe the socio-cultural characteristics of the development of modern people and help to make evident the main trends that contribute to the development of modern yoga.

It is estimated that around the world there are 300 million people practicing yoga. According to the information and analytical platform Fitness Connect UA, which conducts annual comprehensive research on the situation in the field of fitness in Ukraine (taking into account surveys of leading market players, price segments, investment potential for the development of the fitness industry, etc.), the Top 10 fitness 2018 trends are as follows:

**Tab. 1. Top 10 fitness trends of 2018 in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>.**

|    |                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | High Intensity Interval Training    |
| 2  | Group programs in large groups      |
| 3  | Wearable technologies / wearables   |
| 4  | Exercises with own body weight      |
| 5  | Strength training                   |
| 6  | Experienced certified professionals |
| 7  | Yoga                                |
| 8  | Personal training                   |
| 9  | Fitness Programs for the Elderly    |
| 10 | Functional Fitness                  |

Yoga takes the 7th place, but statistics data indicate that Yoga is in constant dynamic.

**Tab. 2. Dynamics of Yoga from 2007 to 2018<sup>2</sup>.**

|    | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 2  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 3  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 4  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 6  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 7  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 7    |      |      | 7    |
| 8  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 8    |      |
| 9  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 10 |      | 10   |      |      |      |      |      | 10   |      | 10   |      |      |

Yoga, which held the 7th position in 2015, and the 10th position in 2016, occupied the 8th place in the 2017 studies. And in 2018 it again took the 7th place. For the first time this trend hit the top ten in 2008, and in 2009 fell out of the top ten. However, the situation changed in 2010 (the 14th place), in 2011 - the 11th place. In 2012, yoga remained in the same position, and in 2013 its place changed into the 14th one<sup>3</sup>.

Yoga in Ukraine is mainly popular in regional centers and large cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Lviv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia), whose population covers 18% of the country's population. According to the latest statistics and analytics, the popularity of Yoga is decreasing: experts believe that the younger generation is most likely not very interested in yoga, but as people approach the age of 30-35, the number of those who want to do it in order to improve their health increases<sup>4</sup>.

In Russia, yoga became truly popular in the 2000s. The Yoga Journal survey results show that the following styles have become the most popular: Hatha Yoga (59%), Iyengar (37%) and Ashtanga Vinyasa (16%). According to statistics, 64% of practitioners have thought about becoming yoga teachers, 20% position themselves as vegetarians, 64% have higher education. Yoga classes students are moderately affluent, socially protected people (74% have middle income and above average), mostly 35-females at ages 35-45 and males at ages 30-50<sup>5</sup>. German

statistics show that the reason for the classes is the desire to increase physical (58%) and intellectual (53%) performance. However, the respondents also indicated such major reasons for starting the yoga practice as the desire to improve their physical (66%) and mental state (64%) (*Yoga in Zahlen BDY, 2018*). In the United States, 36 million Americans practice yoga, and from 2012 to 2016, their number grew by 50%. About one in three Americans has tried yoga at least once. The most popular reasons for starting yoga are stress relief and flexibility. And what is more interesting, over the past four years, the number of American people over 50 practicing yoga has tripled<sup>6</sup>.

After analyzing the statistics, some questions arise about why a person of the 21st century prefers the reception and practice of yoga and whether it is possible to find cultural and social causes that act as determinants of active interest in it. K. Baier, a well-known popularizer of modern yoga, gave the following definition of the phenomenon: Yoga is a

*"phenomenon of cultural and religious history, which manifests a change in the social configuration of knowledge concerning the way yoga is conceived of and practised at a given time. This has been the focus of attention of Modern Yoga Studies, aimed at explaining Modern Yoga's historical emergence and related cultural historical changes" (Baier, 2016).*

The studies of different Western researchers provide an opportunity to analyze the nature of the determinants of modern yoga in the culture of the West. Among them, there are the works of E. De Michelis, S. Newcombe, J. Alter, S. Norman, S. Syman, V. Schnäbele, S. Strauss, K. Baier. The pool of researchers also includes the solid team of the editorial board of the journal *Yoga*, founded by S. Newcombe: Prof. Ellen Goldberg, Dr. Philipp André Maas,

