

YOGA SUBCULTURE IN İSTANBUL;
BODY, BELONGING, IDENTITY



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PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: 31/05/2021

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Signature

On this path
effort never goes
to waste,
and there is no failure.
Even a little effort
toward spiritual awareness
will protect you
from the greatest fear.

(2:40) The Bhagavad Gita

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı alt kültürel yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde araştırmayı yaptığım kurum dahilinde İstanbul’da bir yoga alt kültürü olup olmadığını değerlendirmektir. Eğer İstanbul’da bir yoga alt kültürü varsa bu alt kültürün oluşmasındaki sürecin nasıl gerçekleştiğini anlamak ve beden, aidiyet ve kimlik kavramlarının nerede yer aldığını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmanın verileri etnografik çalışma ile gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlem tekniği kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Bir yoga stüdyosunun 3 şubesinde 12 kişiyle derinlemesine görüşme gerçekleştirilmiş, birçok yoga seansına ve yoga sonrası sohbetlerine katılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular İstanbul’da bir yoga alt kültürünün olduğunu göstermektedir. Beden, kimlik ve aidiyet kavramları yoga alt kültürünün oluşumunda önemli rol oynamaktadır. Araştırma verilerine göre yoga alt kültürü yogaya yüklenen anlamlarla başlar ve bireylerin sosyalizasyon süreçleri ile gelişir. Yoga bireylerin yaşamında bir dönüm noktası, içsel yolculuklarında bir araç, bir kaçış ve bir sosyalleşme alanıdır. Beden bireylerin kendini ifade ettiği, dönüştürerek inşa ettiği kültürel bir öge olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bireyler bedenleri aracılığıyla farkındalık geliştirir ve içinde bulundukları topluluğa karşı aidiyet oluştururlar. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgu ve gözlemler bireylerin ortak paylaşımları ve birbirleriyle olan iletişimleri beden algısı ile başladığını göstermektedir. Yoga onlara sosyal alan sağlayan, aidiyetlerini geliştiren bir alandır. Bedenlerindeki değişim ile tutum davranışları değişmeye başlayan bireyler yogayı yaşam biçimi olarak benimsemeye başlar. Yoga onların kimliklerinin bir parçası olmaya başlar. Kimlik inşası beden inşası ile başlar. Araştırma sonucuna göre yoganın bireylerin alışkanlıklarında, kullandıkları dilde, sosyalleşme biçimlerinde değişime sebep olan bir yaşam biçimi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yoga, alt kültür, beden, kimlik, aidiyet, farkındalık, değişim

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to evaluate if there is a yoga subculture in İstanbul within the yoga studio that have been researched. In addition to this, to understand how the process of subculture is formed, and to understand where the concepts of body, belonging/identity take place in accordance with subculture approaches.

The data is collected through the combination of semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation techniques by using ethnographic method. Twelve in-depth interviews have been performed from three branches of the yoga studio, and it is involved in many yoga sessions and yoga small talks.

The findings show that there is a yoga subculture in İstanbul. The concepts; body, belonging/identity have significant roles in shaping the yoga subculture. According to research data yoga subculture begins with the meanings attributed to yoga, and grows with the socialization processes of the individuals. Yoga appears as a turning point, a tool for inner journey, a runaway, and a social place for individuals. Body appears as a way of expression and a cultural element that individuals can transform and build. Through their body individuals develop awareness, and compose belonging to the community they are in. The findings and observations of the research shows that common sharings and communications of the individuals with each other begin with body perception. Yoga is the place where individuals create social space, and improve their identity.

Key words: Yoga, subculture, body, identity, belonging, awareness, change

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PREFACE

I have been practicing yoga for about six years. I noticed the change in myself from the moment I started practicing yoga to the process of becoming an expert. Not only my relationship with my body, but also with my social environment has changed. Further, my interests have expanded and changed as well. The reason why I went back to the practice of Hatha Yoga again and again was because it has created an inner space to me. At a complex and challenging time in my life, yoga seemed to embrace me every time and made me feel that I was not alone. It was quite amazing to see the change in my personality.

In the early months of my Hatha Yoga experience, what attracted me most was me having my own time and space. For the most part, I did not seem to have a single space of my own in the running of life. I was tired of the thoughts flying in my mind and the problems I was trying to solve. I have met yoga at times when life has forced me to its limits. Over time, I realized that the changes I noticed in the yoga sessions I attended, the feelings and thoughts I felt could be not only to me, but also to everyone who attended that session. Because yoga had a point of view that emphasized integrity and unity. As I attended the sessions later, I got the feeling that I was sharing things in common with other people who came to the session, even though I never knew them. The thought of having my own time, which I physically defined, sharing emotions and spending time with other individuals pushed me towards an emotional sense of belonging. That space made me feel good. By observing the change in myself over time, I began to realize that my sense of belonging led to some changes. It was among my observations that the concept of belonging therefore has the property of holding a

group together, and this sense of belonging can be associated with identity development.

The physical change I observed in my body led to the change of the person I used to call “I.” After a while, I felt like I belonged to the group where I did yoga, and I saw that my social life, attitudes and behaviors, the words I used and my habits had changed. On the other hand, when I attended my first yoga session, I felt like a stranger, like I was in a world that I did not understand. I had no idea about yoga, and I was in a community where a language I did not understand was spoken. When I looked at it from the outside, it was like I was out of a group with different cultural elements.

Those facts that both myself and others observed while practicing Hatha Yoga encouraged me to conduct this research. The thought of whether another group experienced the same experiences that I experienced led me to the question of whether yoga was a subculture or not. Because it contains countless elements in the concepts of culture and subculture, I have determined a research position in order to examine whether there is a subculture of yoga in İstanbul under the headings of body, belonging/identity.

Gamze Demirhan

May 2021, İstanbul

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Rationale

The aim of this research is to examine whether yoga is a subculture or not. With this aim the research is conducted in İstanbul in the three branches of a yoga studio. The focus is on the concepts of body, belonging/identity that arise during the formation of this subculture mean in the context of yoga subculture.

Culture as being the research subject in antropology, is a debatable concept and there are many definitions attributed to it. Bozkurt Güvenç (2011, p.121) expresses the difficulty of defining culture. Culture is beyond observable behavior. “Culture is the opinions, values, and perceptions that a society jointly owns and spreads to its members, reflected in behavior, creating that behavior, and used in interpretation” (Haviland et al. 2008, p.103). The boundaries of the culture are quite unclear. It is difficult to answer where the boundary of a culture begins and ends. The concept of culture can encompass a country and also accommodate different regional cultures or subcultures within a national cultural boundary (Güvenç, 2011, p.142). The concepts of culture and subculture will be discussed in detail under the title of presentation of culture and subculture. Since yoga contains a lot of cultural elements it became the subject of anthropology.

1.1.1. Questions and Scope of Research

As both a yoga expert and an anthropology graduate student, a field has emerged in which I can combine concepts, experiences, and processes that I have experienced and learned in both fields. This area helped me to identify my main research question. By exploring the literature on the concepts of yoga, culture, and subculture, I have found that

they are highly interactive and context-dependent and this interpretation has led me to ask more questions, each of which stands as a sub-research question for this study.

During my time in anthropology, I had the opportunity to read many studies and articles on the relationship between anthropology and culture, concepts of “the other.” Ever since I started yoga, I have realized that the group I have been in has its own unique dynamics. In the main culture in which we live, there were many subcultures. It made me argue and claim that yoga is a subculture. I first asked myself the question whether yoga practitioners have a common culture or not and if there is, it is possible to define this cultural area? Then the second question I asked whether a yoga subculture has formed in İstanbul, shrinking the area where I will ask these and similar questions. Because even İstanbul would remain too wide for this research, it was important to investigate it in several branches of a yoga studio, to limit the research to get more specific results. The question “how are concepts such as body, belonging/identity explained in this process?” formed the subheadings of the research subject. Just like culture, subculture contains many elements. Therefore, the concepts it contained could be too many. The most important tangible thing people could experience was the body. Therefore, the concept of body was essential. The concepts of identity/ belonging were other elements that created subculture. Again, the two concepts I observed were identity/belonging. These two concepts could be created, and transformed. Of course, the answers to the questions I asked below were kept by individuals practicing Hatha Yoga. Because they were the most important elements of the subculture that I asked if it could exist. The question of how Hatha Yoga practitioners would evaluate and explain all these elements would lead me to a lot of data to confirm my assumption or to reveal otherwise.

Though my main research question is to understand whether yoga is a subculture or not. This research also looks for answers of the questions mentioned below. The question of whether the time of practicing Hatha Yoga would change their perception and understanding of the concepts of yoga, body, belonging/identity led me to include not only those who have been practicing yoga for a long time, but also those who have been practicing yoga for less time in my research in order to carry out a multidimensional research. How the purpose and motivation of those who practice yoga to start and continue yoga varies, what are the common and dissociating points in the interest of those who practice yoga, are the ideas of those who practice yoga about how yogi will be common, how the lives of those who practice yoga have been affected, whether it is possible for those who practice yoga to achieve commonalities in their personal ideas of what yoga is, the principal questions were to see if there was a common point in the responses of the people I interviewed, and these responses would lead me to conclude whether yoga is a subculture.

Was there a change in body awareness of individuals before and after they start yoga, if individuals have any change on their bodies, how this change had affected the perception of individuals before and after starting yoga, was there a change in the habits of individuals and their social life, both in physical and social aspects, if there was any change in all these areas, may these changes be a sign that belonging/identity may vary and transform, did experiencing yoga in a group or individual reinforce individuals' sense of belonging, did practicing yoga in a particular place create a change in a sense of belonging, did individuals' spiritual experience make them feel belonging to a particular place would inform me about the concepts of body and belonging within the scope of this research.

Firstly, whether yoga change and transform these individuals in their social life? If yes; (a) would it lead to a change in their identities? (b) would individuals' leisure time activities

affect the construction of their identity? Secondly, whether yoga change and transform these individuals' manners and behaviour? If yes would these manners and behaviour have an impact on the construction of their identity? Finally, how these individuals would define themselves? These questions would provide detailed information about the concept of identity and how it has evolved as a yoga identity.

The questions: (a) whether elements that make up the subculture, such as clothing, music, and language, show common point with those who practice yoga? (b) did individuals' clothing style, musical style, and language differ after they started practicing yoga? (c) would individuals engaged in yoga distinguish yoga from other holistic practices? (d) whether those who practice Hatha Yoga have anything in common? would reveal whether yoga constitutes a subculture. All these questions mentioned reveal the scope of my research. All of these questions will support us greatly in reaching the results of the research and collecting data within the framework of the research I have created.

1.1.2. Importance of Research

Yoga appears to be a tool that many people practice, both as a physical and a mental practice. The growing emphasis on yoga and numerous contributions to the individuals, have been reflected in an increasing number of researches. These include how to practice yoga, its history, and the benefits of yoga. Especially in recent years, many books that have been translated into Turkish from foreign sources or several edited books have been published. Among those Bora Ercan's (2015; 2016) books on yoga philosophy and Hatha Yoga is quite detailed. B.K.S. Iyengar's works that contributed to the field of yoga titled *Light on Yoga* has taken its place among the Turkish yoga sources. Leslie Kaminoff's and Amy Matthews' (2011) book about yoga anatomy is also one of the most frequently cited books.

There are also academic books on yoga in various research fields such as anthropology,

sports, nursing, sociology, psychology, and music. To look at the themes of some of the researches will give a brief understanding of the subject that are discussed on the yoga studies. Ummahan Baş (2002) studied the effects of Hatha Yoga on healthy young people where Ahmet Özdemir (2018) focused on the aspect of self-esteem and body perception. Özge Duman Karaboğa (2019) analyzed yoga on context of the social class and gender. As can be understood, yoga has provided the opportunity to study different sciences.

In addition to all these studies, there are no academic studies neither on yoga culture, nor yoga subculture in İstanbul. Because of the lack of the studies in the area of yoga and subculture, I aimed to worked on this subject area in accordance with my interest. The study of yoga subculture reveals the importance of this research in terms of contributing new research area within the framework of the concepts of body, belonging/ identity in the field of anthropology. Before mentioning my research process including the method I used in the field and my findings, it would create a brief idea about the concepts I will be working on. In the literature review yoga studies from an anthropological perspective, main concepts and history of yoga, Hatha Yoga activities, the concepts of body, belonging/identity and subcultural perspectives will be discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Presentation of Yoga from the Perspective of Anthropology

In this section, studies that approach yoga from an anthropological point of view and method will be discussed. Since yoga studies in the anthropological context in Turkey are very few, we have referred to foreign sources more. Studies that used ethnographic and qualitative techniques will also be mentioned.

Recently, the spread of yoga among individuals has also allowed many scientific fields to enter the subject of study. Both the social sciences, health sciences and sports sciences are just a few of these areas of study. Although all these areas have created opportunities to address yoga in many dimensions, researches that deal with yoga in the social and cultural dimension, especially from an anthropological point of view, is almost not available in Turkey.

Many anthropological studies have been conducted in the field of yoga. Therefore, the concept of yoga has entered the field of study of anthropology. Lalonde (2012, p.6) says that there are studies of many researchers related to contemporary yoga in the fields of anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, and religious sciences. These works date back to the 19th century and continues in our contemporary world, and Modern Yoga is widely covered in such studies.

Singleton (2010, p.3, 10) in his book *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice* discusses the importance of the rise of modern yoga in the transnational dimension in the context of posture (asana). Singleton (2010, p.3) argues that postural yoga has been rising since the 1990s, since then, yoga styles, sequences and poses have been part of the sales chain, copyright and patent of yoga obtained by individuals, companies, and

governments. In addition, yoga poses became popular for the sales of many products. Despite the rise of postural yoga around the world, postural yoga in the Indian yoga tradition was not of priority as Hatha Yoga oriented before the modern era. Therefore, today's international asana practices are a new phenomenon. In addition, the concept of "transnational" has allowed ideas, beliefs, and practices to move beyond national borders.

Singleton, (2010, p.5, 8) stated in his study that posture-oriented yoga arose as a result of Modern Indian yoga through the interplay of religion, and body culture techniques. Furthermore, he concludes that the studies made in Indian Physical Culture supported the re-discovery of asana. With this re-discovery, asana-oriented development of Western physical culture movement in India has improved. As a result, those movements shaped with "esoteric gymnastics" forms that became popular in Europe and America. In addition to detailed literature studies, he has conducted interviews in field research, especially within the scope of yoga practice and cultural physics. He preferred not to address classical texts, which are considered the "gold standard" in his literary studies. The fact that his interviewees were in their 80s and 90s helped him understand the development of modern transnational yoga today.

Postural forms were developed by T. Krishnamacharya a yoga specialist in Mysore in the 1930s and 1940s. The rise of modern-day postural yoga is associated with Krishnamacharya developing his effective postural forms from the Mysore Palace gymnastic tradition. This study is important in demonstrating how asana works evolved after Vivekananda and were transferred to Anglophone culture (Coward, 2010, p.63-64).

Singleton (2010, p.16) states that the treatment of modern forms of yoga by the humanities and social sciences started only from the 90s. The first studies included Christian Fuch's perception of the history of yoga in Germany (1990), Norman Sjoman's Mysore

Palace yoga tradition study (1996), Karl Baier's analysis of the transition of yoga to the West (1998), Sylvie Ceccomori's detailed studies of the history of yoga in France (2001).

Singleton highlights the emergence of two important studies on modern forms of yoga in 2004. The first is Joseph Alter's book *Yoga in Modern India: The Body between Science and Philosophy* and the other one is Eliazbeth De Michelis' book *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism*.

Alter (2004, p. xii, xiv, xx) in his book *Yoga in Modern India: The Body between Science and Philosophy*, tries to understand the structures of social change in India during the colonial and post-colonial, transnational period from an anthropological point of view and he mentions alternative medicine. In these embedded structures, there are details that make up the philosophy of yoga, metaphysics. Although the researcher deals with the body and classical Hindu thought, it differs from other studies in theoretical terms. Alter (2004, p. xii, xiv, xx) emphasizes that his study should not be read from a Sanskrit perspective as a study of yoga philosophy or a study of yoga. Because the focus of his study is on how yoga has evolved in the past century, not on the original forms of yoga. Although it is stated that yoga originated in the civilization of time-independent India, he claims that yoga is a modern phenomenon. He also draws attention to the struggle in the relationship of modern yoga between the metaphysical and the material body.

Based on the history of Modern Yoga, Alter (2004) addresses the concept of culture and the problem of cultural relativism in the theory of anthropology. He deals with populist and anti-mystical forms of yoga and puts health, body productivity, physical education, and "natural" medicine at the center of these forms. He rejects the Orientalist point of view and opposes the view of Eliade who accepts yoga as a transcendental, metaphysical (transcendental) system, adhering to classical texts that are considered the "gold standard."

In his ethnography, he refers to the recent history of yoga, taking into account the scattered, human, and purely physical aspect (Singleton, 2006, p. 91). One remarkable point of view is that he sees yoga in the modern form as a product that emerged as a result of modernizing yoga in India, developing it into a medical system and transforming it into a physical cultural system. In addition, he mentions that the combined system of yoga, consisting of the principles of science, philosophy and yoga is simplified from the metaphysical point of view and interpreted psychological and material processes. Alter's most difficult claim to explain was the relationship of science and national politics with the religious discourse of yoga. He formed this study with the study of Swami Kuvalayananda. His scientific nationalism has transformed yoga into an international philosophical science, a transnational harmony. Alter (2004) paid attention to the method and was influenced by Clifford Geertz and Michael Taussig in his research. It has been quite difficult for him to mention the existence of the transcendence property of yoga by his own research method (Sarbacker, 2007, p. 279-280).

In her book *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism*, Eliabeth De Michelis (2005) talks about how Modern Yoga, which has taken shape over the past 150 years and tries to understand how it maintains its original features without harboring its heavy traditional realities. De Michelis (2005) underlines the impact of Christian and Western esoteric ideas on the environment, which we describe as the development of popular yoga today. She sees Vivekananda's Raja Yoga as a turning point in the development of Modern Yoga. She says that Raja Yoga was influenced by Vivekananda's meeting with elite intellectuals in Boston and New York before and after the World Parliament of Religions in 1893. In the same period of Modern Yoga, alternative medicine, esotericism, and hypnotic discoveries in the late 19th century highlights their emergence (Newcombe, 2006, p.89).

De Michelis (2005) makes use of Arnold van Gennep's rite of passage and Victor

Turner's point of view in analyzing the structure of Modern Postural Yoga. According to her, the ritual area of a yoga session is as follows: "the time of initial silence" (the first stage), followed by asana and pranayama (the middle stage), and finally relaxation (the last stage). The importance of contemporary yoga as a ritual is that a "healing" takes place without a religious context. Although Newcombe (2006, p.89-91) exemplifies names such as Keshab Chandra Sen, Vivekananda, and Iyengar, which he considers important in the development of Modern Yoga, he does not explain why. His goal is to lay the foundation for Modern Yoga research rather than detailing the entire history. This study by Elizabeth De Michelis (2005) presents a detailed study and terminology to other researchers as it addresses both the religious, social, and physical dimensions of yoga practice over the past 150 years.

Another anthropological study that should be mentioned is Geoffrey Samuel's (2008) *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century*. In his book Samuel (2008, p.1-2) explores the development of Buddhism, Jainism, and Brahman traditions from the fifth to the twelfth centuries and mentions the development of the first yogic and meditation practices, the development of tantra, the relationship between tantra and yoga. He mentions that from the beginning of the twentieth century, these practices were practiced outside South Asia, that is, outside non-Buddhist societies, as Indian yoga practices. Samuel (2008), who has studied in the field of social, cultural anthropology in the field of Tibetan and Indian religions, says in his book that he aims to understand the development of yoga, meditation and tantra and its global context today.

Samuel (2011), states that yoga and tantra practices are incomprehensible, because the relationship between text and practices is tortuous. The explanations offered by the texts on how to practice yoga and tantra are limited. Samuel (2011) states that practices change over time, while in his study he avoids addressing practices in which stereotypes are completely

disconnected from the outside world (Bronkhorst et al., 2011, p.308, 311).

Patton, (2011) notes that Samuel (2011) offers an anthropological perspective on the history of yoga and describes yoga as disciplined, systematic techniques used to train and control the unity of mind-body of human. Patton, who says that Samuel (2011) should not look at his study as historical ethnography from a narrow anthropological point of view, adds that he is more concerned with the relationship of everyday life, individual's metaphysical and life requirements. If the study is from a single method, it involves an integrative approach. For example, he has benefited from the ideas of many theorists, such as Jan C. Heesterman, Michael Witzel (Bronkhorst et. al., 2011, p.312-314).

Sarah Strauss (2004, p.162-166) based her study *Positioning Yoga: Balancing Acts across Cultures*, which she completed in two years, on the structure of yoga as a transnational practice. In addition, she aimed to understand how certain ideas and practices shape the concept of health. She started her studies in India and continued in Europe and America. In her ethnographic study, she has been in contact with many people who identify themselves as citizens of the world. Although she planned to do her study only at the Sivananda Ashram, in a single ethnographic area, she decided to do his study as multi-sited ethnography, realizing that it would be insufficient to describe Rishikesh in the context of yoga.

Strauss (2004, p.168, 170, 175) made use of the views of anthropologists such as George Marcus (1986), Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson (1997), Arjun Appadurai (1986) in her study, especially in the context of "location." She emphasizes that "cosmopolite ethnography," in Appadurai's (1986) words, helps develop new ways of thinking about the field. In addition, global and local are intertwined, and each is related to each other's past and future. Sarah states the importance that individuals, institutions, communities, ideas, practices, and objects interact with each other, enabling the transformation of yoga in the last

century. Sociocultural and geographical units limited in a particular area have an effect on the emergence of new ethnographic practices due to the effect of deterritorialization.

Another researcher who has done her study as multi-sited ethnography is Andrea R. Jain. Jain (2015, p.xii, xvi), like Strauss, uses Marcus' (1995) method of multi-cited ethnography. She emphasizes that with the change of the place of the cultural product in the changing world, the multi-sited ethnography suggested by Marcus has developed in response. In *Selling Yoga: From Counterculture to Pop Culture*, she examines postural yoga as a cultural object that she sees as part of consumption culture. The structure, dissemination and practice of postural yoga led her to make a multi-sited ethnographic study. In her study, she not only tried to understand postural yoga, but also studied the transnational system, which is a modern consumer culture. She has performed her study in London, America, and India. She has done comparative studies to understand yoga in the context of heterogeneous forms and places. Therefore, many postural yoga systems have addressed important individuals in the field of yoga not only with similarities but also with contrasts and discrepancies in the dimension of time and space.