<sup>1</sup> Ukraine fitness services market research 2018. Retrieved from <https://fitnessconnect.com.ua/files/2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Yoga in Numbers, 2018. Retrieved from <https://yoga.ua/read/joga-v-tsifrah/>

<sup>3</sup> Ukraine fitness services market research 2018. Retrieved from <https://fitnessconnect.com.ua/files/2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Yoga in Numbers, 2018. Retrieved from <https://yoga.ua/read/joga-v-tsifrah/>

<sup>5</sup> Spiritual Practice in Numbers: Who and How Much is Engaged in Yoga in Russia. Mathematics of Indian "gymnastics", 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.buro247.ru/.../dukhovnaya-praktika-v-tcifrahkh->

<sup>6</sup> Yoga Statistics: Staggering Growth Shows Ever-increasing Popularity, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.thegoodbody.com/yoga-statistics/>

Dr. Mark Singleton, Prof. Smriti Srinivas and others. E. De Michellis described modern types of yoga, highlighting its features, which took shape under the influence of Western culture (De Michellis, 2005). S. Newcombe made a conclusion that yoga practice is in line with modern spirituality as "the most popular form of religiosity in the educated classes of the post-industrial society." (Newcombe, 2009). She and P. Berger correlated yoga with "an atmosphere of religious pluralism." V. Schnäbele, analyzed the space of modern urban yoga in a "post-industrial-neoliberal social context" and tried to answer the question about the influence of yoga on the self-positioning of those who practice it in the social structure of society (Schnäbele, 2009). S. Strauss believes that the passion for Yoga corresponds to the worldwide movement of searching for and shaping a different modernity. K. Baier states in his study,

*"All three sociological interpretations of Modern Yoga show a close connection between yoga and socio-cultural conditions in contemporary society. As a multifunctional, low-key spiritual practice, yoga is very suitable for serving the globally expanding spiritual scene among the middle classes. The major themes of this scene since it began - coinciding with the point of origin of Modern Yoga - have been holistic health teachings and therapies, mysticism and meditation, alternative lifestyles and cultural critique, systems of intensive physical culture outside sport exercises, the unawakened human potential, and the unification of science and religion. All of these areas have been picked up by Modern Yoga and presented as exercise systems which people with any religious background or none can adopt at any time. It is clear that there are many reasons why Modern Yoga has arrived and is here to stay" (Baier, 2016).*

Later S. Newcombe put emphasis not only on "religious hunger", but on the desire to get acquainted with the "mystical" colours of Yoga, slightly adjusting the interest in Yoga in Western culture (Newcombe, 2016). Philip Deslippe supported her. He examined the history of yoga in the United States (until the mid-twentieth century), describing its nature, where and how it was taught, and who were its teachers and students of that time. He claims that early American yoga was not physical or postural, but primarily mental and magical. "Early American yoga was not centered on books or specific figures, but rather upon an active and widespread network of travelling teachers who gave tiered levels of instruction through public lectures, private classes, and dyadic relationships. Teachers of yoga were overwhelmingly of a type - educated, cultured, and professionally savvy - and students were largely female, affluent, and invested in American metaphysical religion." (Deslippe, 2018).

In 2019, S. Newcombe published an article in which she described the first years of yoga practice in Great Britain after World War II, emphasizing the enormous role of two Yoginis - Sunita and Kailash Puri. They were not just yoga teachers - their lives illustrate how yoga opened up new opportunities for improving personal qualities and social influence, offering a new way for the liberation of women. Kailash Puri also gave lessons on healthy eating, and since the 1970s. As in the United States, most of the students were women (70-90 % of those who attended yoga classes). Many of them later became yoga teachers. There were several reasons for the phenomenon. First of all, the modern practice of yoga had much in common with such exercise methods as Swedish and Danish gymnastic exercises, which were popular among women at the turn of the XX-th century. Secondly,

*"Teaching yoga also gave women viable work that could fit around family commitments. Teaching yoga allowed them to earn more in shorter periods of time compared to other employment accessible to women at that time, such as secretarial work" (Newcombe, 2019).*

The industrial society had special demands in the form of improving the material base of women (constituting the vast majority of yoga practitioners), familiarizing with physical exercises, which served as an indicator of affiliation with an affluent class, a nascent interest in a healthy lifestyle, a feeling of a woman's social significance, the search for new spiritual guidelines, etc.