Jain (2015, p.xv) sees postural yoga as a transnational product resulting from the dominance of market capitalism, industrialization, globalization, and the spread of consumption culture through global processes. She analyzed postural yoga through their web pages and publications to understand the relationship between yoga practitioners and consumers. Taking advantage of the study of authors such as Mark Singleton (2010), Elizabeth De Michelis (2005), Jain (2015) mentions that mobility in new transport technologies allows students, teachers, and artisans to travel, spread ideas and belongings. Frustrations in traditional religions and institutions have pushed individuals into the spiritual world. Postural Yoga has used the ideas and practices of consumption culture to reshape

itself, resulting in increased yoga consumption and products making yoga a part of popular culture (Lutz, 2016, p.53-54).

The book *Yoga Traveling: Bodily Practice in Transcultural Perspective* focuses on the transcultural spread of yoga in the twenty and twenty-first centuries. Central to the study is the reinterpretation and diversification of yoga, as well as representations that practice postural yoga. Many questions have been tried to explain why yoga takes place in different forms, and how time and space affect social roles and associated experiences (Hauser, 2013, p.1-2).

Suzanne Newcombe (2013, p.57-58) discussed the development of yoga in Britain and the parallels between contemporary yoga practice and magic practice. She describes the interplay between occult, esoteric, unincorporated Christianity, and spirituality through the roles of Watkins bookstore, Paul Brunton, and The Atlantis bookstore. She studied the anti-aging, empowerment, and mystical inspired practices of contemporary yoga. She examines the overlap of yoga and magic in the first half of the twentieth century by the method of social history, while explaining how yoga and magic are understood by contemporary practitioners using the method of sociology.

In her article *Magic and Yoga: The Role of Subcultures in Transcultural Exchange*, Newcombe (2013, p.57, 63) states the entrance of Modern Yoga to Britain with tools like the teachings of international yoga gurus and body-building courses. In addition, she explains that the importance of transcultural concept in the emergence of Modern Yoga should not be considered just as cross-cultural, and national boundaries but also it should be considered as subcultures that has a specific national context. Watsins and The Atlantis bookstores have been considered as a meeting point of yoga and occult subcultures.

In addition to talking about the interaction between yoga and magic, Newcombe (2013,

p.66-68) notes many similarities between yoga and magic. She points out that the advice of alone witches or Wiccans gathered in groups for personal development is similar to the principle of ahimsa (no harm) in yoga. In parallel with yoga, she also emphasizes that magic in pagan traditions is used as a way to reach the higher self. Although postural yoga is physical, it is a means of achieving transcendence as a symbolic “magic complex.” If magic is a practice that affects change by the individual’s will, then there are quite a few ways that contemporary yoga practice can also be characterized as magical.

Hauser (2013, p.109,111-112) focuses on how different yoga publications contribute to cultural transformations in body practice. He tries to understand how language shapes the body, the self and health while focusing on the language that is constantly used in yoga sessions. He conducted his analysis of postural yoga practices in Germany through Bikram Yoga and Kareen Zebroff’s *Yoga for Everyone* study. In addition, she states that language has an important place in revealing the experience that enables its meaning and change in Hatha Yoga, the body practice that travels in a cross-cultural context. Claiming that the most important tool for restoring a healthy body is verbal commands, Hauser emphasizes that the tradition of speech has a tremendous impact on how yoga exercises change an individual’s body perspective and personal growth potential.

The commands used in teaching yoga are not only didactic tools, but also a form of communication that specifies how yoga practitioners should feel and think. At the same time, analysis of the language constantly used in yoga sessions helps to understand why Hatha Yoga has a particular audience (Hauser, 2013, p.112-113). Hauser (2013, p.112-113) analyzes the commands used by many yoga experts from the records and memories he received by systematically examining the form of communication used in and after the yoga session, conducts interviews with several yoga experts. He also covered commands in

Zebroff's book and television. His ethnography does not address the yoga community of a particular region. He not only interpreted Hatha Yoga with the German understanding but also beyond nations, geography, religion, and yoga cultures that are contrary to each other. Finally, he explored the impact of the study findings on body practice that extend beyond cultures, examining the role of specific language use in the emergence and reconstruction of practitioners' somatic experiences.

Strauss and Mandelbaum (2013, p.175) in their study address the contribution of yoga to the introduction of the ecological worldview and the link between yoga and individual health and well-being. At the same time, their analysis focuses on the commercialization of the areas of yoga, general health, and ecology. For this purpose, they used both internet and print press presentations, in addition to ethnographic data obtained from many different places between 1992 and 2010. This data was obtained from yoga practitioners who participated in the trainings initiated by Swami Sivananda, T. Krishnamacharya and Sri. K. Patabhi Jois. Through all this data, the connection between individual practice and world health has been studied through the mind, body, discourse, and different members of yoga in the cross-cultural stream.

Strauss and Mandelbaum (2013, p.176-178, 180) aim to point out the importance of commercializing modern postural yoga community practice in certain ways through health and environmental values. Yoga has taken its place in the global market under the name of "Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability" by offering "return to nature" activities such as trekking, rafting. LOHAS is a representation of a part of the consumption category, an organization with an international purpose, a product, a corporate identity in which companies practice sustainable business practices. Strauss and Mandelbaum, who have conducted many interviews in different places, focus on the commodification of yoga. For

yoga to be commodified, yoga must be transformed by society into an object both conceptually and practically, in other words, its value must be measured with money in the capitalist economic system. Yoga has value as a consumable object. Based on this view, processes such as copyright and branding of contemporary transnational yoga have contributed to making yoga a commercial commodity at the center of researchers' analysis. In addressing Appadurai's (1986) meta concept, authors have also addressed his relationship between things in motion and human activities.

Another discourse noted in their study is that the consumption of yoga practices leads to the formation of a new "internal bourgeoisie identity." The self of those who practice yoga is considered part of symbolic capital and is associated with social class. In Bourdieu's (1984) words, the conceptualization of experience and practice gives rise to the distinction of social class. These cultural experiences become natural, embedded in everyday practices (Strauss and Mandelbaum, 2013, p.181).

Eaton (2015, p.91) carried out a study on how yoga is a discipline and what discipline it is. He examines Sivananda Yoga as a discipline from two perspectives. The first point of view is the concept that Sarah Strauss (2005) calls yoga as "the oasis regime," and the second is the concept that Michel Foucault (1991) discusses discipline as the power of imprisonment. The discipline of yoga at the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center is explained by two examples. The first are religious diaries, and the second are japa mala beads (prayer beads).

In his study, he focused on the questions of how yoga disciplines yoga practitioners, whether the discipline of yoga shapes the practitioner or not, whether individual practitioners are shaped differently or not by these disciplines, how these disciplines structure the subjectivity of the yoga practitioner. He focuses on the claim that modern institutions, which Foucault (1991) put forward in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* function

as discipline and prison. In this context the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center is called the disciplined yoga institution (Eaton, 2015, p.91-92). Eaton, (2015, p.91-92) argued Foucaultian discourse in the discipline of yoga and he likens yoga to concepts of control regime, discipline, surveillance. This perspective allows seeing yoga practice differently. It makes us think about whether yoga is a libertarian practice or a confining practice, or whether it is a practice that includes both or not.

Eaton (2015, p.93), who treated Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center as a case study shows that different disciplines of yoga places importance to the different points of the yoga practice. Having practiced each discipline together indicates the loyalty of yoga practitioners to the “yogic life.” The researcher supported this claim by explaining his analysis by claiming that yogic life is a religious practice at the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center.

According to Foucault (1991), the religious regime has a disciplinary function. This function shapes and constructs the self-understanding and practice of the person who devotes to that regime. Strauss’ (2005) concept of “oasis” explains that religious regimes provide temporary relief from modern life, as opposed to Foucault’s (1991) view that the concept of power cannot be avoided (Eaton, 2015, p. 96-97). Eaton (2015, p.100, 103) mentions that religious diaries and japa mala beads as yoga objects support Foucault’s view. As a result, Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center is considered as a modern institution like a prison. In addition, it is said that modern disciplinary networks provide control through social institutions.

Aydiner Juchat, (2019, p.2) in her study, aimed to analyze yoga specialty programs and yoga teaching, a profession dreamed of by individuals suffering in the neoliberal period. She describes the stress and race created by Neoliberal ideologies in the individual as the need to escape. She examined Yoga Alliance certificates as a tool for institutionalizing and

globalizing yoga specialty programs, while also evaluating yoga entrepreneurs from a neoliberal ideological point of view. She also addressed the escape route that evolved from neoliberalism to yoga.

Aydiner Juchat (2019, p.20, 68), who conducted in-depth interviews in her research, participated in many yoga sessions and introductory sessions of yoga specialty training programs and did participant observations. Talking about how Yoga Alliance certification programs are shaped by a neoliberal and global ideology, the researcher considers yoga a safe and space-creating escape in the neoliberal system. Described as a platform that brings together many yoga experts from all over the World, Yoga Alliance has given rise to the concept of “yogascape” in addition to offering a global yoga practice. Here, based on Appadurai’s (1990) concept of “scapes,” the author emphasizes transitivity and rupture within fields (Aydiner Juchat, 2019, p.8).

Research findings have revealed why individuals dream of becoming yoga experts and the entrepreneurship of those who do yoga professionally. The willingness of individuals to do the job they love, and the risk of unemployment has pushed individuals to seek alternative jobs. The author identifies the transition process to yoga expertise with Van Gennep’s (1960) model of rite of passage and Turner’s (1969) liminality concept (Aydiner Juchat, 2019, p.69).

In the researches mentioned above, although many authors discussed yoga from different perspectives such as; its historical development, as a part of a consumer product, as an element in the rite of passage, in terms of the parallels between yoga and magic, the effect of yoga language on practice of body and mind, modern transnational yoga has become the main the subject of ethnographic studies as a practical multidisciplinary field beyond culture, and beyond space and time. As we have a general idea about the studies on yoga from the anthropological perspective, it would be efficient to learn about yoga history and its main

concepts in order to have a deeper understanding the concept of yoga in general and its contributions to daily life.

2.1.1. Main Concepts of Yoga and History of Yoga

In order to associate Hatha Yoga and subculture, first of all, one should have an understanding of the concepts of yoga and history of yoga. In this section I will try to explain main concepts of yoga briefly and also historical development of yoga in general to relate the place of Hatha Yoga. This research, as with any research, is limited temporally and conceptually. Concerning the depth of yoga history, the main concepts, the history of yoga, and Hatha Yoga activities will be discussed in general terms. The history of yoga is widely included in many sources. It is useful to mention what yoga is without going into the history of yoga, and to mention what the word yoga means. In order to understand the connection of yoga with subculture, and with the concepts of body, belonging/identity, it is necessary to understand the concept and history of yoga.

2.1.1.1. Main Concepts of Yoga

If we look at the origin of the word yoga, it is in Sanskrit. Sanskrit is the language of religion, sacred and divine. The priests of the Vedic period say that language and sound is a tool used to communicate with the gods. The word yoga has been used in meanings such as “tying, adding, harnessing horses, method, tool, alchemy, use, practice, putting the arrow in a bow, medicine, ordination, magic, gain, wealth, opportunity, unity, integrity, putting together, meditation” (Ercan, 2015, p.37).

Yoga comes from the root “yuj” in the Sanskrit language, meaning to unite, to be one. It was also used as “jogi” in different periods. Its transition to English is from the root “yeung” and has become “yoke” and means to connect, to unite. In Sanskrit and Indian languages, the words “yukta” (connected), “yukti” (devotion), “yocita” (connected),

“yocoka” (connecting), “yuṅa” (connecting, devotion) are among the words that can be associated with yoga. The word yoga is often mentioned as the unity of the individual self and the supreme self (Ercan, 2015, p.38; Feuerstein, 2008, p.2-3; Worby, 2002, p.2).

Although yoga is intertwined with Indian philosophy, it has continued to exist in Jainism and Buddhism, which oppose to Indian philosophy. Because it contains the mythology and philosophies of different styles in itself, and it has a complex structure (Ercan, 2015, p.37). Yoga has been variously described by many authors and in many yoga philosophical texts. It is quite difficult to define yoga in a single sentence, as there are many dimensions of yoga that have quite various meanings, even in terms of meaning of the word (Feuerstein, 2008, p.3). Here, the concept of yoga and culture are similar to each other. The meaning and definition of culture, which we will mention in the presentation of culture, is also quite difficult, as it includes many concepts. Feuerstein (2008, p.3), an important expert on the philosophy and practice of yoga says that yoga is a multifaceted phenomenon, and it is difficult to define yoga. Therefore, there is always an exception.

Hence, let's look at how different writers and yoga masters define yoga. Nagendra et al. (2014, p.29) defines yoga as a system of establishing physical and mental self-control within its own integrity. The final goal to be reached when this system is established is “enlightenment.” In *The Bhagavad Gita*, yoga is used to discipline the mind. Yoga is the “evenness of the mind” because the mind must be freed from its dependence on pain and pleasure, the duality of success and failure. “Yoga is skill in action” because the path to freedom is through action (Easwaran, 2007, p.85).

Worby (2002, p.3) defines yoga as an ancient method of psychotherapy, a tool for personal evolution and development and practice to discover and develop the true self. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, defines “yoga as a person's attempt to perfect and to reveal the

dormant potential at the physical, mental, cognitive and spiritual levels” (Nagendra et al., 2014, p.29). Iyengar (2006, p.15) defines yoga as the “unification of the soul of the individual with the universal soul.” He adds this concept by embodying it a little more, saying, “it is the union of the body with the mind and the mind with the soul.” *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says that yoga is “to relieve the instability of the breath” (Iyengar, 2006, p.16). In *Yoga Sutras*, yoga is mentioned as a means of calming the mind by intelligent and resourceful methods (Nagendra et al., 2014, p.30). Patanjali sees yoga as focusing attention on a particular object and according to him yoga is “the restriction of the whirls of consciousness” (Feuerstein, 2008, p.4).

Sri T. Krishnamacharya says, “yoga is the delivery of all the powers of human existence to the divine being.” Yogi Bhajan says that “the feeling of gratitude is the ultimate yoga.” Sr. K. Pattabhi Jois says “yoga is what anyone wants, it is universal.” Amit Ray states that “yoga is not a religion. It is a science: the science of being good; the science of youth, the science of integrating the body, mind, soul.” John Friend says “yoga is an awakening” (Ercan, 2015, p.31-33).

Feuerstein, (2008, p.6) makes a statement that will cover all these definitions; “yoga is a tremendous combination of spiritual values, behaviors, moral principles and techniques that have continued to develop in India for the last five centuries, which is the basis of ancient Indian civilization.” Therefore, yoga has become a common word used in Indian methods of self-transcendence or in which consciousness is systematically transformed from ego to free personality.

In this study, the concept of yoga will be considered as the Hatha Yoga system, which is a tool for achieving freedom for the person who keeps spiritual values, behavior, moral principles and techniques, physical asana, in parallel with Feuerstein’s recognition and will

be explained under the title Hatha Yoga.

Talking about the meaning of the word yoga, definitions of yoga, gave us a general framework of yoga before understanding the history of yoga. Before examining how the history of yoga philosophy has evolved, looking at how yoga teaching is taught and transferred to another yoga practitioner will help us understand this process. The word *yogin*, meaning yoga practitioner, is derived from the root yoga. This practitioner can sometimes be a novice, advanced, mature, or self-aware practitioner. The woman yoga practitioner is called *yogini*. The word *yogi* can also be used for all spiritual practitioners (Feuerstein, 2008, p.7).

As with other esoteric practices, yoga is maintained by the fact that a master experiences first-hand, guiding their awareness of the yogic path to those who are just beginning this path. It is assumed that this guide has reached the ultimate spiritual stage, namely enlightenment (*bodha*, *bodhi*), freedom (*moksha*) through yogic effort. Unlike the Western mentality now, traditional yoga is never a practice that people do by themselves. “One does not learn yoga on his own,” Eliade says. As in all traditional Indian systems, yoga is a student process in which the master transfers his secret teachings to the person who has dedicated himself to this path or to the deserving student. These secret teachings are not knowledge to be expressed in words or obtained from books (Feuerstein, 2008, p.9).

What the master (*guru*) transfers to his disciple is a spiritual transition. In this transition, the guru empowers him by transferring his energy, consciousness to his disciple; this is the initial process of yoga. The yoga practitioner is blessed by his master for the purpose of achieving transcendental awareness. The *yogi* or *yogini* whose initiation is performed experiences the necessary transformation. In this process, reaching far beyond earthly experiences he finds reality and self beyond the ego (Feuerstein, 2008, p.9).

The word *Guru* is described in Advaya-Târaka Upanishad. The syllable *Gu* means

dark, while the syllable *ru* means dispeller. So, the guru is the one who dispels the student's spiritual ignorance. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says that without the compassion of a true teacher, one has difficulty in achieving one's own transcendence. Because of his spiritual awareness, the guru is considered the embodiment of the sacred, the essence (Feuerstein, 2008, p.11).

The student master system in yoga extends to the Vedic period (B.C. 4500-2500). A young boy would spend all his youth and adolescence in his master's house with many scriptures, the deepest wisdom of the era. The master had to guide him through the student's learning, help him learn his farewell wisdom and ensure his well-being. In return for his master's guidance and support, the student was expected to respect him, follow his guru's rules as if he were his father, devote most of his energy to self-study (*svaddhyaya*) and serve his master's family (*seva*) (Feuerstein, 2008, p.9-11).

The relationship between student and master is seriously shaped. There are daily rituals that the student must perform. These are to beg the guru for alms, to make a ceremonial offering to him for the burning of the holy fire. He was expected to stay with his guru until the student's study was finished. The guru and the holy books were seen as a force that led the student to freedom (Feuerstein, 2008, p.10).

A responsible teacher does not accept an unprepared individual as his student, but can accept an individual whom he sees spiritual potential. A student accepted by his teacher is repeatedly tested. The yoga practitioner is confronted with the spiritual body and mind of his self-aware guru, his physical and spiritual presence, which gradually transforms. Guru is highly appreciated in yoga practice. Devoting himself to yoga, he considers the guru to be more of a spiritual reality than a human being. This dedicated behavior allows for a strong bond between the person and their guru (Feuerstein, 2008, p.10, 14-15).

The guru constantly observes his disciple, waiting for the right time to initiate him.

When the student is ready, he transfers the confidential information of the esoteric lineage to the student. But a fully enlightened expert can realize this initiative, only in this way can the student achieve satisfaction on the path of self-awareness throughout his life. Initiation creates a special connection between the guru and the dedicated person. This bond requires responsibility from the teacher and labor from the practitioner. After initiation, the student becomes part of the teacher's lineage. This means strengthening the chain. The student and the teacher maintain this bond even after they die without knowing time or space. Being part of this chain requires dedication to the spiritual path with all the heart, in other words it requires surrender (Feuerstein, 2008, p.16-17).

2.1.1.2. The Vedas

The ruins of the pre-Veda period of the Indus Valley, where the history of yoga dates back ten thousand years, are revealed by mural paintings. Ercan, (2015, p.45, 47, 53) says that yoga originated in the Indus civilization, is one of the greatest civilizations in the world. He suggests that cities along the Ganges, Indus, Saraswati, were destroyed by Aryans coming from the northwest in B.C. 2000, and according to other sources, these civilizations were destroyed due to a natural disaster. The Aryans established Indian culture through the Vedas on the Indus civilization. It can be said that the ritualistic and shamanic elements in yoga come from the Aryans.

Indian philosophy consists of many texts. One of the earliest texts are the Vedas. They are considered the first inscriptions of the Indo-European language. For Hindus, the Vedas, holy books offering the words of the gods, can be considered as works of philosophy and literature. The Vedas contain superhuman knowledge of the Vedic civilization or Indus Sarasvati Civilization. It is the sacred texts in which meditative introversion practices, sacrificial rituals arise. Vedas are the sum of hymns and poems. Veda means knowledge. The

Vedas contain four basic texts: the Rigveda (divine knowledge), the Yajurveda (sacrificial knowledge), the Samaveda (musical knowledge), the Atharvaveda (magical knowledge). Like other texts, the Vedas convey historical, cultural, and geographical information of the period. Age of the Vedas is between B.C. 2500-500 years old. The Vedas are the earliest written texts of Indo-European language and culture. Vedas was written by the anonymous poet philosophers called “rishi.” It is asserted that the texts allegedly have come through revelation. It has a linguistic intensity that surprises and admires people (Ercan, 2015, p.70-71; Feuerstein, 2008, p.27; Ganapati, 1992, p. xix).

The origin of yoga is mentioned in the Vedas. Veda is seen as a spiritual wisdom while yoga is a practice of it. Meditation and pranayama techniques (breathing techniques) are mentioned in the Vedas. The Vedas mention purification techniques in the *Yoga Sutras* and Astanga (eight-limbs) Yoga, which will form the basis of the yogic tradition. Many philosophies and schools, including yoga, have emerged in the light of the Vedas. We can say that the origins of the mantras practiced in current yoga practices date from Vedic ceremonies to the present day. There are traces of yoga in the Vedas, the oldest texts about yoga, and it is still practiced today within the practice of Hatha Yoga. It is important because it carries the first knowledge and practices of yoga to the present day in writing. If we briefly mention the four parts of the Vedas, we can say that the Rigveda is the first text that humanity has created (Ercan, 2015, p.71,79, 79-80).

The Rigveda includes mantric, poetic, symbolic, esoteric, and poetic texts. We can see in The Rigveda the first traces of yoga as can be called proto-yoga. *Rishis* (sager) mentions about the elements such as concentration, watchfulness, breath regulation with sacred hymns in rituals (Feuerstein, 2008, 105, 106). In Atharvaveda, it is mentioned about the importance of air, water, plants. Those elements are considered essential for all living beings

(Renugadevi, 2012, p.2). Prana is associated with life, breath, and supreme spirit. A section from 11.4 of related texts is as follows:

... When Prana waters the Great Earth with rain, then the animals rejoice; they think that we can really have power now.

And when they were watered by Prana, the plants spoke together: you have indeed extended our lives and given us all good smells.

Be respectful to Prana, to those who go to and come from Prana: be respectful to those who stand and sit.

Respect Prana, when she breathes, when she exhales! Respect for you, when you leave here; respect for you, when you return here; respect for you, all, respect here!... (Ercan, 2015, p.84).