#### **Difficulties in understanding the social in yoga**

The development determinants of this phenomenon are of great interest that is complemented by huge material of various nature. The number of articles that indicate an improvement in the way of communication and a positive effect on the lives of those who practice yoga today is huge. The authors point out the need for yoga practice in order to maintain physical, social and spiritual health. (Abera, 2017). The scope of the material, which describes the positive nature of yoga, based on medical reasons, is also impressive. It is strongly advised there to include yoga in the "healthy lifestyle protocol" to improve the state of one's mind and body. At the same time, the number of articles investigating clinical test results of those who practice yoga, medical indicators of improvement (and sometimes even deterioration) of health has increased. Undoubtedly, yoga classes contribute to the formation of a completely new ideology and practice as a cultural and social component of modern society, which can organizationally indicate the path to achieving one's own freedom and well-being. But is it possible to point out those fundamental features of the 21st century Western culture that play the role of determinants and push a person to yoga, demonstrating the social and cultural effects of its receptions and practices?

Obviously, the Indian tradition of yoga practice is not applicable in its full understanding to Western culture. It "accepted" yoga, but did not leave it in the form of traditional Eastern yoga, but transformed it into its own special brand of modernity. M. Eliade wrote that yoga is "a religious expression of a highly developed urban civilization, but not a folk culture." (Eliade, 2002a: 180). Today, yoga is also an element of urban culture, the culture of the largest cities. This causes a natural interest in the social characteristics of modern yoga as in all philosophies (both in East and West) the social and spiritual, the social and asocial were always at the forefront of thought and aroused constant interest. The social in the tradition of yoga is a rather difficult component to understand. The description and understanding of yoga can be traced in ancient sources, and its tasks or goals that a person should solve in their life are represented by certain directions. They are the so-called four values or principles of activity (Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksha). The foundations of these four goals were formed on the basis of two ideas: the idea of denying social activity and the idea of maintaining the same activity. The combination of these two, at first glance, unconnected positions, found its realization in the concept of Purushartha or Chaturartha (see *The Upanishads*).

The social was not separable from the spiritual. The explanation of this relationship was formed on the basis of two phenomena - sacrifice and austerities. But while the primacy of the sacrifice system was proclaimed in the Brahman, in the Upanishads the primacy is given to

metaphysical knowledge (*Eliade, 2002a: 215*), and knowledge is understood as a value. The sacred texts of Aranyaka "were taught in secret, far from villages; in the forest. Their doctrines emphasize the self, subject of the sacrifice, instead of the concrete reality of the rites." (*Ibid*). The dialectic of the social and asocial also gets a special color (after all, the gods achieved immortality not only with the help of victims, but also with the help of austerity): "Certain forms of asceticism, for example, holding the breath, are even considered superior to sacrifice; their results are declared to be more precious than the "fruits" of sacrifice." (*Eliade, 2002a: 217*). The dialectic of the social - antisocial goes through a complex evolutionary path and influences the formation of the axiom of yoga - "a person is born into the world created by himself" (*Eliade, 2002b: 45*). Moreover, the Bhagavad-Gita describes a possible "existential crisis" and ways to overcome it, among which is the ability to "act so as not to contribute to "world turmoil" with its passivity (*Ibid: 203*). The life path itself, concentrating on activity, is regarded as dominant in the life of a yogi.

Hence the understanding of the formation of the idea of men's true spirituality that means not to leave society, and fulfil themselves as much as possible in conjunction with the social, performing Dharma. (that is one of the most important concepts of all Indian thinking, that has no-single word translation into European languages due to its fundamental ambiguity, but in its most general form means "order", "paradigm", "norm" of the existence and development of both the universe and society; the governing spiritual, social and moral "law"). "The idea of developing oneself through following one's Dharma formed the basis of a practicing Yogi. The question arises: why does the Dharma develop?