The Samaveda section contains hymns, prayers, sacred songs. This section is considered as the realization of the knowledge. The last part is Yajurveda contains Veda inscriptions and ceremonies (Das, 2020, p.4).

2.1.1.3. Brahmanas

Brahmanas are notable texts from around B.C. 2500. In Brahmanas, yoga is not mentioned directly or referred to, but the basic knowledge and practices of yoga schools that will be born in the following centuries are mentioned. The Vedic Aryans were nomadic tribes and engaged in husbandry. Therefore, the relationship of sacrifice ceremonies with this culture was understandable. But after passing to settled life, they lose their influence in the Brahmanas along with the Vedas, and this is because animals are not dedicated as sacrifices, and by using animals in agriculture, they become just a symbol. Aranyakas, on the other

hand, forest texts, in some sources, are referred to as wild texts or retreat texts. Aranyakas focus on purification practices such as meditation, silence, fasting, Saluting the Sun in yoga. It can be said that the headstands and balance poses on one leg are based on asceticism (Ercan, 2015, p.90-91).

This process shows the end of the Vedas in a philosophical sense. After the Vedas comes the Vedanta. “Anta” means the end. Vedanta means the end of the Vedas and indicates the future of the Upanishads. *The Upanishads* emerge from the Iron Age. This, in turn, is an era that brings classification. It is the Brahmin priests who are seen as the most distinguished class in the process. During this period, many poets, yogis, and philosophers rebelled against Brahmin orthodoxy. On this occasion, the Upanishads were born, and then Jainism allowed movements such as Buddhism to be born (Ercan, 2015, p.93).

2.1.1.4. The Upanishads

Upanishads are philosophical and theological texts. In these texts, meditation is seen as the primary approach towards enlightenment. In these texts, life, death, after death are addressed. They have considered on many elements to explain God and the Universe. In the Upanishads, it is mentioned that the knowledge of God, the nature of God, the Universe, Rebirth, and salvation is confidential and should not be passed on to everyone. In addition, it contains much information such as body organs, veins in the body, state of sleep with and without dreams, the roles of the sun and moon (Kaya, 2008, p.vii). However, the emphasis on deities in the Upanishads decreased as the Brahmins lost influence (Ercan, 2015, p. 94; Feuerstein, 2008, p.27).

The Upanishads are important for being the first systematic philosophical text essays of Hindus. They appeared in the B.C. 600s. This period coincides with the period when Buddhism was about to emerge. It is possible to say that there was an interaction between

first period of Buddhism and the Upanishads. Traces of both hymns and sacrificial ceremonies are seen in the Upanishads, which bear the influence of the Vedas and Brahmins. It influenced the Bhagavad Gita that came after Upanishads. In addition, it is possible to say that Upanishads both influenced all movement of thought in India and influenced Western philosophy (Kaya, 2008, p.ix-x).

The Upanishad is formed by the merger of the words *upa ni* and *sad* and means “to sit down near, sit down right besides.” Kaya, (2008, p.x-xi) emphasizes that the teacher accepts the student by telling his student, “Go and get your lamp, I will teach you,” and that the person finds answers to his questions right beside of his teacher from that moment on.

The concepts of *Ātman* and *Brahman* appear in the Upanishads. Brahman and Atman, who are in every living being, are depicted as the same being. Easwaran, (2007, p.35, 38) refers to the concept of Brahman as God, while Ātman refers to the concept of sanctity at the center of a person. Brahman is an unchanging, eternal reality. In deep meditation, when consciousness is focused, the body and mind retreat and separate from the ego and enter a state of uniqueness. In this moment of meditation, “the one who sees” reaches a consciousness beyond time and change. This consciousness is self, that is to say Ātman. There is no distinction between Ātman and Brahman. It is the same indivisible reality that is outside and inside. The essence is the same in every being.

The expressions *Tat tvam asi* (you are that) and *aham Brahma asmi* (I am Brahma) are formulaic forms of Upanishad philosophy. The Universe is Brahman, Brahman is Ātman. Ātman is the Universe. In understanding these two concepts, Korhan Kaya (2008, p.xii) refers to the following description of the wise Shāndilya:

...The Ātman (essence) in my heart is smaller than a grain of rice, a grain of barley, a core of mustard. The essence in my heart is greater than the Earth, the air space, the sky, all the worlds... this essence is Brahma. When I leave this world, I will be reunited with him.

Comparing the word Ātman with the German word Atem (breath), Oldenberg states that Ātman means pale and breath. At the same time, the word *Prāna* is also used in the sense of pale and glorified (Kaya, 2008, p.xiii).

Easwaran (2007, p.24) talks about the important concept mentioned in the Upanishads. *Dharma* is the law that expresses and maintains the unity of creation. It is the essence and virtue of things, truthfulness, justice, goodness, purpose. Dharma is the unity of life and everything is interconnected. *Karma* is a cause-and-effect network. It is something done and an action. Each event has both a cause and an effect. It is not just a physical, it is a mental action. *Samsara* is the cycle of birth and death, *moksha* is the ultimate goal of life, and spiritual liberation.

Maya is an illusion. The mind sees the world as a multiplicity of different objects, depending on time, space, and causality. The mind looks at unity and sees diversity. The perception of his experience is varied and short-lived. Accordingly, there is a distinction. It is our fault to see this distinction as an immutable reality. Because it creates a dichotomy. Maya, illusion is a sense of distinction. The world of the senses is real, but it must be known what it is. Unity emerges as multiplicity (Easwaran, 2007, p.28- 29).

The concepts of soul migration and karma have been the elements worked on. The goal is to become one with Brahma, and it is said that this will only happen with the elimination of ignorance. Offering sacrifices or asceticism to achieve this position is useless, and they cause

rebirths. Those who acquire this knowledge offer gifts to the ones from whom they acquired this knowledge (Kaya, 2008, p.xiii).

The oldest and most important Upanishads are called Thirteen Basic Upanishads. These Are: Brihadāranyakā Upanishad, Chhāndogya Upanishad, Īshā Upanishad, Kena Upanishad, Aitareya Upanishad, Taittirīya Upanishad, Kaushītaki Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Shvetāshvatara Upanishad, Prashna Upanishad, Māndukya Upanishad, Maitri Upanishad (Kaya, 2008).

Since it will take too long to explain each part of the Upanishads individually, let's only mention the main titles and a few chapters within the scope of the research. Prana, apana, and vyana are mentioned quite often in the Upanishads. This is the form of Pranayama, the fourth step in Patanjali's yoga system, which will be mentioned later. These breathing practices are applied as a means of connecting with the "Supreme Soul." In this non-dualist philosophy, the connection between prana (breath) and Absolute is mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as follows:

Where does your body and essence reside? In the inner breath (prana). Where does the inner breath reside? On the outside breath? (apana). Where is the outer breath? In prevalent breath (vyana). Where does prevalent breath reside? In the upper breath (udana). Where does the upper breath reside? Mid-breath (samana) (Ercan, 2015, p.98).

In Svetashvatara Upanishad, yoga is defined as:

Moving from earth, water, fire, air and space, when the five-fold nature of yoga is revealed, a person acquires a body without disease, old age, and death with yoga fire. Brightness, healthiness, fortitude, facial cleansing, beauty of sound, beauty of smell, little defecation: they say that these are the first symptoms seen after practicing yoga (Ercan, 2015, p.100).

As can be understood from here, yoga is not only mentioned as meditation and pranayama (breath work). It is also understood that there are some asana (yoga pose) studies. In addition to asana practices, Kriya (purification) methods are also mentioned. The above explanation gives an idea of a lot of information, from yogic eating style to circulatory system. This, in turn, shows us clues from the existence of asana works at that time (Ercan, 2015, p.100).

The expressions mentioned in the Ishavasya Upanishad are an advice for both yogis and society: “know all this; everything that moves in the moving world is covered with God. So, find your pleasure in giving up, don’t look at other people’s property.” In Maitri Upanishad, both the word yoga and Om are explained in detail (Ercan, 2015, p.101). The worldwide known mantra and composed many times in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28, is:

Asato mā sad gamaya	Lead me from ignorance to truth
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya	from darkness to light
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya	from death to immortality (Ercan, 2015,
s.101).	

2.1.1.5. Samkhya Philosophy

The Samkhya philosophy and the concepts it addresses are also mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita. Samkhya and yoga philosophies have been influenced by each other, Samkhya philosophy has filled the gap in yoga philosophy, and those interested in Samkhya philosophy have benefited from yoga practices (Ercan, 2015, p.121). Therefore, it would be useful to mention the Samkhya philosophy before talking about the Bhagavad Gita.

Samkhya philosophy is a school of meditation and this school is called Yoga. They were influenced by Buddhist philosophy. Although the Bhagavad Gita is not affiliated with any school, it contains the concepts used by this philosophy. Samkhya philosophy, which is a dual philosophy, believes in the existence of not universal and divine soul but believes the existence of different souls. Two characteristics and concepts are mentioned to reveal the distinction between consciousness and matter: Prusha is soul, and Prakriti is everything else (Easwaran, 2007, p.37; Ercan, 2015, p.121-122).

Prusha is the pure soul: he knows all the facts, and it was not created nor it can be created. It is independent. Only Purusha is conscious or consciousness itself. Purusha uses the mind as an internal tool, and the body as an external tool. Purusha is synonymous with Atman, it is the self, the essence, and the same in every being. Prakriti is the facts that can be objectively known, everything that has a name and form. It is not only matter and energy, but also the mind. It is common features of matter and mind. Purusha needs an object that is to say Prakriti to realize itself (Easwaran, 2007, p.37-38; Ercan, 2015, p.121; Güngören, 2017, p.20).

Prakriti is concerned with 24 principles: prakriti, mind, self (ahamkara), sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin, larynx, hands, feet, excretory organs, reproductive organs, ether, air, fire, water, earth, purusa. Except for Prakriti and purusa, they

recreate the evolution of matter and then destroy it. The unchanging, infinite purusa is inside the self-contained body (Ercan, 2015, p.121).

Samkhya calls the features found in prakriti as *gunas*. Each substance and mind carry the characteristics of these three gunas. *Sattva* (lightness, brightness, joy); *rajas* (mobility, extreme vitality, pain); *tamas* (extremism, poison, heavy). So, according to physics, sattva can be called gas, rajas as liquid, and tamas as solid (Ercan, 2015, p.121). Easwaran (2007, p.44) explains this with an example as follows. We can think of tamas as a frozen energy as a mass of ice. Energy clings tightly to each other in a mass of ice, but it is solid. As the ice melts, it becomes rajas, so the energy turns into a flowing river, an uncontrolled force. Sattva is harmony, it is like steam. Each guna can turn into another.

We can think of the gunas as different stages of consciousness. Tamas is the lowest level, the unconscious, the complex level of consciousness. At this stage, there is no awareness, basic impulses of a person are at the foreground and his ignorance about the integrity of life is dominant. Rajas carries the characteristics of the ordinary mind: competing, desiring, worrying, disappointment and suffering, angry, deceitful, and competing. Rajas are the emancipation of power, yet they are uncontrolled and egocentric. Sattva is the higher mind, independent, calm, self-controlled. It realizes the communion of purpose, desire, and characteristic in a natural harmony (Easwaran, 2007, p.45).

2.1.1.6. The Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita is a chapter within the Mahabharata, one of the two great epics of India. Because of the deep religious and philosophical teachings, it contains, it has been one of the three main pillars of Hinduism. And because it is located in the epic, it is important for its appealing to all segments of community, that is, to everyone. *The Bhagavad Gita* is dated to B.C. 5th and B.C. 2nd centuries. It means The Song of God (Ercan, 2015, p.125; Güngören,

2017, p.8).

The Bhagavad Gita addresses the difficulty in self-development. The metaphor in this epic is that the war in the heart of man is between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. Arjuna represents everyone. He asks Krishna questions about life and death (Easwaran, 2007, p.21). Hence Easwaran (2007, p.21) says that the Bhagavad Gita should not be read as an external dialogue, but as an internal dialogue between the ordinary human personality with many questions about the meaning of life and the deep sacred self. Krishna is not an external human or superhuman being. Instead, he is a spark of sanctity within each human personality.

The Bhagavad Gita consists of lyrics by Krishna. Krishna accrued different meanings by different cultures. For example, Hindus see Krishna as an avatar. Furthermore, while some see Krishna as a God, some see him as a wise yogi. On the contrary, Mahabharata, accepts him as an enemy who tries to destroy the established order (Güngören, 2017, p.12). The epic of the Mahabharata is about the battle for the throne between the Sons of Kuru and the Sons of Pandu. Maha-Bharata, meaning Bhrata the Great, is a King mentioned in the Rig Veda. In ancient texts, India was called The Land of Bharata. Kuru is another king of Bharata ancestry. Both Bharata and Dhritarashtra, who are descended from Kuru, and Pandu are also two brothers. Dhritarashtra is greater than Pandu, but because he is blind, Pandu comes out of the throne. Pandu's sons from his first wife are Yudhishira, Bhima and Arjuna. Sons of Pandu is five siblings. And the Sons of Dhritarashtra are hundreds. His eldest son is Duryodhana (Güngören, 2017, p.13-14).

The Sons of Dhritarashtra call themselves Kuru Sons and want to exclude the Sons of Pandu from their lineage. Pandu dies a few years after becoming the king. The children of the Sons of Pandu and the Sons of Dhritarashtra grow up in the palace and are raised by the same

teachers. Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhritarashtra, thinks that he deserves the Kingdom and tries to kill the rest of the kids by setting traps and scheming for the Sons of Pandu. Sons of Pandu's sons survive by supporting each other, but war is inevitable. Krishna, the Lord of Yadus, is Arcuna's relative and friend. Krishna tries to prevent the war as a mediator (Güngören, 2017, p.14).

It is unclear whose side Krishna will take in the battle. Duryodhana and Arcuna, went to visit Krishna. Krishna sees first Arcuna and asks: "Do you want me unarmed or do you want my army?" Arcuna chooses Krishna without hesitation. Since Krishna becomes Arcuna's charioteer, Arcuna finds himself in an unarmed combat (Güngören, 2017, p.14-15). The Bhagavad Gita is a very important book which covers Arcuna and Krishna's conversations. These conversations are addressed in symbolic, metaphorical, allegorical language with concepts such as reality, exquisite, justice, and passion (Ercan, 2015, p.126). Concepts of yoga and yogi have been frequently mentioned in this epic. For example, "the yoga master is the one, whose heart is united with eternal consciousness and who understands every being's consciousness." "He sees the Supreme Soul in everyone." In another example it is mentioned that: "The one who sees the happiness and unhappiness of all in all living things as equal to his own state is accepted as the highest of all yoga masters." (Ercan, 2015, p.126).

○ **Yoga Branches**

Moreover, the Bhagavad Gita covers many different yoga branches. These are *jnana yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga*, *raja yoga*.

● **Jnana Yoga**

Jnana yoga is the yoga of knowledge. Those in this yoga path separate themselves from their body, mind, and senses by using their will and awareness until they see that they are

nothing but the Self. This path is a way to reach self-awareness with the wisdom of separating reality from the unreal and the imaginary. Although Jnana yoga is the shortest way to reach the self, it is also highly difficult (Easwaran, 2007, p.49; Feurstein, 2008, p.31; Nagendra et al., 2014, p.49).

• **Bhakti Yoga**

Bhakti yoga is devotional yoga. Those who follow this yoga achieve the same thing by identifying and dedicating themselves to the self, the I. This path is followed by the Mystics of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Divine Love brings one closer to the essence. It is the purification of man's emotional power and channeling it into the divine. It is the simplest way to get to the essence. Bhakti yoga is the way of the heart. It is a connection to the divine and the Supreme. It is the only attachment that does not feed the ego (Chopra, 2006, p.107; Easwaran, 2007, p.49; Feurstein, 2008, p.36; Nagendra et al., 2014, p.49).

In the twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, dedication and love are mentioned as follows:

KRISHNA:

The one who thinks nothing but me

The one who turns to me sincerely with love

The one who is bound to me by unbroken bonds

Is mature enough for unity for me (2)

Those who dedicate their work to me without running away from work

Those who turn to the Unity without dispersing themselves

Those who call me, concentrating on their essence

Those who constantly think of me and worship me (6) (Güngören, 2017, p.199-

200).

- **Karma Yoga**

Karma yoga is the yoga of action. Those in this path of yoga leave their own selves through the body and mind and serve others all their lives. Thus, the finite self is replaced by the infinite self. It is the simplest method that a person will deliberately apply himself. Not thinking about the outcome of the fruit of actions will bring one to peace (Chopra, 2006, p.107; Easwaran, 2007, p.49; Nagendra et al., 2014, p.48). In the third chapter of Bhagavad Gita, karma yoga has been mentioned as:

KRISHNA (talks to Arjuna):

The wise one is;

The one who shapes his senses with his mind,

The one who works while he can

And he who is free (7)

Do all the necessary work

Working is better than not working

At least even to survive

Do not be an idle, work! (8) (Güngören, 2017, p.79).

- **Raja Yoga**

Raja yoga is the meditation yoga. It disciplines the senses and mind until the sense reaches to a state of stillness and self. According to Swami Vivekananda, the purpose of raja yoga is to teach “how to concentrate on the mind, how to discover the hidden part of our own

mind, to generalize the contents of the mind and to draw our own conclusions. This meditative research leads one to explore the transcendental reality beyond thought, image, worship and prayer, ritual and magic” (Chopra, 2006, p.107; Easwaran, 2007, p.49; Feuerstein, 2008, p.29; Nagendra et al., 2014, p.43). In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, the part about the practice of meditation is quite detailed:

KRISHNA:

The one who defeats themselves;

Is peaceful

Finds truth in its essence

He does not care the cold, the hot and the bittersweet

He does not care who is high, who is low (7)

He is;

Filled with knowledge and wisdom

Exalted and self-possessed

Has reached unity and he is called a Saint (yogi)

According to him, the pebble is not different than gold (8) (Güngören, 2017, p.117).

The Bhagavad Gita starts with karma yoga, continues with jnana yoga and ends with bhakti yoga. So, it moves from unselfish action to knowing the self, and from there into the path of love (Chopra, 2006, p.107; Easwaran, 2007, p.49).

As the Bhagavad Gita has been written in an epic form, it is relatively more understandable and can reach many people. Although epic includes conversations between

Krishna and Arjuna, we can call Krishna Arjuna's inner voice and his mentor. In other words, Arjuna's conversation with himself is a state of questioning and asking questions. In this context, the above-mentioned types of yoga are the elements that are mentioned and practiced in Hatha Yoga from time to time, and Hatha Yoga cannot be said to be completely independent from other types of yoga. For example, a person is responsible for every action that he performs, every action that he does have a result. Although this is the subject of karma yoga, the practice of asana (physical pose) is also an action. In this context, it is possible to say that not only the Gita, but also many texts mentioned above are among the elements expressed by the yoga experts, which are subject within the Hatha Yoga practice.

2.1.1.7. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras highly important studies as they provide the essential information about yoga. The sutras focus on the methods in order to reach the ultimate goal of yoga. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras consists of four parts and contains 196 sutras. Each sutra stands a guide for the individual to turn to their own wisdom. The book deals with art, science and philosophy of life and aims to lead the individual to freedom. The first part is Samadhi pada. While the Sama means goodness and virtue; adhi means beyond. Enlightenment means the achievement of transcendence. Samadhi is the indivisible state of being, absolutism and facing the soul. In this state, the body, the mind and the soul disappear. The first chapter describes yoga and the movement of consciousness. This chapter is about the disciplines that need to be applied, which we call Dharma. While Dharma is perceived as the seed of yoga, Kaivalya (salvation) is perceived as the fruit of yoga (Ercan, 2015, p.137-138, 140; Iyengar, 2002, p.3-4; Vivekananda, 2014, p.15).

The beginning of Samadhi pada describes what yoga is: 1.2 *Yogas citta-vritti-nirodhaḥ*: According to this description yoga is controlling and silencing the activities of the mind. It

also highlights the importance of the need to direct the mind waves in the process of reaching the truth. The chapter continues with explaining breath practices and meditation as tools for controlling the mind in the path leading to samadhi (Ercan, 2015, p.138, 140; Vivekananda, 2014, p.25-31).

The second part is Sadhana pada. This chapter deals with the path of yoga and presents in detail the Astanga (eight-limbs) yoga, which is, eight yogic discipline. The first step is yamas, which includes social rules, relationship of the individual with their environment. Yamas are: ahimsa (nonviolence), satya (righteousness), asteya (not stealing), brahmacharya (self-control) and aparigraha (non-possesiveness). The second step is niyamas: which includes individual rules that must be followed. These are sauca (cleanliness, purity), santosha (contentment), tapas (self-dicipline), svadyaya (self-study), ishvara pranidhana (devotion to God) (Ercan, 2015, p.140; Vivekananda, 2014, p.16-17).

Asana, is the third step and refers to physical postures in yoga. Yoga postures are only mentioned in three sutras. In one of those sutras asana is described as; 2.46 *Sthira-sukham asanam*; Asana is a steady, comfortable posture. Asana is a tool in achieving the samadhi that leads to the ultimate goal (Ercan, 2015, p.141). Asanas serve as a bridge to unite body and mind as well as mind and soul. If the body is healthy, clean, and pure, it becomes the temple of the soul (Iyengar, 2002, p.32). The fourth step is pranayama. While *prana* means life force, *ayama* means expansion and pranayama is the expansion of life force through breath control. Patanjali explains pranayama as regulating the breath we take and give by holding it. He adds that pranayama should be applied only after the perfection in the asana has been achieved (Iyengar, 2002, p.7, 32-33).

The fifth step is pratyahara, which means the withdrawal and the control of the senses (Ercan, 2015, p.142). Vibhuti pada is the third chapter and covers the sixth, seventh and

eighth steps, which are Dhrana, dhyana and samadhi. Dhrana refers to focusing the attention; dhyana refers to passing into the deep thinking through focusing the mind and finally as explained in sutra 3.3 Samandhi refers to abolishment of self-awareness, which happens when the object of meditation encloses the meditator (Ercan, 2015, p.143).

The final chapter is Kaivalya. It describes the ultimate goal of yoga, which is salvation and its features. This state is perceived as liberation from all dimensions in life. In other words, it is the state of freeing from Moksha (Emancipation), dharma (rules of religion), kama (pleasure), arthta (rules of life) (Ercan, 2015, p.144-145). Ercan (2015, p.141) says that yoga is a journey from ahimsa to samadhi, and emphasizes that Hatha Yoga cannot be independent of ashtanga yoga. He states that it would not be right to express the practices performed only on asana as yoga, as there is no pratyahara and dhuranan.

Above, we talked about how yoga developed, what the concept of yoga is, and how it is transformed. We talked about philosophical approaches that support each other or dissociate from each other. There are numerous texts focusing on yoga since its emergence and they help us to understand yoga holistically. These studies are highly significant and have a transformative effect as they include many techniques applied in Hatha Yoga. Various concepts mentioned regarding yoga philosophy are mentioned in Hatha Yoga studies. Yoga sessions can be opened by mentioning a chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, or it can be ended by a sutra from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Not only meditation practices, but also asana practices bring awareness to the individual and guide them into themselves. Because of the transformational effect of Hatha Yoga, it has become popular globally. Various types of Hatha Yoga have emerged according to the needs of individual. As the research is conducted with the Hatha Yoga practioners to know what Hatha Yoga is and how it developed throughout the years will guide us.

2.1.2. Hatha Yoga Activities

The study of yoga subculture in İstanbul covers Hatha Yoga practitioners. Therefore, understanding what Hatha Yoga is, talking about how Hatha Yoga is shaped and what activities does Hatha Yoga involve will help us to understand the relationship between Hatha Yoga and subculture. Having information about the group being studied will allow us to understand the role of the group in the research as a whole.

2.1.2.1. Development of Hatha Yoga

Feuerstein (2008 p.29-30) states that Hatha Yoga is a medieval development and its most important purpose is the same as other original forms of yoga. The goal of Hatha Yoga is to help the individual to transcend their ego consciousness and reach the self or divine reality. But Hatha Yoga focuses on developing the body's potential. In this way, the body becomes able to withstand the violent attack of transcendent reality. Although levels of consciousness, such as Samadhi (absolutism, indivisible state of existence), are considered mental processes, the effect of mystical states of consciousness on the nervous system and body is quite profound. All these processes of consciousness also exist in the body. Therefore, Hatha Yoga practitioners make efforts to strengthen their body. Enlightenment itself is a bodily event. The discipline of Hatha Yoga is organized around revealing the "ultimate reality" in the mortal human body and mind. The practice of Hatha Yoga aims to live life in its entirety and to achieve self-awareness, rather than withdrawing itself from life to achieve enlightenment. Hatha Yoga practitioners try to create a "sacred" or "unshakeable" body. This body is like a guarantee of their immortality.

Singleton (2010, p.5, 8, 10) states that Indian cultural physics studies support the rediscovery of asana. He also says asana-oriented Western cultural physics movements have been developed in India and, shaped by "esoteric gymnastics" forms, which resulted in

becoming more popular in Europe and America. Posture-oriented yoga religion emerged as a result of Modern Indian yoga through the interplay of body culture techniques. Despite the rise of postural yoga around the world, postural yoga in the Indian yoga tradition remained secondary compared to Hatha Yoga especially before the modern era.

The relationship between Hatha Yoga and the body is more than asana (physical postures). Instead, Hatha Yoga tradition includes nutrition, purification, cleansing, breathing techniques, mudras, bandhas, energy channels. The concept of Hatha stands for power and strength. Symbolically, while *Ha* means sun, *ta* means Moon. The sun is the right side of the body. The sun symbolizes the body, dynamism, and masculinity, while the Moon stands for the left side of the body and represents the feminine side (Ercan, 2016, p.158).

Although the origins of Hatha Yoga dates back to the 5th century, its transition to writing was more recent. The first Hatha Yoga text is *Saradatilaka*. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is the most important text accurate one. It includes rules of nutrition, asana, mudra, and meditation techniques. Hatha Yoga Book published in the West is *Hatha Yoga: or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Well-Being*. (Ercan, 2016, p. 154-155).

Swami Vivekananda's inspiring speech to Americans at the Parliament of religions held in Chicago in 1893 paved Hatha Yoga the way into the Western World. After this meeting, he traveled around the country, wrote books, and introduced yoga to many people. Yoga expert, author of the book *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansa Yogananda came to the United States in 1920 and founded The Self-Realization Society. Jiddu Krishnamurti inspired many Westerners with his writings and speeches until his death. Indra Devi, known as the "first lady of Yoga" who introduced Hatha Yoga to America, opened her first yoga studio in 1947. She is the first non-Indian-born person and woman to teach yoga and bring it to the west. She trained many experts and gave yoga sessions to many people. Theos Bernard published

Hatha Yoga: The Report of a Personal Experience in 1947 and became a pioneer in the 50s. Selvarajan Yesudian has been one of the yoga experts known for his book *Sports and Yoga* (Worby, 2002, p.21-22).

Richard Hittleman brought yoga to a television program for the first time and taught a type of yoga that focused not only on the spiritual aspect, but also on human health. The *Richard Hittleman's Yoga: 28 Day Exercise Plan* program sold millions of books. During the 1960s, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's method of Transcendental Meditation has gained the Beatles' attention. The band members' interest in yoga was instrumental in spreading throughout the world. Research on meditation began to emerge during this period. Amrit Desai founded the Kripalu Yoga Center after Kripalu Yoga and the Pennsylvania Yoga Society. B.K.S. Iyengar wrote *Light on Yoga* in 1967. Iyengar's use of yoga tools to provide the best position for the body, in addition to the emphasis on anatomical certainty in postures, correct body balance has influenced the way yoga is taught around the world. Swami Sivananda's students have opened many schools in America and Europe (Worby, 2002, p.22-23).

Sri Krishnamacharya is an important Hatha Yoga master. It can be said that every single Hatha Yoga school on earth has been influenced by him (Worby, 2002, p.24). According to Singleton, postural forms, which were developed by Krishnamacharya were used in Mysore in the 1930s and 1940s. The rise of postural yoga today is attributed to Krishnamacharya's development of effective postural forms from the Mysore Palace gymnastic tradition (Coward, 2010, p.63-64). After taking lessons from Krishnamacharya for a while, Iyengar's system focused on introspection and anatomically detailed expression of asanas, which at the end influenced all other Hatha Yoga styles. This has a great influence on the West's interest in yoga and the ways in which Western people practice yoga. One of

Krishnamacharya's disciples is his son T.K.V. Desikachar and subsequently created his own style of yoga (Worby, 2002, p.24-25).

2.1.2.2. Hatha Yoga Styles

Yoga became quite popular in America in the 1990s and 2000s. The most common style of yoga today is Hatha Yoga and the styles derived from it. This is because Hatha Yoga can find solutions to the challenges of modern life (Ercan, 2016, p.155; Worby, 2002, p.26). Hatha Yoga, which includes asana, breathing techniques, relaxation, and meditation, is divided into styles according to the points they emphasize and the techniques they practice (Worby, 2002, p.47). It is worth mentioning Hatha Yoga styles briefly: B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga, founded by Iyengar, focuses on correct posture and alignment. In Iyengar yoga, tools such as belts, blankets, mattresses are used to support the yoga practitioner's posture. These tools minimize the risk of injury and ensure maximum efficiency from exposure. Music and partner studies are avoided in Iyengar yoga because they are seen as distracting elements. Ashtanga yoga is the dynamic Hatha Yoga formed by Pattabhi Jois. There is an energetic flow that transitions from one pose to another. It consists of asanas in series form. Beryl Bender Birch authored the book *Power Yoga*. Power yoga is an energetic, fluid hybrid system based on the Astanga system (Kappmeier & Ambrosini, 2006, p.6-7; Worby, 2002, p.48).

Vinyasa yoga is a series of salutations to the Sun, or the attachment of similar poses from one to another. The practitioner repeats each pose in the sequence before moving on to the other. Vinyasa flow means linking poses. Fluid movement proceeds in a way connected with breathing. Desikachar founded by Krishnamacharya's son T.K.V. Viniyoga is a therapeutic yoga system that the individual can adapt to himself. The flows are energetic and not strong. Poses are done slowly and gently. One soft pose can be attached to another (Kappmeier & Ambrosini, 2006, p.7).

Bikram yoga is known as “Hot Yoga” It is applied in a room at a temperature of approximately 41 degrees. It was revealed by Bikram Choudhury. It consists of twenty-six poses. It helps to remove toxins from the body and allows you to reach a better body.

Kundalini yoga is a form that Yogi Bhajan brought from Sikhism to the West. In Kundalini yoga, more mantras are sung and rapid breathing is given while performing poses. Poses are repeated a lot and certain mudras are made. It aims to highlight the Kundalini energy (Kappmeier & Ambrosini, 2006, p.9; Worby, 2002, p.51).

Hatha Yoga can be practiced as some of the styles mentioned above. Hatha Yoga practices, which are not practiced under any style name, can consist of a combination of different schools. In addition, even experts from the same school may have different sessions. The practice of Hatha Yoga mentioned in this research is not referred to any of the above-mentioned styles. Hatha Yoga practice, which is part of the research, includes asana (physical pose), pranayama (breath work), meditation and savana (relaxation) practices. Knowing about what Hatha Yoga is, what it includes shaped the Hatha Yoga practices in our minds. To know about what subculture is and, what type of approaches is discussed will build up the claim of yoga subculture. The concept of culture, subculture and subcultural theories will be a guide to deepen our knowledge about the main concept of the research which is subculture.

2.2. Presentation of Literature on Culture and Subculture

2.2.1. Concept of Culture

The concept of culture is very diverse. It contains many elements within the culture. Different researchers have defined the concept of culture in different ways. Before looking at what subculture is and what it covers, it is useful to briefly look at what the concept of culture is and what areas it contains. Among the most important concepts of social-cultural anthropology is culture. Culture, according to anthropologists, is the most fundamental

feature that distinguishes human from the animal realm. Although it takes long time for all human to take care of themselves after birth compared to animals, they ensure the continuity of its species thanks to culture (Özbudun & Uysal, 2012, p.71-72). Güvenç (2011, p.121) says that culture is the subject of social/cultural anthropology. But he adds that defining the culture is quite difficult. American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn mentioned 164 different definitions of the concept of culture.

As can be seen it is almost impossible to attribute one single definition to culture. Therefore, E. B. Tylor's definition of culture is considered more holistic: "culture or civilization is a complex whole covering knowledge, arts, traditions and talent, skills, and habits learned (acquired) by mankind as a member of society." Although the definition of Tylor does not fully reflect the phenomenon, it has given direction to social anthropology (Güvenç, 2011, p. 128-129).

2.2.2. The Concept of Subculture

The boundaries of the concept of culture can expand from a small village to a country. A village in the same culture and geography will have similarities and traditions, as well as meaningful differences. Different units and syntheses formed within national borders are called subcultures. Subcultures differ from each other with some cultural characteristics (Güvenç, 2011, p.144-145). As a result of this relationship patterns between individuals, a sub community, a subculture is formed within the same society and culture. In subcultures, we encounter concepts of identity, difference, and self. Subculture refers to cultural changes created by a certain segment of society with a collective consciousness. Subculture groups can be called outside society. Yet, they do not necessarily mean an opposite culture. On the contrary, some social scientists say that subcultures are not disconnected from society, they make a difference with the whole of connected systems. Jenks defines subculture as a micro-

level semantics of culture that is not detached from culture (Aslan, 2013, p.1-2).

Ökeli (2014, p.18) sees subculture as a cluster culture that is separated from wide culture by its beliefs and behavior, while being a part of that wide culture. He describes it as “communion within the community.” Bora believes that subcultures live their own social norms as their unique morality, form of communication, housing, style of entertainment, artistic activity and a community that reproduces with a unique integrity and a system of social relations apart from the social-political order of the dominant culture.” In addition, he underlines that subculture should not be seen as inferior to the dominant culture (Ökeli, 2014, p.18).

Subculture is called a lifestyle that varies according to regions, social categories within the dominant culture and makes certain lifestyle richer. Ökeli (2014, p.19) adds that subcultures can be formed in categories such as age, gender, occupation, sexual preference, education, and wealth. He further says that subcultures can vary depending on economic, social classes, ethnicity, and geographical region. Subculture gains meaning according to its position in society. Each group movement, which differs according to the general society, can be called a kind of subculture. In other words, groups that differ from the traditional values and lifestyles of the society to which they belong are subcultures. Minorities, gypsies, various youth groups and religious communities are among these examples.

Subcultures often align with the dominant culture in terms of behavior patterns and traditional values. Despite their differences, they are not in conflict within the mainstream culture. Cultures in which they reject the values and norms of society and adopt the values and norms against the dominant culture in which they live are called opposite culture not subculture (Ökeli, 2014, p.19). Despite the differences between subcultures, each of them complements each other. Although they have their own unique characteristics, they contain

the values of the dominant culture (Tanrikulu, 2015, p.476).

Although definitions of subculture vary according to researchers, we see that subculture exists within the dominant culture, not independent of that culture. A subculture is a community that differs within the culture in which it is located.

Some researchers have proposed the concept of “co-culture” instead of using subculture as subculture has “inferior” and “secondary” meanings. Those who use this concept emphasize that no culture is superior to any other culture that exists. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel state that the dominant culture exists in every society, but it contains different cultures within that society. Thus, they claim that the most accurate concept to be used when describing these different cultures is the concept of co-culture (Ökeli, 2014, p.20).

2.2.3. Development of Subculture Theories

Tönnies (1988) mentions the distinction of social bond as “community” and “society” or “unity.” The idea of using the concept of community is that it combines emotional characteristics such as privacy, exclusion, inclusion, and closeness. Whereas the idea of society emphasizes the combination of rational and conscious choices away from sentimentality. According to his theory, these two concepts are separated from each other and this is based on the concept of subculture (Aslan, 2013, p.2).

Durkheim (1984) explains society in two forms of solidarity and organization. The first is “mechanical solidarity” and the second is “organic solidarity.” Mechanical solidarity uses simple societies and organic solidarity refers to developed societies. Although he does not use the concept of subculture, he focuses on explaining and making sense of the concept of society and micro-level structures. He deals with primitive and modern societies by evaluating subcultures through the concepts of belonging and commitment. For example, guilds are the first examples of subculture studies (Aslan, 2013, p.3). Durkheim’s study

(1984) influenced the Chicago School. Urban studies and sociological studies have had profound effects on marginal social group studies (Stahl, 1998, p.13).

2.2.4. The Chicago School

At the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of subculture began to be discussed within the Chicago School of American sociology. Sub-cultural studies began to emerge by focusing on different ethnicities, mass migration, violence, conflict, organized crime, underground life, corruption, poverty, and revealing the structure of the city on the occasion of study on the groups that make up the city. Sub-cultural studies conducted within the scope of Urban Research have been aligned with social types such as marginal, non-assimilated homeless people, criminals, newly arrived immigrants, street gangs. The focus of these studies has been on young people living in suburbs and poor areas, which are mostly seen as urban problems (Akcan, 2011, p.16). The impact of Chicago's history of urbanization is great in the studies that are the subject of the Chicago School. The uncontrolled growth of the city caused changes in the social structure. With industrialization, the city became a financial and cultural center and received mass migration. The resulting problems formed the basis of the Chicago School's research topics on the city (Kaya, 2011, p.367-369).

The Chicago School explored the concept of deviation, focusing on what is and is not normal behavior. According to Chicago theorists, deviation is not considered as normlessness or anomaly, but as an area where different norms can arise. Therefore, they have carried out many empirical and ethnographic studies to understand the perspective of young people towards the world. They studied them in their natural habitat by observing with deviant groups. They have developed a model on how deviant cultures normalize their deviant behavior (Akcan, 2011, p.16). The Chicago School is unique in its study. The individual is treated as a self and socialized through lifelong learning. In this process, the concept of "adult

socialization” stands out and this concept are important in professional reviews (Akcan, 2011, p.18).

The focus of Chicago School on the ecological model which claims that the space has role in forming the individual’s behaviors has an impact on some researchers. Therefore, researchers such as Park, Burgees, McKay, and Shaw focused on social problems and issues of deviation. They based this on “social disorganization” (Aslan, 2013, p.4; Güven, 2018, p.180). Park’s work, *The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment* is one of the first subculture studies. According to him, the city does not mean a physical mechanism or an artificial structure. Instead, the city is a product that reflects nature and human nature. Accordingly, it is an area that allows socialization of social groups to form their own moral circles. When talking about community organizations, Park focuses on professional and outlier forms. Professional forms are where individuals provide social solidarity within the scope of the division of labor. Subcultures, on the other hand, arise in these contradictory forms. The city is not homogeneous and has a differentiated structure. Although the city tries to prevent contradictions, it creates a space in which contradictions themselves emerge (Akcan, 2011, p.17).

Ernest Burgees (1928) tries to understand the social basis of crime in the urban model he created. According to the theory of social disorder, parameters such as migration, industrialization, and rapid social change disrupt “well-organized lifestyles.” Shaw and Henry D. McKay (1969) argue that crime rates are higher in suburbs. In these neighborhoods, young people grow up in a value system where crime is accepted. In addition, young people who are vulnerable to crime carry the criminal tradition from these neighborhoods to other areas of the city where they are in close contact. According to Shaw and McKay (1969), the trend towards crime is culturally transmitted. On the other hand, they claim that by eliminating the

negative effects of the city, these individuals can turn into law-abiding individuals (Güven, 2018, p.180).

According to Parsons' (1951) theory, subculture is a collective experience. Its existence must be acknowledged, even if it is not approved in society. The subcultures he exemplifies are criminal, outlier groups, criminal gangs, or radical political movements. Subculture members are considered as communities disconnected from society and have the potential to oppose what may be valuable to society. But Parsons (1951) argues that they should be brought into society. His point is that subcultures should be a contradiction and they should experience inconsistencies with moral norms. Accordingly, subcultures play a significant role in bringing those who act outside of social rules into society (Aslan, 2013, p.5).

Gordon (1947) allowed the subculture to be known in a more general context. Subculture, he said, is "subsets of cultural traits owned by certain sections of the population." Society can form a subculture with ethnic, economic, regional, and religious differences. American society continues to exist, hosting many different small groups within it, maintaining its own cultural elements. In other words, subculture has a unifying effect on its participants and plays the role of being functional unit (Akcan, 2011, p.18).

Albert Cohen laid the foundation for the first theoretical approaches to subculture with his study *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gangs*. Cohen emphasizes that subcultures occur as a result of the need to produce solutions to social problems. The focus of his theory is on problem solving (Akcan, 2011, p.18). In his book he admits that he did not emphasize the concept of subculture, crime, and the gangs enough in his previous study as he supported Merton's thesis, which states that the effort for material success led young people to crime. In addition, vandalism, which is overlooked along with material wealth, draws attention to violent crimes. Cohen, who for the first time systematically used the concepts of culture and

subculture in explaining the crime, sees culture as the dominant cultural values. The dominant culture is middle-class culture, and subcultures, according to him, are different cultural values that come out in response to the dominant culture. Working-class young people who do not have respectable middle-class characteristics such as skill development, individual responsibility, and long-term gain led them to be disappointed in achieving their social status. In this way, working-class youth come together to join “criminal subcultures” and create areas based on guilt and informality to gain their respectable values (Güven, 2018, p. 181).

W. B. Miller (1958), on the other hand, offers a sharper definition of subculture, suggesting that crime has nothing to do with social status or failure to achieve success. According to him, the reason for the crime is the fact that they have “different and lower subcultural norms and values than the rest of society.” The characteristics of the subculture members expressed by Miller are as follows: They are rowdy; they appear with violent and aggressive tendencies, they are cunning; they find clever ways to steal, they are excited; they pursue alcohol, gambling, and sexual adventures. As a result, Miller (1958) argues that subcultures treat crime as normal (Güven, 2018, p. 181).

2.2.5. The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

Hebdige (2004, p.73) says that subcultural studies in England were born out of the tradition of urban ethnography pioneered by the study of Henry Mayhew and Thomas Archer. The Chicago School’s reflection on England was achieved by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Studies have varied from community and space issues to class issues (Akcan, 2011, p.20). Stahl (1998, p.10, 13) notes that over the past two decades, subculture theories have been shaped by the emergence of the oppressed, the outsider and the political working class. In the context of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural

Studies, subculture theories have been discussed by John Clarke, Phil Cohen, Hebdige and Hall through the concepts of heresy and guilt. Dick Hebdige, Stuart Hall, and colleagues advanced this idea and formed the basis of many contemporary subculture theories.

Subculture: The Meaning of Style, Resistance through Rituals works, shape their own theories within the framework of various theories, from Gramsci's Hegemony to Lévi-Strauss's concept of bricolage and affinity, Eco's semiotics, Marx's theory of class, ideology, and matter fetishism. "Teds, Mods, Punks, Rockers" oppose the dominant culture and turn the meaning of their daily lives into something exciting, alien, so their style becomes a form of resistance."

While researching the youth cultures in post-war England, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies built on the Chicago School, who acknowledges that deviance is normal in certain social conditions. In relation to this, in the context of neo-Marxist theory, they were directed at the "symbolic resistance to hegemonic values" of young working-class men in Britain 1960-1970 with their critical points of view against capitalist ideology (Akcan, 2011, p.20-21).

Hebdige (2004, p.77-78) explains from this point of view that each subculture represents different forms of shaping of the "raw material of social existence." He adds that individuals' creation of their own history comes from the past and reaches the present, and this happens under a number of circumstances. As a result, material (social relations) becomes first culture then subculture. In other words, material is never raw. The current historical context places the individual in a specific ideological space, changing form and gives him a unique life and meaning. The raw material created by visual subcultures is both real and ideological. These items reach members of the subculture through school, family, research, or media. Each subculture is a representation of a specific "problem,"

“contradiction,” and “solution” in certain circumstances.

In post-war England, The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was influenced by Hall and Gramsci's point of view. They claim that a new type of capitalist hegemony, consumption, and media culture, has emerged. They also suggest that mass culture is important for the working class to adapt to capitalist society. They see culture as a form of resistance to capitalist society, emphasizing that culture is reproduced through hegemony and ideology. They discussed how youth subcultures resist the hegemonic stance of capitalist authority. Youth subculture studies have expressed themselves by demonstrating the resistance of subcultural groups to dominant forms of culture and identity by producing their own identity and styles (Kellner, 2016, p.141-142).

The study of Hall, Clarke, Hebdige, Cohen and others have obvious traces from the anomalous theory and the study of the Chicago School. For example, Phil Cohen's neighborhood studies reflect many perspectives ranging from Park's social ecology, Clarke, and Hall's resistance through rituals, to Merton's theory of anomalous. Cohen's study “Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community” is an example of the approach of The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies theorists. Post-World War II social transformations; industrialization, urbanization and the rapid consumption habits of young people are the focus of these theorists. Intergenerational conflict within the dominant culture has led to the emergence of new subcultures. Cohen emphasizes that the reason for this is the weakening of historical and cultural continuity, which bonds through the family. Subculture can magically eliminate contradictions within the prevailing culture as opposed to being a symbolic structure (Stahl, 1998, p.13-14).