*"Any social function is inherently transcendental to man; each activity is transcendental, i.e. it contains certain meanings of the current understanding of the Universe. It is necessary to make efforts to expand consciousness, and this is already regarded as an effort (transcendence). And one should not focus on the achieved fruits of one's activity, since the activity itself is interesting if it corresponds to Dharma"*<sup>7</sup>

So, the sharpness of the mind, the elimination of its fluctuations, the improvement of the options for seeing, listening and feeling the Universe are considered the basis of the method of personal transformation as the fulfillment of the social. The following words of K. Baier are also about this:

*"Scientists begin to take interest in a phenomenon at the latest when it becomes noticeable as an economic and cultural factor, as is the case for yoga now. A success that has lasted many decades indicates that Modern Yoga reflects deeper sensibilities and ways of thinking. One can expect to find out something about how people live under the conditions of modernity from researching yoga, which is reason enough for the cultural, social and historical sciences to take an interest" (Baier, 2016).*

#### **Grounds for implementing social investment of yoga**

The reference to "deep sensibility and thinking" allows us to talk about the social in Yoga in different contexts and at the same time to expand horizons of understanding of the social in it. One of such contexts, in our opinion, can be

Time as one of the main components of modern culture. Countries with highly developed economies can boast of such a phenomenon as the availability of free (leisure) time. According to the statistics presented above, we could see that in the developed countries of the West and the USA as well as in the countries of the post-Soviet space, people, who engaged in yoga, are socially protected and moderately wealthy, that is, those who have a wealth of "free time". This phenomenon leads to unexpected transformations in the social sphere, directions of development of the human community itself and leaves a certain imprint on individual human activity. Undoubtedly, modern yoga combines the individual aspect of development and contributes to the various manifestations of the implementation of social investments, which has become a characteristic "business card" of developed countries with a post-industrial political and economic character of arrangement.

The rational aspect of the implementation of free time contributed to the formation of various social movements, including international public organizations. An example is the KAICIID intergovernmental organization, whose mandate is to promote the use of global dialogue to prevent and resolve conflicts in order to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation. The members of this organization are the leaders of a wide variety of professions, among which are representatives of specialists in the field of modern practical yoga. In December 2018, one of the authors of the article participated in an international practical conference "International Conference "Intercultural Dialogue Workshop to Foster Coexistence & Diversity", 08 - 10 December, 2018. Rishikesh, India", that was held by KAICIID (*Muslim and Hindu Youth Unite at GWA/KAICIID Summit, 2018*).

The conference was aimed at uniting the religious leaders of the countries of Central Asia (in particular, India, Pakistan, etc.), who make political decisions in order to develop and implement multilateral initiatives to strengthen social cohesion and resolve conflicts. V. Lobas, President of the "Asanga Yoga School - Traditional Yoga Philosophy", represented the European department for the interaction of cultures of East and West in the context of the program to overcome stereotypes in dialogues of different cultures and religions.

#### **The bodily is one of the dominant modern challenges**

What else acts as a determinant (a development factor) of interest in modern yoga? A new intellectual sensibility has become a feature of the modern cultural situation. We have witnessed a spiritual crisis, which always brings to life the manifestation of the dialectic of such oppositions as "the social - the asocial", "the social - the spiritual". Moreover, the dialectic of the opposition "the spiritual - the body/bodily" has intensified. Modern culture (we are talking about its humanitarian colouring) - a presence culture - is forming a completely new sensibility, paying more attention to the body and everything related to it. At the same time, a presence culture seeks to correlate a human with the cosmos; its goal is to transform a human ("humans consider their bodies to be part of a cosmology. There, they don't see themselves as eccentric in relation to the world but as being part of the world." (*Gumbrecht, 2005: 80*)). Thus, the culture acquires a special passion in relation to any kind of activity in which the phenomenon of the body has become the focus of attention. Now, the body is not just included in the world, it has an internal meaning. It is no coincidence that H.U. Gumbrecht calls a presence

<sup>7</sup> Safronov, A. (2017). Sotsialnaya filosofiya yogi (The Social Philosophy of Yoga). Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Nmf7MK9QY0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Nmf7MK9QY0)

culture "the culture of the body" (*Ibid: 86*), as a special place is given to the body "feelings" in it.