Cohen's method of studying on symbolic structures was expanded to study on areas such as clothing, music, ritual, and slang. The discourse of the style has created a form of

communication between subculture, dominant culture, and mass culture. The indicative scientific rearrangement of objects in the dominant culture allowed subcultures to create their own specific meanings. Hebdige's book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* presents modern literature, indicative scientific, structuralism, and anthropological perspectives (Stahl, 1998, p.15-16).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the symbolic resistance of young working-class people to hegemonic values was incorporated into sub-cultural areas of study, such as Teds, Mods, skinheads. Youth subcultures have been evaluated as a way of understanding and living the social structure. Youth subcultures bring the view that activities are the solution to the problems of the working class through life and clothing with them. For example, Jefferson states that Teds who are forced to spend their lives away from the respectable working class with unskilled jobs are opposed to the boredom of school, studying and family life by creating an exaggerated style. The Teds youth group wore "narrow-cut, waist-length fabric jackets, fancy vests and tight pants" and listened to American Rock and Roll Music. Jefferson states that they intended to gain status with this style of clothing. As a result, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies theorists say that in order to understand youth subcultures, it is necessary to dialectically examine the relations between hegemonic dominant culture and working-class culture. The basis of this review is the class struggle as well as the relationship between subculture and dominant culture (Akcan, 2011, p.21-23).

As can be seen, subcultural styles were evaluated through class struggle, each containing its own unique differences and symbolic meanings. According to this point of view, we can say that they are in resistance to the dominant culture with differences and symbols. In relation to this, Hebdige (2004, p.81) underlines that the meaning of the subcultural style is the result of the reaction of the working-class to the changes in life and, in

Stuart Hall's words, the "ideological influence" of the media. Suggesting that sub-cultural resistance is maintained through styles, Hebdige (2004) adds that it is only at the symbolic level that it cannot actually find solutions to problems (Akcan, 2011, p.24).

Noting that subcultures are also "conspicuous consumption cultures," Hebdige (2004, p.97) suggests that the "secret identity" of the subculture will only be through style. He explains the attractiveness of subcultural styles by certain groups with two concepts: bricolage and homology (Akcan, 2011, p.24). The concept of bricolage is used to understand how sub-cultural styles are structured. Lévi-Strauss (1966) describes the concept as a "coherent system of connections" between things that drive primitive people to think about the forms of magic (myth, witchcraft, superstition). The common feature of these magical connection systems is that each of them has infinite expansion capacity. In other words, the concept of bricolage can be considered as "the science of concrete" from an anthropological point of view (Hebdige, 2004, p.97-98).

The second concept is homology. This concept is used to explain the connections of different cultural practices to each other. Homology can be expressed as a "symbolic harmony" between subculture, lifestyles, and the actions that depend on it. For example, in the punk subculture, there is an order that forms a meaningful whole in chaos. An internal structure and organic harmony are seen in various areas. As a result, the concepts of bricolage and interaction have been used to explain the consistency between the subculture and the various material practices to which it depends (such as wearing clothes, buying motorcycles) (Stahl, 1998, p.17-18).

2.2.6. Post-Subcultural Approaches

The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has been criticized for not addressing all aspects of life in a subcultural context. If we give a few examples, McRobbie

and Garber (1976) talk about the fact that sub-cultural studies are conducted only on men, and that woman participants are not considered. He attributes this to the fact that girls are under parental control and, accordingly, cannot use their free time as they wish (Bennett, 1999, p.602). Muggleton (2000) argues that the inclusion of most subculture members in the working class is unproven and only accepted theoretically (Akcan, 2011, p.25). Tıǧlı (2012, p.12) says that post-subcultural theories are influenced by post-structuralism and post-modern approaches. In contrast to the subcultural studies on social division and inequality, the focus of this approach has been mass culture, not class. Post sub-cultural studies criticize the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies which explains the identity of youth culture through the class.

Post-subculture theories focus on the concepts of “new tribe,” “individual identity and style,” “unstable and changing cultural relations.” All these concepts depict modern consumption-oriented communities. Since the 1980s, the changes in sub-cultural theory walks in tandem with the changes in youth culture. This is because young people are involved in dominant power structures (Tıǧlı, 2012, p.13). According to Maffesoli (1999), the concept of “tribe” refers to revealing a certain environment, a mental state, through certain lifestyles, rather than literal organizational forms. Maffesoli’s (1999) tribal concept has also been used in different forms as “new tribes,” “postmodern tribes” (Bennett, 1999, p.605-606).

Bennett (1999, p.605) criticizes the sociological theorists for two reasons. First, he criticizes them for using the term subculture as an opposing concept. Second, Bennett criticizes the sociological theorists for expressing the concept of subculture as a subset of culture or society within culture and such a definition would be quite difficult and would point to a division and social categories. He also argues that even in the most interconnected groups, there are no such fixed and harmonious styles. The so-called youth subcultures

remained quite insufficient in explaining the consumption-oriented societies and their changing social relations.

Muggleton (2000, p.47-48) describes the 1980s and 1990s as a period when subcultural divisions, multiplications, many revivals, hybrids, transformations, and quite a lot of styles co-existed. Post-subcultural theorists see style as a concept in which one can quickly move from one style to another. They are not concerned about whether their chosen subculture identities are opposite or not because there is no rule, no originality, no ideology to connect with. Instead, there is just a stylistic game to be played. Because post-modernity does not need boundaries and thus, subcultural lines have now been disappeared. Therefore, comparing styles is quite problematic. As a result, post-modern sub-cultural identities are multiple and fluid and structural relationships such as class, gender, and ethnicity. According to Muggleton, there is no longer a consistent dominant culture, and accordingly we cannot talk about a subculture that will express resistance.

As a result, the concept of subculture has been interpreted and defined in different ways by different researchers, in different contexts. Subculture theorists have focused on urban ecological approaches and concepts such as crime, class, and deviation within the framework of their quest to find solutions to the problems of the city of Chicago with the differentiation of society in America. The Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, influenced by the Chicago School, focused on youth styles that emerged after World War II. Under the influence of Gramsci, concepts such as the working class and resistance became popular. Post subcultural approaches, on the other hand, used the concept of “new tribes” instead of the concept of subculture, emphasizing the rule-free, variable and fluidity of subcultures.

In his book *Subculture: The Fragmentation of the Social* Jenks states that subcultures

are new times and places where individuals settle in. He also adds that they are “new sources of identity.” Due to the fragmentation of society, subculture has given space to new meanings. Subculture, in his words, is “not ultra-modern; it is regressive, nihilistic, and entirely relative” (Aslan, 2013 p.8). Jenks’s point of view presents us to see subcultures from different perspective. Reading about different subculture approaches, will provide us an understanding whether Hatha Yoga creates a subculture or not. The most central and concrete representative of Hatha Yoga subculture is the concept of body. Therefore, we can look at the approaches on the concept of body.

2.3. Presentation of Literature on Body

For human body is a tool to perceive the world through it and with it. Body is a concrete form that shows us our existence and also a source to communicate. In this, there is no duality. As human being we feel and experience through our bodies. Therefore, the concept of body is a must for this research which aims to understand yoga subculture. In this research, it is necessary to understand the perspective of perceiving the body for those who practice Hatha Yoga. Body is a concept that we come across quite often in our daily lives as we are with our body every second. The concept of body contains physical, mental, spiritual, and psychological states. Everything we experience is embodied in our body. In Hatha Yoga practices, the body is not considered only as an object that is shaped, noticed, experienced, and observed, but also as a reality. In each Hatha Yoga session, yoga practitioners shape, feel, mention, recognize, experience, and practice their bodies. In this way, while understanding whether yoga is a subculture or not, it will also be understood whether the body contributes to it. But before that, seeing how various researchers, anthropologists and sociologists look at the body will give us information on the concepts of the body and subculture.

According to Descartes, the human body was thought of in two ways. The first is the physical and the actual body, which is associated with physical needs. The second is the spirit/intellect, which deals with the actions such as understanding, thinking, and creating. Though Descartes' dualistic point of view, in Hatha Yoga the unity of body, mind, soul is emphasized. During periods when this distinction was not made, the body was accepted as a whole, its physical and spiritual needs were not separated from each other. A person was considered as a physical and spiritual integrity and this integrity should not be broken. It was also believed that damaging the physical body was also damaging the mental body. Therefore, various rituals were performed to preserve this integrity (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.401).

Descartes' view chimes with Hatha Yoga practices, which accepts body and soul separated but emphasizes their simultaneous connectivity. Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu (2016, p.401) states that man is a physical and spiritual unity and during periods when this distinction is not made, and rituals are performed to protect this unity. His argument openly supports the view that the practice of Hatha Yoga is used as a tool to keep the concepts of body and soul in balance as a whole. Because of the reasons above to look at the literature of the concept body is essential and helps us to understand what body shelters.

The ways in which Nietzsche (1994) describes body dates back to ancient Greek thought. According to him, there are two forces that determine the attitude and behavior of a person, and these two forces are constantly at war with each other. The first force is Dionysius sexual power, and the second is Apollo, which represents order, consistency, and rationality. When these two forces are balanced, the person becomes healthy and complete. But with rational behavior, sexual power can be controlled, and the peace of people is only revealed through art and aesthetics. According to Nietzsche (1994), the human body is not

complete. This state of deficiency can only be completed by education and discipline and by creating cultural life. Accordingly, man must recreate himself by establishing his own reality, and establish himself with a social environment (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.402).

As a Hatha Yoga expert, I face many different bodies. On the one hand, I see the infinite potential of the body, and on the other hand, I observe that many people face restrictions on this infinite potential of the body. Yoga practice supports training the body by developing body awareness. The individual develops it by noticing it through his body, that is, he recreates and defines his own body. According to Nietzsche, the individual supports the completion of his body by creating his own reality and creating a social environment. In other words, the construction of the body takes place through culture, through the creation of the individual's own reality and through education.

B. S. Turner (1997) said that the human body is in a dialectical relationship with the social environment that a person has established. This relationship occurs in three forms. In the first, people think of their bodies as part of a foreign environment, and when people get sick, they become alienated from their bodies. In the second, a person does not notice the existence of the body, they are unaware of the body in their daily work. In the third one, people understand that they must establish dominance over their bodies, which means that the social process is understood. For example, when a child dominates his body, he understands what behavior he will do in society and behaves accordingly (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.402).

In his book *The Body and Society*, Turner (1984), sees body, culture, and nature as the intersection point. The body belongs to nature and is in the field of culture. In other words, the body is built culturally. Additionally, he states that many things are internalized through society, and there is a social space in human beings. Simply put, an inner body is created.

These inner and outer bodies are constantly interacting. As ideas about the body change, the external appearance of the body is regulated accordingly (Canatan, 2015, p.9-10).

Turner's relationship with the body and culture makes it clear that the body has a role in culture building. The body is part of the culture. If the body is a phenomenon that is culturally built and formed by individuals of society, then it is possible to say that the body is also built by the individuals. The idea of the body contributes to the change in the appearance of the body. In other words, the ways in which we perceive the body leads changes in the body itself.

Body sociologists argue that there is both "inner body" and "outer body." It is Bryan S. Turner, who has first made this distinction. For him, the external body refers to the representation, regulation, and supervision of the body in the social sphere. The outer body is related to the representation of the body as personality and identity in the broader context. The outer body is analyzed by movements such as art, fashion, media, consumption, sexuality, and gender in post-modernism. These movements reflect what the body represents and how it is organized in both public and private spaces. The inner body, on the other hand, deals with the inner structure of the body, its organization, and the preservation of the body. The inner body emphasizes the control of passions and needs in the face of the interests of social organization and stability. (Canatan, 2016, p.346-347).

Internal-external body separation has continued from history to the present day. In the traditional period, importance was given to the body. For example, in Ancient Greece, in the development of young people body comes right after music. The body is not limited to sport. At the same time, it is important for a person to pay attention to food, drink, and live a healthy life (Canatan, 2016, p.347-348). Similar to the concepts mentioned by Turner, in Hatha Yoga practices, the outer body is considered as the body in which we connect with the

outer world, apply physical asanas, communicate with the world, and reflect our personality. In addition, the inner body is paired with the idea that everything a person consumes or creates as a thought in yoga practice will be a reflection in a person's body and inner journey. Mauss says that the way of using the body is shaped by behaviors learned within a particular culture, and emphasizes that the body is cultural. Since body is used differently in each culture, it is an interesting research topic for anthropology (Evren, 2018, p.249-250). According to Mauss (1979) even in the simplest movement of the body, there is a social process. For example, although walking seems to occur physically, people in every society learn the movement of walking through cultural and social contexts (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.403). Mauss' colleague Robert Hertz states that the body is not only shaped by culture, but also has an influence on the cultures of individuals (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.176).

According to Mauss (1979), culture has an influence on the formation of the body. The use of the body may vary from culture to culture. In other words, we can say that a certain bodily activity belongs to that culture, or defines the culture. So, it would be fair to say that a group that we can describe as a subculture has its own unique bodily activities. Hertz, who says that not only culture but also the body have an influence on creating culture, shows us that the body and culture mutually influence each other. We can express that the individual is influential in the formation of a culture or subculture.

Similarly, Douglas' (1970) argument that bodies reveal the conditions of that society in action or in a stationary state indicates that the body plays a role in the formation of culture. Mary Douglas (1970) states that body-related rituals in small-scale societies are effective in organizing the social order and social relations in societies. Body is a tool in societies to which they belong, and a factor in showing how that society will be recognized. Therefore,

bodies reveal the conditions and situations of the society in which they are in during action or in a stationary state (Beyazyüz, 2015, p. 177).

Victor Turner (1977) argues that social sciences do not reveal an important idea of the human body, and mentions that two understandings of the body have become apparent. In the first understanding, the body is seen as an experience lived. Phenomenology explores how the biological condition of the body affects daily life and organizations, the relationship between organic systems and social and cultural systems. In the second understanding, the body appears as a discourse expressing social relations. The body is a system of symbols. Therefore, understanding body movement allows us to understand the social structure. This understanding sees the body as a factor in the creation of knowledge and power in society. According to the first understanding, the body exists independent from the discourse that represents it. Turner believes that these two different understandings will converge at some point (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.403). Turner states that everyday life consists of regeneration of the body. He says that with the resolution of life, the resolution of the body will be possible. Seeing the body as both a physical and social structure, Turner sees the body as a point where nature and culture merge. (Kara, 2016, p.28).

From a Post-modern point of view, the human body is at the center of consumption culture and is a product of the economy and, capitalist system. In the new culture being produced, the body remains under the influence of three factors. First, the human body is reformatted as a means of consumption, and the way of life changes accordingly. Second, culture creates entertainment using signs of consumption, images, and stimuli. Finally, a different system of values is formed in social life. In this context, the existence of a healthy body is only possible by being part of the consumption culture and keeping up with the consumption required by the culture. Moreover, the continuity of consumer culture is only

possible by changing perceptions of individuals on their own bodies (Cirhinlioğlu & Cirhinlioğlu, 2016, p.404).

Evren (2018, p.250) explains Bourdieu's (1994) view that for people to belong to a society, the value judgments of that society must first be transferred to the body. He gives the name "habitus" to the mechanism in which social structures are transferred to the body and everyday life. It deals with the body in a class-based habitus that allows the daily life of a person and the development of the body. The concept of habitus is defined as an established, social structure that motivates a person to take action. According to him, the body is the transformation of the ideal world in terms of social classes into material (Kara, 2016, p.28).

In addition, he says that individuals born and raised in specific a group will reflect the taste and eating preferences and the traditions that dominate the group of that culture. In the social space, the individual exists with his body and shapes his body according to his own desires. The body contains many symbolic meanings. The body is shaped under the influence of groups to which it belongs or does not belong. How an individual perceives his own body is part of this process of shaping (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.198).

Forms of nutrition vary according to the individual's purpose. For example, eating preferences depends on what people need. These include body building, looking aesthetic, and strengthening mental abilities. Therefore, perception such as "beautiful body" or "normal body" varies from group to group. For example, a weakness that can be ideally defined today can be seen as a useless, unhealthy body in a group engaged in agriculture. Beyazyüz emphasizes that eating preferences depends on "the work done, the group which you belong to, religious requirements or medical recommendations." In particular, he states that "sexual attractiveness" and "staying young" efforts also determine nutritional preferences (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.199). As it is understood, the individual's body perception varies according to the

purpose of the group he or she is in. Nutritional preferences, on the other hand, are related to the body. The purpose of a particular group, their point of view will affect the bodily perception of that group and their nutritional preferences. In this context, the nutritional preferences of Hatha Yoga practitioners will inform us in terms of whether that group carries subcultural elements.

Foucault (1991) focuses on the physical education policies of state institutions (Evren, 2018, p.253). According to him, the body is the study subject of “political, ideological control, surveillance, regulation.” Since the 18th century, the body has been at the forefront of providing social discipline. In areas such as medicine, education, psychiatry, law, the state controls body behavior. In addition, bodily actions are recorded through these systems. If the bodies go beyond the established limits, they will be punished. This process strengthens the body’s political and economic functionality (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.178).

In his book *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault (1991) mentions that bodies are conceptualized through increased medical knowledge, clinics, and hospitals. He emphasizes that medicine is an institutional force in labeling bodies as “normal or deviant,” “clean or dirty,” “controlled or in need of control.” In this way, bodies become “objects that need to be arranged, observed and tamed.” With medicine, body secrets become accessible. The doctor can touch the body and question it because the body is delivered to the doctor as an object and the health system can restrict the body’s freedom by closing it somewhere (Beyazyüz, p.178-179 2015). Foucault (2005) states that the body is socially constructed, while suggesting that there is a power that shapes the body through the concept of “the pacified and disciplined body.” This means that the body is socially formed (Kara, 2016, p.28). Foucault (2005) explains the concepts he proposes through the development of medicine and government institutions, the regulation of the body. Yet, Hatha Yoga practices believes that

body should be disciplined, organized and it should be seen as a tool in the process of self-liberalisation. This at the end raises the question of whether the body is an object built socially in different forms in different institutions and groups.

Traditional schools of philosophy have treated the body with a dualistic approach; they treat human as body-soul or mind – feeling. For the most part, while the soul and mind are valued, the body and emotions are side-lined. Recently, this approach has changed to accept human beings as both physical and emotional beings. Social scientists, on the other hand, argue that the body is created socially and culturally (Canatan, 2016, p.16-17). In the field of medicine, the body is not treated as a mere physical being. The perception of the body by the individual and its social aspect are taken into account. Areas that a person wants to change about their body and interventions that they make on their body reveal the influence of culture (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.188).

Kara (2016, p.23) defines the human body as a being separated from the world of objects due to its organic structure, form, color, volume, and consciousness. The human body is both physical and metaphysical. While its physical structure can be seen, its spiritual structure is motivated and perceived through the senses. Features such as the organic structure and color of the body form the material side of the body. Whereas features such as gender, race, and sexuality reveal the social side of the body. The social side of the body is a structure in which the identity is created, questioned, and realized.

The values and changes of social structure are transferred to the body through culture. Not only social experiences, but also “group norms and values” affect the body. Kara (2016, p.23) mentions these norms as “appropriate and necessary behaviors for different sexes, age groups, economic classes, clothing style, rules of care and cleanliness, measures of beauty and ugliness, health status.” Because the self develops together with society, bodily

characteristics defined by concepts such as healthy or beautiful vary from society to society. Because the discourse and comments made about the body convey the culture in which the body is located and the symbolism of that language. Therefore, the body should be treated as a historical and cultural structure.

In many cultures, ceremonies with symbolic meanings are performed, such as painting and piercing the body. These ceremonies, which contain symbolic meanings, play a role in determining a person's position in those society. Since the meanings created about the body are formed through history and culture, it would not be wrong to say that the body is "socio-culturally constructed." Society has an important role in influencing, changing, shaping the body (Kara, 2016, p.23-24).

Kara (2016, p.26) explains that Marx, the body is reproduced in individuals' "own social networks and social spaces especially in capitalist societies." The worker body is both a tool and an object. A person creates dominance according to his own needs. Since the free nature has been transformed into the field of work and social work, the nature associated with the "organic body" of the worker, turns into an "inorganic" production.

Durkheim (1984) distinguishes the connection between the human body and soul as "sacred and profound." Although body and soul are connected, they are not in the same world. The body is part of the material world through sensory experiences and the soul constantly returns to the body. Describing this cycle as the Sacred World, Durkheim (1984) says that the soul is bound to the profound body. Therefore, he involved the concept of body into his discussions (Kara, 2016, p.26).

Weber (2000), on the other hand, focuses on the concept of "suffering" of the body. He suggests that "the desire to be content with less, to be free of pleasure, to work too much" shapes bodies. It means that every moment must be passed for God's satisfaction, and that it

is necessary to work hard for what needs to be achieved (Kara, 2016, p.26).

Based on the concept of social structure, Simmel explains the body through consciousness and emotions. According to him, sensory organs create sociological implications. For example, someone who is seeking to see another reflects his own soul (Kara, 2016, p.27).

Kara (2016, p.27) argues that Parsons does not only see the body as a behavioral form that represents harmony within the elements of action, culture, and society-system, but also as a behavioral form of resistance. This biological approach has also led to the view that the human body is not a sociologically realistic reflection.

Baudrillard (1993) sees the body as an unfinished process. Simply put, he says that the consumption culture divides bodies into two different forms: ones inclined to consumption and ones are not inclined to consumption. He explains that bodies that are not prone to consumption are either excluded or become objects of consumption, which at the end turns bodies into a “graveyard of indicators” (Kara, 2016, p.29).

Norbert Elias (2004) mentions the concept of “the process of civilization” The process of civilization is the transformation of externally managed behaviors into internal dynamics. In other words, the process of civilization is the transformation of inner body into the outer body in the consumption culture that Featherstone (1993) points out. In this process, the rules that control human behavior have been replaced by “self-limitation” and “self-control.” As internal control gained importance, the external body gained value. In consumption society, the external body has been commodified and has become part of the popular culture as well as an indicator of social status (Canatan, 2016, p.348- 349).

Mike Featherstone (1993) says that: “the protection of the inner body in consumption society is the goal of beautifying the image of the outer body.” According to Featherstone

(1993), the reason why the importance given to the inner body is replaced by the outer body is the “body modification.” Body modification includes many concepts such as drilling, forging, burning, cutting, binding, gymnastics, diet to change the shape and appearance of the body. (Canatan, 2016, p.349). Canatan (2016, p.367) refers to the modern person who controls his soul, keeps his body healthy, strong, rather than a person who controls his desire and cleanses his soul. Because when the outer body is good, it also allows the inner body to change and be good.

Beyazyüz, (2015, p. 190) says that the body plays a role in shaping the individual’s self, and adds that the self also exists in the body. Traces of the constructed identity are seen on the body. We can give an example of the reflection of the self in the body, such as the way one walks, gestures and facial expressions, and the way he talks. Self through the body is in a continuous process of building

The body has been covered by many researchers, sociologists, and anthropologists. Body and culture mutually influence each other. The body is treated not only as a physical body, but also as both a physical body and a spiritual/mental body. Body, mind, spirit concepts are very common in Hatha Yoga practices. The concepts of inner body and outer body reveal different dimensions of the connection of body and mind. The body is built by society and is a factor in the formation of identity. Eating habits are also considered bodily activities. The culturally shaped body affects how one perceives his own body. In this context, the body can be considered as a cultural structure. The body is an important element in explaining whether a group is a subculture or not. Although body is accepted as a cultural element, it has an individualistic structure. If we mention about a group, there we should mention about belonging/identity. Belonging can be against an object, person, or social community. The formation of identity leads to belonging to a certain culture or group. That’s

why the concepts belonging/identity should be taken into consideration to the relation of subculture and belonging/identity.

2.4. Presentation of Literature on Belonging/Identity

Belonging/identity come across as two interconnected and affecting concepts. Belonging to something, or someone, can change and turn over time in accordance with person's needs or interests. Identity, on the other hand, can be seen as a structure that can change and build, just like belonging. In order to understand the relationship between belonging/identity, it would be right to first examine what these two concepts are, and then to consider their relationship with each other and finally their impact on the subculture. Since belonging/identity are two related concepts, it is quite difficult to separate these two concepts from each other. Therefore, the elements of belonging/identity must be addressed by associating to each other.

Alptekin (2011, p.20) explains the concept of belonging as “association,” “to be a part of something” and “the state of belonging.” Here, the concept of association is the most accurate one in terms of understanding the concept of belonging. The form of association can be with an object, community, ethnic group, or social category. The individual uses these states of association in self-identification. It is possible to say that concepts associated with identity become part of the concept of belonging. Belonging defines the connection between the individual and the society. In addition, belonging supports our understanding of individuals within similar categories. As can be seen the connection between the concepts of belonging/identity is highly clear. The idea that the concepts of belonging/identity reflect certain categories also shows that these two elements are very important in defining sub-cultural groups. Yazgan (2010, p.87-88) states that individuals' belonging bonds define their

identity. There are two important concepts at the core of the concept of belonging: association and interest and Yazgan emphasizes their relation with commitment, interest, and relation. In other words, belonging can be defined as feeling part or a member of a group, feeling connected to a situation, environment, or group, being close, and being accepted with a feeling of support rather than being isolated.

Simmel's (2009) views on belonging, identity and society also supports this argument. Simmel (2009) sees belonging as *sine quo non* for socialization, common consciousness-building, living together, meaning, norm, value, and identity production. Belonging also comes across as a process of integration. There is an integration effort towards the thing that individuals want to belong to. Belonging arises through indirect or direct relationships with the social environment surrounding the individual. It makes the individual feel involved in that social environment. The social environment in which the individual is born plays a role in building the individual's sense of belonging. On the other hand, the belonging of a conscious individual arises as a result of his own preferences. Although, belonging can be created by the social environment wherein the individual is born, it can be developed by education, politics, and economic environment (Alptekin, 2011, p.20-21).

Accordingly, the phenomenon of identity is also not just a matter of the individual saying, 'Who am I?' but a phenomenon that can be explained by his answer to this question and requires a multifaceted point of view. Just like belonging, identity is a phenomenon that changes and develops according to time, space, both with the social environment in which the individual is born and with his own will. Accordingly, individuals maintain their identity by creating social, psychological, cultural, economic situations, establishing social relationships, and performing their actions (Alptekin, 2011, p.20-21).

Bauman (2017, p.20) also emphasizes that belonging/identity are not something that

can be carried throughout life, they are changeable and debatable concepts. He expresses that belonging/identity are directly proportional to one's own decision and actions. In addition, he emphasizes that as long as belonging remains unchangeable and conditional, there cannot be an idea of identity there. It would not be unjustified to argue that even one's social circle and living conditions play a considerable role in the process of belonging/identity development, individuals' own actions also play a highly significant role on those processes of identity development and belonging. We can say that the idea of identity is constantly changing and transforming.

Individuals have needed other individuals from historically. This need arises from the motivation of individuals to provide satisfaction and live together. While interpreting Weiss' view, Bilgin (2008) expresses that the need for individuals to connect to a social group provides satisfaction for individual. When individuals are connected to a group in their relationship with other individuals, they reach satisfaction in search of safety and comfort. Confirmation of these satisfaction values is a sense that they are important and necessary. In addition, individuals receive social support, assistance, and guidance from other group members. In other words, values, social support, trust, and emotional satisfaction are factors in strengthening individuals' belonging. The emotional connections and common conscious actions of individuals will lead them to obey (Alptekin, 2011, p.22).

According to Fromm (2001), the individual tends to obey. Disobedience is difficult for a person. It is because as long as the individual obeys, he feels protected and safe. In a group lacking any disobedience an obeying person would feel powerful and strong. A person becomes part of a group created with shared values with the belonging that he creates, that is, a whole. As a result, he feels safe and united, the individual feels strong and the sense of belonging becomes stronger as the opportunities to benefit increase (Alptekin, 2011, p.22-

23).

A sense of obedience and belonging makes you feel part of the whole in a community, as Fromm (2001) notes. This feeling then brings a sense of trust. A sense of trust feeds a sense of belonging. In the same way, trust is an important element in identity construction. Bauman, (2017, p.41-43), although offers a similar perspective to Fromm's words, he notes that a sense of confidence, which is unclear, feeds the desire to create identity. Although this short-term uncertainty supports identity formation, he says that long-term uncertainty and lack of support cause concern after a while. On the other hand, while a person can choose a certain identity position from many possibilities, it is also not acceptable to remain stuck in a fixed identity definition that does not stretch. Although belonging is traditionally considered as profession, family, environment, and neighborhood, it loses its usefulness and becomes unreliable when it does not contain a sense of "togetherness" and brings a sense of "loneliness and abandonment." In other words, Bauman states that in a community where there is no sense of trust, the individual cannot be in a sense of unity and integrity and will be concerned. In such an environment it is impossible to talk about the concept of belonging.

When belonging is formed without a will, such as a family, a nation, a society elimination of the concept of 'I' can be accepted. Because the individual contains the characteristics of the society in which he borns in, he grows and develops with all these characteristics. But in order for this to happen in will-dependent belonging, individuality must be weakened. But in this way, the bond of belonging becomes stronger, and the identity provided to the individual comes to the fore. For this to happen, there must be "volunteering." Volunteering, on the other hand, reveals the responsibility of people to each other. An individual is responsible not only for himself, but also for everyone. As a result, it is necessary to "remain loyal and obey" in order to maintain belonging. At the same time,

belonging is an emotion that drives the individual to act in mutual trust and take responsibility (Alptekin, 2011, p.23).

An individual's need to belong is associated with their social experience. For example, an individual's experiences of exclusion and social acceptance, play important role in achieving belonging. Anthropological and psychological research on the emergence of belonging reveals the importance of the relationship between belonging and social experiences. Individuals in communities in these studies see being in a group or in a cooperation and harmony as an advantage while performing basic vital activities such as maintaining established order: housing, and defense. This, in turn, shows that being connected to a group makes an individual's life easier and happier (Alptekin, 2011, p.24-25).

Yazgan (2010, p.42) states that group affiliation is built according to "locality, age, common ethnicity, language and culture." This is also effective in shaping family connections, similar way of thinking, elements such as religion and origin. Durkheim states that it is not possible for an individual to belong to a community independently or detached from their tradition and social ties. In other words, traces of all these ties are also seen in interpersonal relationships (Yazgan, 2010, p.39).

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the most important needs of human beings are identity, commitment, belonging, and higher self-acceptance. According to Maslow, belonging comes across as the needs of an individual to be accepted, recognized, valued, and felt important by others. Social sciences, on the other hand, explain this as the experience of individuals mixing with the system or environment. We can say that belonging makes people feel that they are part of the system and the environment. Individuals prefer to be together with other individuals to meet their love needs and create a safe environment (Alptekin, 2011, p.29). As can be understood, the need for identity/belonging is among the

basic needs of the individual. In order for these basic needs to be met and developed, individuals should be included in a system or group. In this context, the way individuals define their identity, or the strength of their belonging to that group indicates whether individuals define themselves as part of that group or not.

Demir and Bolat (2017, p.14-15) add that the concept of identity has an important place in the social sciences. Identity begins to become evident with desires for differences that stand out in social, political, and cultural areas. The search for identity came to the fore with the awakening of minorities and the search for communion. Identity is not a collective structure in its sole sense, but it covers the ways in which the individual participates into the individual life, the positioning of the individual in the social life. It is up to an authority to make this happen. Therefore, we can only talk about an identity when they are organized within the framework of this internalization by extracting their own meaning through the internalization of social individuals. As the individual's relationship with authority becomes meaningful, the values he has will begin to build an identity.

Identity building is fed “from history, geography, biology, institutions to produce, collective memory, personal fantasy, power and religion.” But individuals, social groups make sense of all this by passing all these elements through their filter according to the culture, condition, time, and social structure in which they are located (Demir & Bolat, 2017, p.15).

According to John Turner (1987), identity “is the identification and categorization of the self in relation to other people.” Identity is about the feeling of belonging to a group formed by the common characteristics of members. Group identity appears by identifying people as self and the other (Yazgan, 2010, p.41). Asserting that national identity is different from other identities, Bauman, (2017, p.34) says that it was created by the state. He also

argues that the belonging coming from one's birth refers to belonging to a nation, which Bauman finds inorganic. According to Matthew Schwartz, national identity is an imaginary whole. Because the phenomenon of national identity is far from reality, it is clear that when the concept of identity loses its social meaning, individuals might will to redefine and identify themselves in order to create "us" (Bauman, 2017, p.35).

Bauman (1999) expresses the concept of "us" as a place where a sense of belonging is formed, primary relationships, trust, and peace exist. "Them" are not belonging, they are not wanted. The term "them" defines everything that is not "us." We and they not only define two social groups, but also indicate two separate attitudes, such as "emotional attachment and antipathy, doubt and trust, and fear, cooperation and strife" (Alptekin, 2011, p.46).

Bauman, (2017, p.19) emphasizes the importance of congregation in the formation of identity. He expresses the concept of congregation as the word those identities use to describe themselves. According to Bauman, there are two types of congregations. The first is "life and destiny congregations in which members live together with unbreakable bonds." The second is "congregations that are completely united by ideas and various principles." The question of identity arises only through congregations combined with the ideas and various principles that the individual faces in the second category of multicultural world.

Here, it can be said that identity formation is at the forefront of the individual's will by intersecting certain intellectual partnerships within a certain community and that it can be changed or it can be abandoned. It is obvious that identity is formed within a group. Similar to identity formation, in Pappenheim's (2002) view, individuals establish belonging only by group roles and identities with a specific purpose. Therefore, they miss for the congregations they have lost in cities. They begin to form temporary emotional communities and create their own postmodern tribes. Thus, they reveal the bonds of belonging, group-specific

behavior, consumption, and dressing styles (Alptekin 2011, p.58-59).

Bauman (2017, p.38) states that identities build social references by trying to relate to groups that move quickly. The ways in which Bauman gains the social dimension of identity is as follows: “that is more or less what they need and want and need them or want them in return and placed safely in the workplace or in the slot ready to use serve them as motionless waiting for someone.”

Traditional social belonging such as race, gender, and family, are increasingly losing their importance, especially in countries that are ahead in technological and economic terms. Individual is directed to find and establish new groups in which he could realize belonging/identity building. At the same time, this quest causes a feeling of insecurity in a person. On the one hand, there are identities that burn the global hierarchy and are created by their own desires, and on the other hand identities that are not offered the right of choice, which is imposed by force. This indicates that identity is a distinctive element in classification (Bauman, 2017, p.35, 51).

Bauman (2017, p.39) explains this with two impressive examples that globalization causes the destruction of identity hierarchies. For example, the first is the identification references given on posters hung on the streets of Berlin in 1994. The poster reads: "Your Jesus is a Jew; your car is Japanese, your pizza is Italian; your democracy is Greek, your coffee is from Brazil; your holiday is in Turkey, your numbers are from Arabs; your letters are Latin, and your only neighbor is a stranger."

The second example concerns children's answers to questions about identity during Poland's nation-building period. When children are asked who you are, the answers they receive are: “who are you? A little Polish. What is your symbol? White eagle. Sociologist Monika Kostera (1996) says that today's answers to these questions will be very different,

and states that the answers will be: "who are you? I am a handsome man in my forties with a sense of humor. Symbol what? Gemini" (Bauman, 2017, p.39). As is clear in these two examples, globalization has led to the destruction of the concept of national identity. The concept of identity has ceased to be an unchanging, innate belonging/identity has begun to become a changing and expanding phenomenon.

Öğüt (2015, p.11-12). draws attention to the relationship between the body and the identity. He states that identity is not only identity, but also practical and performance. He specifies that it would not be possible to fulfill the performance without the body. For example, being a fan of a certain team or being a member of a certain religion is a performance. The body is required to fulfill all these performances. Yoga practice is also a performance. Just like being a fan of a certain team requires a certain performance, practicing yoga also requires performing this attitude and practice. In this context, we can say that yogic body performance is a factor in shaping that person's identity.

Social identity theory suggests that each individual has two types of identity. The first is individual and the other is social identity. Individual identity includes characteristics of an individual such as psychological characteristics, physical and mental capacities. Social identity, on the other hand, arises from their membership in groups such as race, religion, and politics. In other words, in social identity, the individual's belonging to the group is of priority. In addition, social identity shares common belonging with members of the individual in the same group, so it is also possible to call it "collective identity." This belonging is not an ordinary belonging, because the concept of belonging in categories such as religion, nationality, gender arises from the consciousness of belonging, encloses the evaluative and emotional meaning (Yapıcı, 2004, p.55).

Alptekin, (2011, p.33-34) adds the idea that the individual can only exist within the

identity. The socialization process of the individual is also the process by which he creates his or her identity. Therefore, each individual has multiple identities. Because in the process of socialization, i.e. during identity acquisition, the individual can differentiate in many areas such as religion, language, gender, ethnicity. The fact that each identity reflects a specific feature reveals the identity's function, hence similarities and differences. Identity reveals the relationship between identity and belonging. In other words, "identity can be explained as differences that explain the various belonging of individuals, understood by external observation, distinguishing the individual from others." Guibernau also defines identity as "being continuous and different from others over time."

Yapıcı, (2004, p.54) states that social groups create an opportunity to gain a social identity for the people they cover. In this process, individuals carry out social relations with the "other" and compares themselves to the other group by seeing the positive sides of the group to which they belong. According to Festinger's (1954) theory, social identity finds meaning by comparing the individual to the other group. It is because it is impossible for a person to evaluate himself without comparing himself to others. Accordingly, different groups exist in societies both despite to each other, due to each other and together with each other. Individual identity is not only formed within a group because a group does not exist alone. Yet, all this happens through the comparison of individuals and groups with each other.

These comparisons are also not sufficient for identity formation. Behavioral actions, performance as well as beliefs are factors in the formation of individuals' identities. The formation of a positive social identity results in many comparisons. At the end of these comparisons if a group does not consider the other group different enough, the concept "the other" cannot be used. This means that this group is not sufficiently differentiated from

others. In this way, this group will not be treated as a different group with its own unique characters. Social differentiation due to benchmarking is a situation desired by the individual. According to Tajfel (1972), “everyone acts with the desire to either maintain a positive social identity that exists in the social environment in which he lives, or to have a positive social identity that will provide him with prestige” (Yapıcı, 2004, p.55).

Henri Tajfel and J.C. Turner (1986) suggest that individual and social identities are the continuum that connects the social and personal. At one end of this line there is the personal identity of the individual, which differs from others. At the other end of this line there is the social identity he shares with other members of the group. For example, the mutual relationships of individuals, their behavior in family relates to the individual identity. Behaviors of people from the same profession, same gender, or group are related to the social identity. It is the group members and their belonging that determine the behavior here. According to Turner and Tajfel (1986), these two behaviors are not found in a pure form, meaning that the individual keeps both social behaviors. But the behavior of individuals may be closer to one of these two extremes to social identity or individual identity. Which identity the individual will stand closer to would depend on the social and spiritual state in which the individual has. Turner (1972) describes it as follows: “a person acts according to what identity he feels at the moment he is in it” (Yapıcı, 2004, p.55- 56). Turner (1972) sees individual identity as the promotion of autonomy and independence, while he defines social identity as the disappearance of individual identity. The individual acquires ideas about groups he identifies himself with. For example, one would increase their self-esteem when the political party, which they support wins the election (Alptekin, 2011, p.34). Here, we see that individual and social identities are influenced by each other, and sometimes individual or social identity can stand out in defining the individual himself. A defining element in the

prominence of any identity is the behavior that an individual develops depending on his belonging.

Social comparison between groups pushes the individual to see differences between the group he is in and other groups. This differentiation drives us to perceive similarities between members of the same group, to see each other identical, to homogenize, that is, to be “de-identification.” De-identification can be explained by less attachment to the individual identity and uniformity of behaviors in the group. Thus, individuals identify themselves as members of a particular group. The individual still explains himself by the stereotypical characteristics of the group which he belongs to. An individual expresses himself not as a different or separator, but with the common characteristics of the group which he belongs to (Yapıcı, 2004, p.57).

We see that the concepts of belonging/identity are intertwined to each other, and they have a mutual exchange. Although these two concepts are innate, they are redefined and changed by one’s free will. But with the formation of belonging, we can talk about the formation of identity, and identity is built only through the process of socialization within a group. Identity can show different characteristics as individual and social identity. Which identity the individual is closer to is directly proportional to the strength of his belonging/ bonds of trust. A person wants to feel belonging because belonging is a need that both provides satisfaction and shows where a person positions himself. Here, the answer to the question of whether an individual highlights his social identity or individual identity appears in which direction the bonds of belonging are located and in which group the individual is located. How belonging/ identity are positioned in which group, how much subcultural elements of that group take up space in a person’s life, contribute to the identification of that group as a subculture in accordance with the individual’s experiences. We mentioned what

are the roles of the concepts of body, belonging/identity, and subculture in the literature. In the research methods section, I will try to explain how I conducted my research according to my main concepts and which techniques I used. Moreover, in the findings section I will discuss my findings that I conducted through the method I will state.



3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this section, the method of the research, the research and fieldwork process, and data collection techniques will be discussed. In this research the qualitative anthropological method is used. Symon (2004, p.99) states that in the qualitative research method, the goal of the researcher is to understand the reactions and descriptions of the participants from their point of view and their own world. Kümbetoğlu (2012, p.35, 37) says that qualitative research is an attempt to make sense and interpret the individuals who make up the social world by the researcher.

As a practitioner and expert of Hatha Yoga for about six years, I have had many experiences with yoga both physically, mentally, and spiritually. I have come across patterns and cultural similarities that repeat each other. Therefore, as a Hatha Yoga expert and practitioner, I was intrigued by whether Hatha Yoga practitioners in İstanbul have subcultural elements or not. I chose to focus on the concepts of body, belonging/identity, especially in subcultural elements, as culture and yoga are very broad topics in their own right.

Since I started practicing Hatha Yoga and became an expert, I have had the opportunity to gain experience and observe at the same time in the trainings and sessions I have attended, as well as in the sessions I have given. Many common cultural elements stand out in each yoga session. Some of them were body perception, what led many people to a yoga studio was the concern of feeling good about the body and about being healthy. One of the reasons why people wanted to do Hatha Yoga was to have a strong and flexible spine, to get rid of bodily pain and to live a quality life.

In those who first started yoga, the first thing that is emphasized is body awareness; the first emphasis on perceived the body, noticing the body and development of the body in this process. In the practice of Hatha Yoga, the body was the first of the first common cultural

elements to stand out. Along with the process, it developed, transformed, and began to create perception and awareness in the person's mind. During the yoga session, the practitioner who created body awareness began to carry this awareness into his daily life. Individuals who practiced yoga had a perception of their own bodies, or the body of individuals who practiced yoga. Therefore, the first of the subcultural elements I dealt with was on the body.

Anthropology has placed the body as an effective and natural symbol of society. The body has been viewed as a historical area on which culture has recorded. The fact that the body carries the historical developments of culture and has the power to transform and develop these elements has also caused the subject of the body to be very interested in the field of anthropology. The observation of bodily experiences in different cultures has brought the body into the research field of anthropology. Because the body has sometimes been a field that offers social structure and sometimes culture (Aksoy Sugiyama, 2010, p.72). In this process, body awareness, body perception, body form, body and culture connection elements were discussed under the concept of body.

Second, the concept that drove me to think about was belonging. Before I became a Hatha Yoga expert, I experienced the feeling of belonging. I am not alone at the beginning or at the end of that session, I belong to this group, and I feel like whatever you are experiencing, sitting on my side mat, is experiencing it one way or another. Therefore, the concepts of unity, belonging, and coming together were among the elements that should be addressed in this research. Belonging to a society or a group is not only related to the construction of a person's individual identity, but also important in the process of acculturation, belonging to society (Alptekin, 2011, p.iii). Since the subject of belonging is discussed in detail in the literature presentation, I only mentioned the experiences that drove me to study on this concept in this section.

Finally, the concepts of belonging/identity cannot be considered independently of each other. Alptekin, (2011, p.15) states the relationship and indivisibility of belonging/identity by arguing individuals are involved in the construction of identity with a common consciousness as belonging to a particular group or community. Identity formation is undoubtedly not a phenomenon that a person creates alone. Identity formation develops within a particular culture. Alptekin, (2011, p.21) stated that identity is formed not only by one's own efforts, but also by the influence of the environment in a certain time and space, suggesting that one's social and economic relations are effective in this environmental relationship. Therefore, the study focused on the social patterns of participants and their relationship to their environment. Sociological, psychological, and anthropological evaluation of identity understanding is discussed in detail in the literature presentation.

3.1. Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out at different times, in different venues with individuals from three different branches of one single studio. The detailed research process is listed below.