In our opinion, the modern yoga researcher Dr. Georg Feuerstein perfectly described how yoga theory and practice fit into the context of a new sensibility, bringing attention to moral transformations:

*"The postures are only the "skin" of yoga. Hidden behind them are the "flesh and blood" of breath control and mental techniques that are still more difficult to learn, as well as moral practices that require a lifetime of consistent application and that correspond to the skeletal structure of the body. The higher practices of concentration, meditation and unitive ecstasy (samadhi) are analogous to the circulatory and nervous system" (Feuerstein, 2003).*

Feuerstein insists on the practice of world improving, emphasizing the features of constructing the social as a necessary condition in yoga:

*"Attitudes are enduring tendencies in your mind that show themselves in your behavior as well as your speech. Yoga encourages you to examine all your basic attitudes toward life to discover which ones are dysfunctional so that you can replace them with more appropriate ones." (Feuerstein, 2006)*

The intellectual sensibility of presence culture is no longer possible without resorting to the bodily or ignoring it: hence the desire to harmonize such components as spirit - body - cosmos (Gumbrecht). Oddly enough, this understanding of the new culture is echoed by science. Deepak Kumar Semwal analyzes the scientific discoveries obtained from studies of yoga as physical, mental and spiritual practice, and describes the possible prospects for such studies. (*Deepak, 2016*). As you can see, we are talking about understanding the body in the context of human life. It involves a complex systemic organization of the physical, metal, psychological, social, cultural, physiological and even chemical components. This echoes the ideas of the famous book "Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines. From the Good Wishes of the All-Good Buddha Samanta-Bhadra." The chapter "Psychological and physiological value of yoga" focuses on the study of the body in a state of life:

*"Western psychologists and physiologists will find that the experiments of the Hindu, Tibetan and Theological Yogins introduce a completely new perspective on the psychological and physiological functioning of the human body during both ordinary and unusual amazing states of consciousness. Many of the theories of Western physiology are the result of studying DEAD tissue in dissections of corpses. A scientific method for studying the physiology and psychology of a LIVING human body under various conditions, without going beyond the limits of the nervous system, brain and viscera, would enrich the medical science of the West with many significant data that are currently unknown. And such a scientific method follows definitely from the exercises of YOGINS, especially from Tibet and India." (Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, 1957).*

Yoga always preferred the synthesis of the physical and the spiritual; it aimed at eliminating the vibrations of the mind. In this context, the project, organized by the management of the Austrian national football team FK Austria, attracts with its modern intellectual sensibility. V. Lobas works as a spirituality expert (a Yoga and Philosophy teacher) with the football team players, where, along with physical stretching, much attention is paid to

exercises to strengthen the players' psychosomatics, which helps not only their athletic training, stretching, and preventing injuries, but also contributes to the formation of their stable mental representations. Without a doubt, a player's inner world, his personal experiences, authority, ratings, etc. create a special context for a sportsman's life. The highest level of organization and concentration of the body, necessary to achieve sports results, is not possible to develop without creating a mental silence space and the formation of the body-the spiritual balance. The professionalism of the players is determined by the highest level of physical fitness combined with concentration of attention and the ability to shape their inner world (personal reflection), the social world (ratings, authority, etc.) and the spiritual (the mental, an ability to listen to silence, a meditation pause, etc.), based on the knowledge that they gain as a result of yoga practice.

In modern society, the phenomenon of the accelerated flow of time has also manifested itself and has intensified the desire to "keep up with it." The sharp dynamism of modern life causes various types of pressure on a human, ranging from small tensions (already present during the school years) to various kinds of stresses, when the theme of the body is played out in various sociocultural contexts. The statistics data prove the thesis that "psychological burdens" throw society into "a fever" and that yoga practice can serve as a kind of compromise between humans and civilization with its new speeds that become disproportionate to humans. Taking up doing yoga and its development always takes place in large cities, where a human is particularly susceptible to stress. If we analyze the mapping of yoga centres location, the coverage of its respondents, we can see one and the same trend: yoga begins actively to manifest itself in cities with populations of over a million.