First Contacts – First Links (April 2018): In order to limit my research and gain specific information I decided to chose a yoga studio to do my research. On the other hand, to have a variety I decided to pick a studio which has a few branches. The first visit took place in April 2018. In order to start the research, I spoke in detail with the authority of the yoga studio and mentioned the topic and the purpose of my research by using my own contacts. I asked if the Hatha Yoga practitioners and experts I would be interviewing could be selected from the yoga studio. Being a yoga practitioner and an expert facilitated to do my research in a specific yoga studio. However, at the beginning it was not very easy to be accepted because I was there as a researcher and being “a researcher” created a doubt in the mind of the

authority. She asked several questions about my research. I have stated that the research I will do is not to learn about the yoga studio, to resent or to praise the yoga studio. In terms of narrowing the field of research, it was necessary to continue the research through a certain yoga studio. Therefore, I explained that I should do my research with selected individuals from a yoga studio. After having a sufficient information, I am accepted to do my research in that studio. Moreover, she became curious about the research result.

Though I have picked one yoga studio, I have conducted my research in three branches of the studio. Because of the ethical reason I chose not to name the regions of the branches but defining the studios will help us to have an idea about the research that I worked on. Three studios were located both in Asian and European sides of İstanbul. All of the branches were close to the center of the city and for the practioners who live close by could reach to the studios quite easily. Nevertheless, not all the practioners were living closer to the studios. One of the studios because of its location was welcoming also the foreigner practioners and the people going there was more diverse in terms of their economical position and their life style. The other two studios had more specific type of practioners in terms of their economical position and the practioners were living almost in the same region where the branches located.

Fieldwork (September 2019 – November 2020): I conducted my field study with selected people from three different branches of the yoga studio in different districts of İstanbul. In addition to the interviews, I diversified the data from the field by participating in various workshops and yoga events. After the yoga sessions, I became involved in daily life practices by participating in their conversations.

Data collection (September 2019 – November 2020): I have done literature research by reading books, theses, and articles in the fields of culture, subculture, body,

belonging/identity, history of yoga and Hatha Yoga practices within the subject of the research in order to support the data from the field and to organize the questions I will create. After that, I conducted in-depth interviews, as well as observations during interviews. At the yoga sessions I attended, I had the opportunity to observe participants.

Results of Fieldwork (September 2019 – December 2020): I completed my fieldwork to finish my thesis. I transcribed the data as a result of in-depth interviews. I collected it in headlines and I did thematic analysis. I added my observations to my fieldwork.

Write – up (November 2020 – May 2021): I examined the relationship between body, belonging/identity elements, which I treated as subcultural elements through the main headings that emerged as a result of data analysis. I wrote my thesis called yoga subculture in İstanbul; body, belonging/identity evaluating the data from the field holistically.

3.2. Research Techniques

In addition to the literature study conducted, ethnographic data were obtained from in-depth interviews with experts and yoga practitioners. In addition to in-depth interviews, my observations during the sessions I attended as a Hatha Yoga practitioner and my observations during the interviews have also contributed to data.

This research was conducted with individuals from different branches of a single yoga studio. Each yoga studio can carry its own characteristic elements and show differences. Due to budget and time constraints, the research was carried out with experts and members of a single yoga studio, while the diversity of data could be increased by addressing several yoga studios in İstanbul. Participants in the study were selected from 3 different branches of the single yoga studio. On this occasion, it was easier to reach participants who were interviewed in-depth through a single yoga studio to understand the cultural elements of that group.

Understanding a culture in the best way, of course, occurs by experiencing elements of that culture, participating in that culture. The best way to convey that culture is through the experiences of the people living in that culture. Therefore, it is inevitable that in-depth interviews, which have an important place in the qualitative research method, has taken part in this research. Tekin and Tekin, (2006, p. 101) state that in-depth interviews allow detailed answers to be obtained from individuals, and that the feelings, knowledge, experience, and observations of the other person would be achieved in this way. In-depth interviews in the research were conducted with selected experts and members from a predetermined yoga studio. In conducting in-depth interviews, I communicated one-to-one with people as much as I could. I maintained my role as an investigator, and conducted interviews at an equal distance from everyone. Rapley, (2007, p.19). states that in interviews, the researcher's harmonious relationship with the participant (rapport) will inspire confidence in the participant, so that the participant would speak more comfortably.

Bricki and Green (2007, p.14) emphasize that the participant should have confidence in the researcher who conducted the interview, while the researcher should be interested in what the people they interviewed say and not judge them in order to gain trust.

All participants in the three branches of the yoga studio were asked the same questions. Any branch is not subject to order of importance. As in any community, data from in-depth interviews show differences and similarities. It is important for the diversity of data that the interviews consist of both members and experts. Since data from the field is primary data, it will directly contribute to the research result.

This research aims to determine how Hatha Yoga functions in today's society in a cultural context, to examine what elements bring people together and to determine whether yoga is a subculture or not. It aims to reflect not only with its dimension reflected outwards,

but also from the point of view of that culture, as it is with the emic point of view. Therefore, during the interviews, I tried to listen to the experience and opinions of the participants and understand them from an emic point of view.

Altuntek (2009, p.102, 104) suggests that the emic approach supports understanding the concepts and patterns of the “native,” addressing culture and language, as well as understanding the attitudes, motives, interests, reactions and conflicts, and development of individuals in life. Boas (1974a) expresses the importance of emic point of view in following words: “if understanding the ways in which the members of a society think is our most important goal, then the analysis of experience should be based on their concepts, not ours.”

My literature research and in-depth interviews provided me with a great deal of information to complete the research, but the ethnographic study also required participant observation. It is because people’s attitudes, behavior patterns were one of the most important factors in my understanding of subculture elements. Waddington (2004, p. 154) considers participant observation to be a social interaction between the participant and the researcher, a process in which the observer understands daily experiences, participant behavior, feelings, and comments by speaking from the primary position.

Interviews were conducted with a total of 12 people from three branches of a single yoga studio. A total of four people were selected from each branch, provided that there was at least one expert. As an insider, I did observe the environment I was in, and observe the participants, which is called participant observation. I went to all three branches of the yoga studio, participated in yoga sessions. I was actually doing something I was used to do, getting into an environment I was used to go into. I was in my own space, I was not alone or an outsider, I was someone who wore similar clothes, used similar words, but I was there as a participant observer, except while I practice yoga. I observed the participants in the sessions,

directed my awareness to the field with an outside eye to understand the elements that would support my research.

O'reilly (2009, p.114) underlines the importance of continuing research based on the fact that being involved as someone from within the group minimizes the possibility of stereotypes being reflected about societies that the interpretation of complex events came to the fore, that it reflects reality and experiences, not the ideal.

Observation was one of the most important tools in the study that offered the opportunity for the researcher to see with the eye that the group being investigated. Because our behaviors and attitudes, which we turn into habits or automate as individuals, are behaviors and attitudes that we assimilate, sometimes we do not express them verbally. At this point, elements such as the participants' reaction, tone of voice, and pause when answering questions played a role in confirming the accuracy of the participant's answers to the questions. My observation on issues that I cannot verbally answer has been supportive of my written and verbal sources.

During my participant observation process, I joined 80 yoga sessions, 40 yoga conversations, 8 yoga events. As my research took time to finalize, I had the opportunity to join as many sessions and events or daily activities possible.

3.3. Sampling

The sampling of the research is snowball method. I reached out to other participants through the participants I could reach. Sarantakos (1998, p.153) in explaining the snowball sampling, says that when creating the sample, the researcher starts with a few participants that they can reach and these people would allow the researcher to find other people (provided that they meet the research criteria). This process continues until a sufficient

number of people are reached. I tried to keep my relationship with the gatekeepers (the main people who brought me to other people I would be interviewing) as under control as possible. Based on other research I have done, I have retained my role as a researcher so as not to be subjected to the wishes of gatekeepers to be overly involved in the research process (Homan, 1991, p.85). Homan (1991, p.85) in this context, emphasizes the importance that the power of gatekeepers over research should be under control.

Oliver (2003, p. 53) mentions that community members and the researcher can influence each other in the field study, and suggests that this interaction should be as minimal as possible. In addition, the researcher should not change social context norms, but should analyze their own role. Therefore, since I am a member of the yoga community too, I tried to protect my investigative identity in order to reflect the culture that I am exploring as clear as it is.

3.4. Limitations

Since the concepts of yoga and culture are very deep and detailed concepts in themselves, yoga, subculture, body, belonging/identity have been detailed to the extent permitted by the limitations of the research to form the main themes of the research. As with any research, there have been limitations in this research. Due to ethical, temporal and budgetary constraints, the research was carried out in three branches of a single yoga studio in İstanbul. The reason why I chose to do my research in İstanbul is because of the time limitation and choosing one studio would limit the data and make easier to reach to the interviewees from one studio. However, in order to diversify the data, I picked three branches of a single studio. Kümbetoğlu (2012, p.185) identified ethical problems in qualitative research, as problems of time, energy, money as well as problems arising from research

techniques, problems that may arise when evaluating and processing data, and problems that may be encountered in reporting.

Field data from three branches shows the result of the study. Therefore, it would not be right for us to spread the results of the research throughout İstanbul. Qualitative research is inherently conducive to studying with small-scale communities. While even small communities can differentiate within themselves, limiting research has been a requirement. Karataş (2015 p.70) mentions that it will not be possible to study with large groups in terms of time and cost, since data is reached through interviews and observations in qualitative research. In addition, he adds that the data obtained will also be difficult to analyze. Therefore, qualitative research should take into account elements that reflect the whole, such as diversity, difference, contradiction, without concern for generalization.

Transportation has been both difficult and costly as the meetings took place in different districts of İstanbul. At the same time, the number of people to be interviewed remained limited due to the time loss in travelling. Time and economical issues have been the main problems affecting the overall research. Kümbetoğlu, (2012, p.188, 190) says that researchers with other responsibilities need a lot of time to get data from a person, even if they study with small groups. She also mentions about financial difficulties. She says that the researcher would prefer to use their limited budget for written material, audio recording rather than spending on transportation, food, or housing.

3.5. Questionnaire

Yoga and cultural studies in Turkey are very little. Although written sources have a great place in supporting the data obtained in the research and in the transfer of research and information that has lasted until today, because one-to-one “verbal expressions” from field

work reveal the experiential, lived dimension of culture thus it will be of greater importance. A person's daily life practices, economic habits, social lives give a lot of information about this culture. In this context, subculture and cultural studies conducted in different fields has contributed to this research. The literature study consists of written sources and data from the field were chosen for the purpose of the research rather than being general. The information I received from the literature helped me to prepare the questions I asked in the field study. In particular, sources with field studies have been guiding in this research.

The questions directed at the participants were structured and open-ended questions. Completing my literature research before moving on to field study has helped me to create questions that I will ask in-depth interviews. The reason the questions were open-ended and structured required a list of questions that I would direct during the interview. Structured questions written, pre-determined questions about the topic I will address both supported the continuation of the interview in a specific conceptual order, and the classification of concepts made it easy for me in data analysis.

Based on the experience I had gained from previous research participants were able to answer some questions in another question. Therefore, I had to skip some of the questions that I have prepared. Sometimes I was asked again about the subject that was answered from another question, in case the participant made addition because I could not get the answer to the question exactly.

According to Kümbetoğlu (2012, p. 75-76, 78), the interview form allows the interviewer to effectively use his limited time. It helps provide systematic and holistic information, minimize variability and partiality, eliminate differences, and facilitate the data analysis process. In addition, he highlights the importance of the role of open-ended questions in expressing and reflecting people's views.

I have prepared an interview guide for an in-depth interview. In this form, I wrote questions that I would direct to the participants. It also made it easy for me to take notes of what I observed during the interview, to know which participant the note I received belonged to. You can see the contents of the form in Appendix 2. I did not experience any difficulties or transition process in starting to ask my questions because of my position. My participants thought that they will be understood and they answered my questions with sincerity. That's the reason why to collect my data thorough the participants was easy. Before each interview, I explained to the participants, who I was and purpose of my research. I have stated that the interview will only be within their permission that they can stop at any time or even stop making the interview; all this statement is also included in the interview form in writing. Oliver, (2003, p.22, 28) says that, as in any case, people in research should respect people, no harm should be done in any way, and it should be stated what the research is about.

I have stated that the names and identities of the people who participated in the interview will remain confidential. I got permission to start recording and interviewing at the beginning of each interview before receiving an audio recording. I made sure that the place where I interviewed was as quiet as possible in order not to distract the person I was speaking and me. Oliver (2003, p.28, 31) states that the right of participants to privacy means the same as freedom. He states that the participant must be informed about all the data to be created, otherwise it would be an unethical behavior.

According to O'reilly (2009, p.3) ethnography, based on one-to-one communication with certain human communities is about understanding their daily lives and cultures, watching what they do, listening to what they say and asking them questions. Ethnography deals with a small number of individuals due to the study of small-scale groups, but this should not be considered a limitation of research.

3.6. Data Analysis

Ethnography is qualitative in its method and requires field study. In-depth interviews, as well as literature research, formed the main data of the research. In particular, due to the lack of a large number of studies related to the field in which I studied, the data from the field provided detailed information about the results of the research. Since the data obtained in-depth interviews is quite large, the data must be conceptualized and encoded. The main headings of the questions I created helped gather the data under the main headings. I collated and analyzed observation, in-depth interview data from the field and my literature readings. After transferring the audio recordings, I obtained from the interviews to the computer for analysis and interpretation of the data, I divided each interview into groups by naming and writing down the dates of the interview. Ertekin, Berker et al., (2002, p.24) mention that research data is important because it is a primary source and that it should be archived so that the data can be re-accessed. They say records should be preserved safely by dating. They explain the importance of storing data in two ways. First, data is easily accessed when research findings need to be renewed, and second, it allows data to be re-evaluated if an ethical problem arises related to the research.

As part of the topic of yoga subculture in İstanbul: body, belonging/ identity I transcribed audio recordings to analyze the results obtained from in-depth interviews with 12 people selected from three branches of a yoga studio in İstanbul. Each recording was around 1 hour average. I wrote it as it was, listening to my interviews. I collected similar items under the same code that I received in exchange for answers to questions I asked in interviews.

I used thematic analysis by dividing the findings into codes and categories and examined them as part of the research and collected these codes and categories under the main themes. I have analyzed what I think will contribute to the research position from the

findings that come out of the scope of the issue.

It is useful to understand how the individuals I interviewed draw a participant profile, including demographic information. The individuals were between the ages of 29 and 59. Two of the individuals were retired. One of the retirees was still working. All other individuals worked in the private sector, 7 of the individuals were woman and 5 were men. Some of the participants worked as yoga specialists, and some worked in different fields such as textiles, sales-marketing, publishing, advertising, teaching, academia. Only one of the individuals completed high school education, one completed doctorate, one completed master's degree, and the others were university graduates. Demographic information of participants is detailed in Appendix 1.

During my interviews, I observed that the socio-economic, educational, and cultural levels of the participants were high. In addition, the fact that people go to a yoga studio to practice yoga is also an indication that they have allocated a budget for practicing yoga. This, in turn, proves that they have a certain socio-economic level. In addition, during the interviews, some of the participants stated that those who practice yoga had a certain economic level based on their observations in the context of individuals' clothing style and the area in which they socialized within the yoga studio. Some of the participants are yoga experts. Some of those were experts in yoga practice, while others have received expertise only for the purpose of deepening their knowledge of yoga. On the other hand, there were also individuals who specialized in yoga and performed other works. The individuals I interviewed have been practicing yoga for at least 2 years. The person who has been practicing yoga for the longest time has been practicing yoga for 11 years.

3.7. Ethical Issues

Homan, (1991, p.1, 53) defines “ethics as the science of morality.” He states that those involved in moral science determine the regulations in human behavior. From an ethical point of view, he argues that, there are many elements that need to be considered for the protection of “privacy” in the social sciences and lists them as follows; informed consent from the participants, the existence of researchers in the studies that are observed, access to in-depth interviews of the participants with the confidentiality.

As I mentioned in the before, I explained the purpose of the research in clear language to the participants of the interview, trying not to use specific terminology. Oliver (2003, p.28) states that informed consent is one of the basic ethical principles in the social sciences. Prior to joining research which will include participants should be fully informed, and thus, the person should have enough information to decide whether to participate in research, and, finally, expresses that it is the right of access to information and knowledge people. Homan (1991, p.73) states that researchers in the social sciences should be open and honest, that deceiving participants would cause social research to make a bad name. He also adds that this deception is caused by selfish personal attention.

I have stated that people can stop at any time during the interview or even refuse to do the interview; all this statement is also included in the interview guide form. According to Oliver (2003, p. 31-47) researcher must do their best for participant to present data, but the participant has the right to withdraw from the interview as he wishes. Since the participant is the “owner of the data,” there must be a sensitive relationship between the researcher and the participant. In my interviews I was sensitive with my participants’ personal space and I did not touch on the intimate subjects.

While talking about the importance of informed consent, Homan (1991, p.73-74) states

that the risks and positive factors that may be caused by the research should be reported to the participant. The participant has the right to be informed about the purpose and manner of the research in which he is involved. In addition, the researcher and the participant must understand each other. The participant is entitled to participate in the research, to leave and refuse at any time, and to be told what processes they would go through. The most important point is that participants are presented with understandable information about the research.

Therefore, I explained the purpose of my research to my interviewees very clearly. I stated that by having a mutually positive communication with the participant, the participant can end the interview at any time. I said that the data obtained from this research will only be used in this research, and the data will not be shared with other people for any other purposes. All the people I interviewed completed the interviews. They said they were happy and pleased to have participated in my research, that my questions made them notice a lot of things. As part of my research, I followed ethical behavior and norms. The name of the person and yoga studio interviewed in this study was kept secret for ethical reasons.

3.7.1. Positioning

As I am a Hatha Yoga expert, I have clarified the subject and content of this research based on my experiences since and before my time as an expert. During my observations, I sometimes was giving sessions, sometimes I was an assistant, and sometimes I participated in a yoga session, a yoga camp, or a yoga festival. Of course, I was not in a researcher role in the whole process, but all these observations guided me in identifying my research position. Being an anthropologist, as an “outsider” and as a yoga expert, an “insider” with yoga, the research will contribute to the literature not only in cultural terms in this field but also with historical, physical, mental, spiritual dimensions. As someone coming from the yoga culture, I tried to convey as much as possible the perspective of the community I was studying on

throughout my research.

The issue of “Insider-Outsider” is one of the issues of great importance in anthropology, but also the subject of discussion. Insider is a researcher who is familiar with the group by being a part of that group. Outsider is a researcher who has no previous communication with that group, who is unfamiliar with the group to which he will study.

O’reilly (2009, p.110) says that ethnographic research is done in order to achieve an “inner point of view” and an “inner narrative.” He emphasized that for ethnography to succeed, the role of the researcher must position himself as someone from the community and adapt himself to that community, and that the knowledge and understanding of that group must be conveyed as the ways in which the insider understands.

I have experienced the advantages and disadvantages of being an “insider.” As an advantage it was easy to connect and understand the group because of my background and knowledge. As a disadvantage it was sometimes challenging to see the group from distance as I was an insider. As an “insider” the questions of how can I contribute to the literature in this field, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being an “insider” made me think about what I can add to my research and how to face challenges, both as a yoga expert and as someone working in anthropology.

As I mentioned, I took the role of “insider” researcher in this research. Just as an “outsider” researcher will have some advantages and disadvantages, being an insider has had both advantages and disadvantages for me. O’reilly (2009, p.111) noted that while the anthropologist in the foreign culture, that is, the “outsider,” had difficulty understanding the community by looking at it from the inside, the insider anthropologist had difficulty retreating from the culture within himself and looking at that culture.

I am just like as O’reilly (2009, p.112) noted, sometimes I felt the need to distance

myself from the culture I am used to and look like someone from the outside. One of the issues that led me to be distracted in this research was that the author stated that the fact that the insider researcher was very familiar with the field in which he worked could make him biased. Because when observing the situations that occur in the culture I am in, I first had difficulty with what I should note, what is more important? Because maybe the words I heard were images that I used, images that I was used to seeing. And then, when I withdrew as an anthropologist, other than being a yoga expert, I realized what I needed to see.

Me being a yoga expert could create a perception in my interviewees that I knew more than them and I was an authority or whether the knowledge they provided would be sufficient or not and whether they would be judged or not. Instead, being an expert, knowing about yoga, understanding the people I meet, gave confidence to the participants. I used my personal contacts to reach my participants. I realized that because I am a yoga practitioner they approached me positively. As they compose a group within themselves, me being a yoga expert also helped to create a positive environment. It has also showed me that though the group seems open to everyone they can have their own limits towards other groups. They have the behaviors showing group belonging.

On the other hand, being there as an anthropologist/researcher, and being there as an outsider who listens without judgment, cares about the ideas of the other party, made the other party feel relieved and safe. As a matter of fact, my observation throughout the interviews is that the participants felt comfortable throughout the in-depth interviews and that we were in a mutual conversation.

Sarantakos (1998, p.198) suggested that the researcher should be involved in many contexts for a long time in order to establish social relations in ethnography. He also emphasized the importance of learning about the community in which he works about their

habits and the cultural imperatives required by that environment. Since I am a yoga instructor, I have knowledge and experience about the field I am researching, the people I interviewed felt comfortable. It allowed them to answer the questions I asked with sincerity and honesty.

O'reilly (2009, p.9-10) argues that the ways in which the researcher approaches the community affects the way they see the researcher and their approach to the researcher. He also emphasizes that sometimes the role of the researcher can vary according to the codes in a particular culture and the rules of that community. Therefore, I started one-to-one interviews by stating that I was there as a researcher in the group I worked, aiming to reflect the data from the field as it is, but I was also a yoga expert. In this context, I tried to balance my roles as a researcher and yoga expert as much as I could. For example, when I was conducting my second interview, the participant remembers seeing me at another yoga event and says, "you looked more mystical there," which shows that it creates an impression on the opposite side, depending on the environment in which we were located. Therefore, I tried to listen to what people are saying from a neutral side as much as I could, but also to make sense of what I was told as an insider through my experience as an expert.

I conducted my research in an overt format. O'reilly (2009, p.9) mentioned implicit and explicit forms of research. With respect to open research, he explains the purpose of the research as research in which participants are clearly informed why it is done. He noted that many researchers should not prefer implicit research for ethical reasons.

Homan states that covert research might cause ethical problems, (1991, p.109) and suggests that the covert research does not comply with the principle of informed consent. Obtaining the data belonging to the participant by covert research tools is equivalent to theft. Personal freedom is restricted in covert research. Most importantly, no information obtained

is more important than personal freedom (Homan, 1991, p. 110).