It is worth highlighting the connection between the topic of the bodily and such features of modern civilization development as the increase in patients with diagnoses of a mental and neurological nature: Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, anxiety and depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, as well as a large-scale increase in mental illnesses (various phobias, personality disorder, alcohol and drug addiction, dementia, adaptability disorder, neurasthenia, etc.). This list of mental disorders in large cities of developed countries is confirmed by the huge evidence material of a medical, social and psychological nature. In terms of this, questions about one's own "I", about the stability of the personality, one's gender, one's memory, about the existence of the personality in general, etc. are becoming intensely topical. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the term "Yoga therapy" is more and more often used today. (*Woodyard, 2011*).

Researchers at the Indian Medical University (Asha Bipolar Clinic, Asha Hospita) write the following:

*"When health-care professionals talk about yoga, they usually discuss either its usefulness as a lifestyle intervention or as a potential treatment for physical and psychological problems. The health-care community, particularly mental health community, is currently interested in the physical exercises (Hatha Yoga or Pranayama) and few ill-defined meditative practices (such as Dhyana in Mantra Yoga). Hence, the focus is less on the mystical-spiritual aspects of yoga and more on the measurable/interventional and physical-psychological aspects (this specific narrower aspect will be called as "Yoga therapy" in this article to differentiate it from the*

broader wholesome term - which is merely called - yoga). Recent research in psychiatry has been in search of the empirical evidence for the usefulness of yoga therapy as complimentary or solitary therapeutic agent in psychiatric treatment." (Reddy & Starlin, 2016).

#### Yoga practice as a constructivist project

Psychosomatic Therapy training, elementary skills of body and mind awareness, the ability to be responsible for the flexibility of mental representations are becoming an essential preventive measure for an "overloaded" society. And yoga therapy in that regard can be one of the mechanisms for blocking negative manifestations of a psychosomatic nature. Supporting the above mentioned may be the desire to integrate yoga (as an innovation) into the work, as happened at the School of Social Work at Simmons College in Boston. Steffi L. Shapiro, director of The Well Street Station in Watertown, MA, a private psychotherapist, offered "yoga as an adjunct to clinical work, the course includes information on using yoga to decrease anxiety, lift depression, and raise self-esteem" (Sisk, 2007). Steffi L. Shapiro, solving the problem of improving the practice of a social worker for the speedy recovery of their patients, is carrying out a socially valuable project: the issue of exploring yoga practice is transferred from the individual plane to the medical and social one. Undoubtedly, such an activity requires certain efforts, which are both social and transcendental. From this perspective, Yoga stands out (among fitness, Pilates, sports and physical education, group and individual exercises, focusing on body care) with its social attractiveness (Abera, 2017).

Along with yoga therapy, modern society tunes people to the process of constant constructing of themselves. Here it is time to recall the term of the postmodern philosophy "body-without-organs", which was described with the aim of conveying the tension of modern life by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). Emphasizing the inconsistency of the idea of the final state of the body, which was equated and regarded by them as death, they proposed such bodily characteristics as relevance and virtuality (by virtuality is meant the stock of potential movements, energies and affects, etc.). Actual body measurement is impossible without the virtual one, and self-design, the choice of configurations of self-creation under the influence of external factors and unexpected circumstances affect the trajectory of the body design. In this context, it seems interesting and natural to supplement the idea of biohacking with practical training of modern yoga. Bulletproof blog creator Dave Asprey. (Silicon Valley investor) has been exploring brain development and capabilities. His book *Head Strong: The Bulletproof Plan to Activate Untapped Brain Energy to Work Smarter and Think Faster-in Just Two Weeks* (2017) (Asprey, 2018) has become a bestseller. The composition of behavioral skills, habits, rules, which the author writes about and which will allow a person to win a definitely high position in the current time period while leveling the "tingling" of modern civilization to a minimum have much in common with yoga practice and meditations, aimed at strengthening the physical and the mental and at the same time the formation of the social.

#### Conclusions

Sociocultural determinants act as engines of yoga receptions and practices. The dominance of the rational began to "shake" in favor of the equivalence of the rational,

the bodily and the emotional, increasing interest in yoga. Yoga practice introduced the bodily element into the culture of the West as a component of spiritual, social and physical life; it has become one of the many answers to the challenges of the crisis of Western culture. Having such a luxury as free time, the society of highly developed countries opens up completely new horizons for life for a certain part of the population and the opportunity to invest it in numerous receptions and practices, among which yoga is occupying a rather high place.

Due to a new intellectual sensitivity, a special cognitive situation has formed. The "Do it yourself and keep moving forward" formula is gaining momentum in modern society. This cognitive position grows on the basis of the new nature of culture - a presence culture with its uncompromising interest in the body. The formation of a new culture aggravated the opposition "the social - the asocial" and "the bodily - the spiritual", that contributed to a sharp rise of the problems of a psychological, socio-psychological, medical and physiological nature. The desire to harmonize and jinx the opposition, that began to represent itself in the regime of contradictions, has sharpened and accelerated the search for ways to resolve them. The culture of the body and the technique of changing its not only internal, but also the external "I" in order to improve reality and, therefore, society, is carried out in the context of a social order for a new intellectual sensitivity. That is why the tuning of the modern human is based on the desire to balance the mental, the physical, the emotional and the social. The modern yoga practice has been forming the space for finding answers to this challenge. Increasingly, modern yoga acts as a balancing mechanism between the sharp corners of life positions and is considered as a method of harmonizing them.

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### **СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНІ ВИКЛИКИ ЯК ДЕТЕРМІНАНТИ РЕЦЕПЦІЙ І ПРАКТИК СУЧАСНОЇ ЙОГИ**

Бажання творити особисту і соціальну реальність налаштовує на певні рецепції і практики, і йога покликана виконати свою особливу місію: вона закликає вивчати наші основні погляди на життя, з'ясувати, які з них є нефункціональними за умов сучасності, націлює нас на їх заміну і на пошук більш придатних для життя. Автори спираються на аналітичний метод при обробці статистичних даних, історико-компаративістський підхід для розуміння соціального в традиції йоги. Також присутня методологія крос-культурного аналізу, яка дозволяє шукати механізми, завдяки яким ідеї, навички, книги тощо переміщуються із однієї культури в іншу, трансформуючи і формуючи сенси і нові положення речей в соціумі, в природі. Динаміка сучасності в її культурному і соціальному різноманітті свідчить про особливий інтерес до сучасної йоги. Автори намагаються знайти детермінанти, які сприяють розвитку йоги в умовах сучасності. Вони підкреслюють, що зацікавленість йогою формується під впливом особливих факторів, характерних для постіндустріального суспільства із новим відчуттям часу. В статті показано, що формування нової культури загострило опозиції "соціальне-асоціальне" й "тілесне-духовне", що сприяло різкому злету проблем психологічного, соціопсихологічного, медико-фізіологічного характеру. Поширення нової інтелектуальної чутливості також створює певні виклики для людини. Цей комплекс соціокультурних детермінант активізує інтерес до культурних традицій Сходу. Бажання гармонізувати і прогнозувати опозиції, які стали репрезентувати себе в режимі протиріч, загострило і прискорило пошуки шляхів їх вирішення. Культура тіла і техніка зміни свого не тільки внутрішнього, а й зовнішнього "Я" з метою вдосконалення реальності і, отже, соціуму здійснюється в контексті соціального замовлення на нову інтелектуальну чутливість. Саме тому тюнінг сучасної людини розбудовується на бажанні збалансувати психічне, фізичне, емоційне і соціальне. Автори показують, що практика сучасної йоги якраз і формує простір для реалізації відповідей на виклики: вона стала виконувати роль механізму в процесі балансування між гострими кутами життєвих позицій і роль методу їх гармонізації.

*Ключові слова:* сучасна йога; соціальне в йозі; детермінанти йоги; тілесність.

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Надійшла до редакції: 16.01.2020

Прийнята до друку: 29.01.2020