Being an insider gave the other party confidence in the participants to agree to the interview in my communication with the people I interviewed. Being not only a researcher, but also a yoga expert has made it easier for me to understand the community I am investigating and to understand what is going on outside of verbal communication. In particular, my ability to reflect on what is happening in everyday life as it is, to look at the community I am investigating from the inside. When talking about the advantages of an “insider” perspective O’reilly (2009, p. 114), points out that participants of the “outsider” researchers found him less reliable. There could be the negative effects of culture shock created by outsider, while insider researchers could understand the communities they work more comfortably and they will not be seen as a “foreigner” for that community. Instead of describing they could express complex events. I have had the perks of being the “insider” investigator that O’reilly is talking about. My relationship with the participants, particularly was very quickly established on trust. I tried to reveal the meaning deep in individuals’ narratives without trying to understand the concepts of yoga expressed by individuals. Participants also shared their experiences with me, making sure that I understood what they were talking about.

My experience in the field as an insider showed me that in order to work on the area of yoga one should have enough knowledge and experience about yoga. Since in all my interviews the yoga terminology was considerable. Either the researcher can be an insider or not but he has to practice yoga and build a background about yoga culture because he cannot understand the concepts or can exaggerate the data he collected. In other words, the researcher without a certain level of yoga culture knowledge and practice would not manage the study properly. As I mentioned my research methods including the fieldwork, the

research techniques I used, the sampling, limitations of my research, the questionnaire I prepared, data analysis process, and my position in the research we can move to the findings of the research depending on the data collected



4. FINDINGS

In this section, I will try to explain my findings to indicate yoga subculture in İstanbul from the data collected under the scope of this thesis. I will elaborate on the basic concepts of yoga subculture in İstanbul like body, belonging/ identity, and will discuss these concepts' role in yoga being a subculture. In addition, through the questions that I have asked to my interviewees together with my own experience and observation, I will try to explore: (a) the motivations that drive people to practice yoga; (b) the reasons for them to continue to practice yoga; (c) impact of the yoga in their lives; (d) role of yoga in change of the individuals' daily and social lives as well as in their habits.

I grouped my findings through three main concepts (body, belonging/identity). However, those concepts could be quite abstract. Therefore, I will mention about more concrete areas that can be felt in practice, which will be mentioned as subcultural elements. I chose to explain the meaning of yoga at the very end of my findings to understand where people are locating yoga in their lives. I considered that talking about the meaning of yoga at the end would give a holistic understanding of the importance of yoga in my participants' lives. As a result, reader can have a clear idea and could combine all the element that I mentioned.

4.1 Reasons That Push Individuals to Start Yoga: Yoga as A Turning Point

Although the reasons that lead my interviewees to practice yoga are different, these reasons can be grouped under several headings. Although people had different reasons to start yoga, one of the most repeated reason is socialization and having a hobby. Another oftenly repeated reason is the need to move their bodies. Last reason behind people's decisions to

start yoga are bodily, mentally, and emotional healing. Above these, difficulties that people have faced in different times of their lives also pushed people to start yoga. These difficulties occur both physically, mentally, and emotionally. In this context, starting yoga comes across as a space that people open for themselves, a form of socialization, an escape, and a space of healing. Individuals have often decided to start yoga either through the advice of their friends or as a result of their own research.

A participant realized that he did not do any physical activity. He was also told by his friends that he did not have a hobby. So, he started yoga in order to move his body and acquire a hobby. Similarly, another participant started yoga after quitting his job on the advice of his friends to take up a hobby, calm his mind and “reduce his loneliness” and socialize. The second participant explains the reasons for starting yoga as follows:

...I have few friends who practice yoga and they told me that yoga can be a good hobby that will make me feel better. And I am a guy who thinks a little too much, so I said fine. I thought I might not be able to do this meditation much, I could not just stand there. They said start. Here I went one day to ...Yoga. I started to socialize a little, both to be such a hobby and to reduce my loneliness a little (participant 2, male, 53; 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another participant, who started yoga at the insistence of his friend at a time when life forced him, stated that he understood that yoga would be in his life from the moment he first joined yoga. The participant, who experienced a similar situation, expressed that he was on a quest at the time when life “dispersed” him, on the occasion of his friend, and wanted to do

an activity related to him. At a time when his energy was low, he suffered from bodily pain; he started researching yoga on the advice of his friend during a preliminary diagnosis of the disease, and then expressed the changes reflected in his life. In this context, yoga serves as a turning point in the lives of individuals in the physical, mental, or emotional dimension. The fifth participant's narrative, which explains this process in the mental and emotional dimension, shows both his own experience and the reasons that those who started yoga.

I mean, if you ask this question, even to hundred teachers, I am guessing they will answer similarly. ...There was a time, that life hurt you, wanted to get you up, when you broke away from yourself, that my life was not like that but, the time that life took everyone from a place where he would bring them back to life, and it took me too. That is how I started yoga, by accident. ...At this time, I was in a soul-searching process and I wanted to do something about my body. I needed an activity about myself. I have heard of yoga, and then I have researched where it is near. ...I came here through the door. Our... welcomed me. Hello, welcome. "How can I help you," she said. So, I said I do not know. I asked how you could help. I said I am broken; I am offended and all that so I believe you know how you could help me. In response she said it is exact place you need and we registered (participants 5, male, 48, 23.10.2020, İstanbul).

Be it physical or be it emotional the time when yoga enters people's lives is either they have to go through a process of change or they have already in the process of change. The

difficulty encountered the situation that needs to be tackled, is so intense that it would be right to say that the entry of yoga into their lives is a turning point in their lives. The following example supports this discourse:

Because my life energy was very low... I also had bone and body pains at the weekends. I had extreme dry eyes, and I was weak. ...I have spent weekends like this in bed with this pain... ...I had a swelling in my joints on my left side. ...Preliminary diagnosis was rheumatoid arthritis. ...Then there was a very sweet yoga studio. ...She told me very good words just what I needed. She said that you have the power to do everything. You can do anything ...Oh, I am making time for myself. I felt so good here. And then I started searching and continued yoga. ...Then it became regular. And then I got up at six in the morning and do “Sun Salutation” but when I was greeting the sun one day I was almost going to faint. I tried to breathe but I could not. I was obviously using my breath very wrong. ...My pain has decreased. About 6 months, I lived in the triangle of medicine, yoga, and gym... ...Fortunately, that doctor turned out to be cute. She said: ‘Let’s take a look at the results... ...After that day, I never took any more medication (participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

As can be seen, my interviewees consist of ones, who started yoga because of the mental contribution of yoga; ones, who started yoga with the encouragement of their friend and ones, who wondered about the mystical side of yoga. Moreover, there were also people who started

yoga by their own research, as they needed to exercise. Another participant, who started yoga due to his scoliosis for physical healing, later added that she became interested in the mental dimension of yoga for stress management. The eleventh participant, whose both physical and mental needs pushed her to yoga, she spoke as follows:

It was my first, first initiation process, and my first scoliosis in America. And then my desire to decamp and go back to yoga was completely; stress management, stress management and sadness or something like that. It is like the 20s at the time. And I worked very hard at the agency, and I was having on and off relationships. I did not even know how to deal with them, but yoga was good for me. I was going in; I was going out. I felt a different sense of relief. I was saying that yoga is a good thing... (participant 11, female, 38, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Although there were many reasons to start yoga, as it was obvious on the quotes of my participants the main reasons were to be social, to have a hobby, the need to move the body, and physical, mental, emotional healing. All those aspects show that yoga acted as a turning point in their lives. To make it clear though being social, or need for a new hobby may not seem reasons to have yoga as a turning point, the reason behind was to find a solution to their current situation, or to find something meaningful in their life. For instance, the participant who wanted to have a new hobby was in a period of unemployment and having a break up. Starting yoga for the need to move the body, and physical, mental, emotional healing had a positive impact and a

huge changing in their lives. Because with yoga their life quality has increased and the connection, they created with themselves has emerged. To have those effects on their lives they had to have a motivation to continue yoga or to have yoga in their lives regularly. We will see below what are then motivations of individuals to continue yoga.

4.1.1 Interest in Yoga and Motivation to Continue Yoga

Before starting practice yoga, the majority of the participants did not have an idea about yoga. Few had very little ideas, and few had a little interest in yoga. Despite all this little knowledge and interest, all participants who decided to start practicing yoga then decided to continue practicing yoga. The participants I interviewed have been practicing yoga for a long time, even though I have not specifically chosen them. This, in turn, shows that they have a motivation that drives them to continue practicing yoga. The effect of yoga on their lives (yoga making them feel mentally, physically, emotionally better) has increased their interest in yoga. So, they continued to practice yoga. In addition, the approach in the yoga studio where they practice yoga made the individual to feel comfortable in that yoga studio. The connection established with yoga experts and the philosophical dimension of yoga has also increased their interest in yoga. A participant who did not have an idea about yoga before starting yoga was motivated to continue yoga after the first experience:

I did not really know much about yoga. Usually, it was not something that I hear often in my social circle. At some point, it was like something has just happened in my life. It was like a period when I was facing some difficulties. I have been going through some transition period. A friend, I mean, just a coincidence- he forced me to try yoga.

...So, I said: Okay. ... He brought me to yoga. Here is your mat, he laid even my mat, sit here, and now the teacher will come. Wait, I started like that. ... Yes, everything was so new and so out of my senses, I mean. I was very impressed; I was really very impressed. I thought oh there is a world like this, which I did not know (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another participant, who has noticed changes in his body and mind in the process, explains his motivation to continue yoga as follows:

Before I started yoga, I was thinking about yoga, you know, I did not anticipate such a physical part. For me it was more meditative, like meditation, and as a breathing work. ...I thought of it more as meditation and breathing work, but I learned after I started that it was so intense in the bodily part too. After a while, I realized that the mind and body were actually together. ...But after I realized that I have passed these stages, passed them, and it has taken me to a very beautiful place, that I have rested a lot mentally, and that I have rested a lot physically. So, I could not leave it (participant 6, female, 46, 24.10.2020, İstanbul).

Participants who have an interest in the movement discipline, which has philosophy stated that individuals would continue practicing yoga because they feel better themselves and because of the good relationships that they establish within the yoga studios. In this

context, when individuals feel they belong to a field and find commonalities with individuals there, they continue to practice yoga there with that community.

So, the reason why I started yoga is that I wanted to do something, which would make sense at the end of my research process. ...I wanted a meaningful movement culture. ...Yoga was my choice because it is not traditional, but it is traditional. ...There are more guys like me, let's just say more bohemian. I do not know, foreigners are coming, there are not only Turks, the female and male population is more or less proportional to each other... ...It was a little more like this; the free, comfortable I was looking for. ...It was a place where I felt comfortable as a citizen in a cultural sense. It was a place where I found space for me. And I mean, the lessons were good, the teachers were good, I liked the moves, it sounded good to me. I felt calmer because I used anxiety-related medication for a period during this college period, because I had palpitations. So, that is how and why I continued yoga (participant 10, female, 33, 29.10.2020, İstanbul).

In these two sections we saw the very first reasons why yoga takes places in individuals lives and why and how they started to practice yoga. This will create a frame for us to understand the whole process of yoga subculture and how each process is interconnected to each other. Like in our daily lives body has a big role in Hatha Yoga, as it includes asanas (physical practises) and we experience the world with our bodies. Douglas (1970) states that the body reflects the characteristics of the society in which they are located,

both in action and stationary state (Beyazyüz, 2015, p.177) proves the accuracy of starting from the concept of the body when describing that the yoga community is a subculture.

The section below the concept of body which acts as the first subcultural element in my research will be taken into consideration in details.

4.2. Body

As part of my research, I asked various questions to my interviewees to understand the role of the body in yoga a subculture. One of the basic concepts I considered in this context was the body. The body occupies quite a large space in yoga practice. Hatha Yoga practice consists of asanas as detailed in the literature review section. Although yoga leads the individual towards liberation, in Hatha Yoga, this process begins with the body. The participants mentioned that the body was the element made them feel connected to each other and also this connection was bringing them together. In addition, they talked about many topics on body such as; the reasons to start yoga, the motivation to practice yoga, the body change, the body awareness, perception of the body and the change of the concept “I” with the change of the body. The body has become a form of self-expression for individuals practicing yoga. Changes in the body have allowed other changes in the lives of individuals to occur. Individuals who have noticed their bodies through the practice of yoga have begun to understand and realize many things about themselves through their bodies.

4.2.1. Body Perception: A Journey from Body to I

In the life of the majority of individuals, there is a physical activity before starting the practice of yoga. A small number of individuals move very little, while some

dance, walk, and even some are active in many sports before. Among them there are those who have played basketball, volleyball professionally, and individuals who are engaged in mountaineering.

Although most people have previously done physical activity related to their body, they have less perception of their bodies before starting yoga. There are even those who say that they do not have a body perception. There is an obvious difference about the ways in which participants feel about their body while doing other sports and practicing yoga. Some of the participants stated that their perception of their body is close to their current perception. Some also argued that they have established a good relationship with their body when they were doing other sports and they have already perceived their bodies as a healthy body. Whereas many have stated that they notice their bodies along with yoga and begin to feel many places in their bodies that they did not feel before. Among individuals, there have also been those who express what their bodies mean for them. Individuals often do not have a deep understanding of their bodies. There are those who realize that what they think they know about their bodies is not so. In addition, there are people who say that he has no connection with his body. On the other hand, the relationship he has with his body is equivalent to pain. Some quotes on how individuals had perceived their bodies before starting yoga:

I had no body perception before I started yoga. When I started yoga, I realized that there was such a thing called body. I felt like I had a body. I mean, my arm, my legs, okay, I have these. But I did not feel them; I have learned to listen to my body a little more. I have

learned to listen to my body, what my desires are, what I need, where I hurt or what areas I have discovered in my strong body. I mean, I would say I have discovered myself a little bit through exploring my body. I connected with my body, and I loved my body. I really stood in front of the mirror and said how beautiful I was, I also had a body or something, so I liked it very much (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

A participant who sees her body as a shape expresses it as follows:

I mean, it was like a shape, you know? My shoulders are very low, narrow, here my waist is very thin, but my thighs were like wide or something like that, so I wonder if my shoulders are too close to my ears, do I stretch too much, do I squeeze my body like I did not have awareness before yoga. It is just like that, you know, what kind of form I have in my body. My legs are shorter than my upper body or I knew somethings like that (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

A participant who used to perceive her body as a pain before starting yoga says that she did not care much about her body at first. She also explains her perception of body and her relationship with her body as:

It was always pain. My legs, my bones were aching. I was sluggish. I could not look at the light with my eyes. ...The beauty of starting with this illness was ... I already was very weak and inflexible. But on the one hand, for example, for such a reason of health, to be healthy for others. ...I ate and drank as much as I wanted. Apparently, I usually eat and drink unhealthy things. And I did not go into the kitchen. I ate everything I could find. So, I had no problem with my body. Accordingly, I never had problems such as: does the dress look good? Yes, it always looked good on me. My relationship with my body has always been like this (participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

A participant who stated that he did not know his body before starting yoga began to question his body with the chronic illness he experienced:

Before, I never really knew my body. ...I did not have any information about my body. And a while before I started yoga, I had a chronic illness or something like that. That is when I started asking for the first time. What is going on, what is going on there? That disease is related to the digestive system, or rather, it affects that. I asked at the time, but I could not figure it out again. Back then, I experienced extreme stress, tension, such depressive states, for example, but I never knew the solution. I mean, I did not know

anything about my body, my mind, or anything to distinguish them or to combine them (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

When I asked my interviewees about their perception of their bodies after they started practicing yoga; if there was any difference between their perception of body before and after they started practicing yoga; they all emphasized that there were great differences. Just like the meaning and symbols they attributed to the body before starting yoga, the body they perceive after yoga practice has different meaning for them. In other words, changes in body perception before and after starting yoga are similar in those who practice yoga. After yoga, individuals have developed this awareness by seeing the reflections of their emotional states on the body. They started to feel that they notice the presence of their bodies, increasing their body awareness and increased strength in muscles in the body. This awareness has enabled individuals to care about their bodies. We can see this process in the following example:

...Some poses work the muscles. I mean, sometimes I felt where I had muscles. Before yoga I did not normally pay that much attention to that. ...There is a muscle here too. Here is to lying for pigeon pose, for example, to feel the muscle over there in the hip. I found it very interesting to feel my sitting bones. I have never felt it before them. Yes, I became more aware of my body, maybe even an exaggeration, but I felt like I was feeling my muscles (participant 2, male, 53, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

In the following quotes, we see that body awareness, which develops with the practice of yoga, is associated with the mental and emotional processes of individuals. Awareness in those who practice yoga here is effective not only when they practice yoga, but also in their daily lives. From here, it shows how much space the body takes up in the lives of those who practice yoga, is cared for, and considered:

...I communicated. I mean, is it really what you feel in the body, are you anxious, are you afraid, are there things you fear, are there things you do not dare? You know, what you cannot do on the mat is what you cannot do in real life. You start talking to your body, or you stop seeing the body like that piece of flesh, and you read it like a book. ...All of these are actually answers given to yourself, to return to you again through your own body (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

The body has no more been considered as a physical phenomenon. Instead, it has been considered as a part of the individuals, which exists with them. In addition, the body is a tool that individuals notice along with yoga and discover themselves on this occasion. Thus, it is possible to say that individuals build their bodies in yoga, which leads towards building the individual they call “I.” In the identity construction section, this area will be mentioned again. Attention to the words of several participants who expressed their body perceptions after having yoga in their lives will allow us to better understand this process:

My body is for me, it is a part of me. So, it is a big part. It is the ways in which I experience life. And it is me. ...But yes, a lot, it is part of my current existence. I mean, it is tangible. Because, you know, yoga is something like that. Forget about the body, the body is temporary or something like that. Okay, it is temporary, but it is a big part of my experience... (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another participant states that:

...I am talking to my organs or something. When I feel discomfort, I know why. I made contact. I mean, it showed me more what I call myself is disconnected. I mean, you have a rush of life in a day. How long are you with that body from waking up to going to bed? You are not. You are in your complete mind, so the rush of work is running there, running here or something like that, but you do not be aware of your body during the day, when you hit a place, when you feel pain, you say I have this place. But also, after yoga, even when you eat, I know that it is digested, the state of passage through your throat, when you drink tea, you drink it by sniffing it. You become more aware of drinking by enjoying your sip during the day (participant 5, male, 48, 23.10.2020, İstanbul).

As we clearly understood in this section that individual has a great changing in their perception of their body. Perception of their body indirectly effected their perception of the person which is “I.” The changes in their bodies led them to change their perception of their bodies. To understand what are those changes and how they happened we can see the next section; changes occur in the body with yoga and how body is built.

4.2.2. Changes That Occur in The Body together with Yoga:

Body Building

According to the data obtained from the interviews, the bodies of individuals have changed, regardless of the reason for starting yoga. Of course, there have been fewer changes in the body compared to those who have experienced radical changes. Changes in the body can be related to the spine and muscular system. Body changes also provide physical healing. However, changes that people experience about their bodies have also allowed them to change emotionally and behaviorally. A few participants stated that they relieved from their chronic diseases by yoga. Moreover, there were some participants, who argued that they relieved from the side effects of the discomfort they experience and from the pain caused by the physical condition of the body. Along with the changes in the bodies of individuals, changes in the attitudes and behaviors in which they identify themselves are also taken into account. The reflection of this change in the body, attitude and behavior will be mentioned in the identity building section. Yoga has influenced individuals’ posture, strengthening, and stretching of their muscles. The effect of breathing, which is a physical work in yoga, has also been reflected in the daily lives of individuals. With Yoga, individuals’ bodies have been transformed,

and individuals' re-building their bodies with awareness has given them a "new" and "healthy" body.

As we can understand from the words of the participant below, he got rid of the pain he experienced in his spine with yoga, and because of his chronic illness, he gave up medications that he should use throughout his life. Here is the role of yoga in the transition from disease to health:

...After all, I mean, I was a person with a lack of posture. And yes, I was one of those people who were constantly warned to stand upright, stand upright. They say stand up straight when you are sitting, stand up straight, but you cannot stand up straight. You think you are standing up straight. ...After a few years with yoga, I started seeing how bad it was, scoliosis or something like that. ...For example, the pain I feel in certain parts of my spine, after which it changes, it passes to another point. I have always carried them all my life, but I do not care much, and now that the openings start with yoga, it is like the pain is moving back to the old areas and starting to open. ...You know, my chronic condition, when I started yoga, I was on a lot of drugs, anti-depressants related to my immunity. I was able to leave them at some point. I said, I did not have any medication in my second year, so I had to take medication for life. I am not on medication right now. ...I came in that situation so I thought. Even if you are seen as normal right now, it feels like a miracle to me. I was high at the time. I was in a very bad place; I cannot carry my illness. I have always learned more alternative ways.

So, I learned how to carry my disease. It helped me a lot for these
(participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

It is possible to say that the body structure resulting from the practice of yoga in individuals is different than the bodies that are “stronger,” “more flexible,” and those individuals, who have “bodily awareness.” A participant who explains how the bodies of individuals who practice yoga differ from other bodies through the concept of “yoga body” and states:

...So, there is such a thing as a yoga body. And you know it. I mean, I think I have lost weight. I mean, that is what the old people say. I was already weak, but you know, there is a tightening. The muscles really surround the bones. There is a tightening. I am definitely more flexible. My level of awareness is higher. ...I am flexible, more open and my awareness is way higher. The sensitivity is high. I mean, my body is not just like the body, you know, those things, flow of energy, of course. ...I mean, that experience has increased my body-to-body presence. My experience increased (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

Though body is considered as an individual element and unique, my participants has mentioned a lot of similarities in terms of changing and awareness of their bodies. The reason why they had similar changes in their bodies they were practicing the same cultural discipline regularly. To say it in other words, they were learning the similar bodily practices and

applying them on their body in the same way. So that is the reason why body had a role in connecting people with the same cultural sharings in a specific group. The importance of the concept body is that it is the first subcultural element in my research. Similar to my point of view Mauss (1973) says that the body is cultural and shaped by behaviors learned within that culture. He adds that the body is used differently in each culture. (Evren, 2018, p.249-250).

4.3. Belonging

The second main concept I focused on when exploring whether yoga is a subculture or not was the concept of belonging. Research findings show that individuals feel like they belong to the community they are in. Individuals express their belonging in many forms. It differs from what individuals' experience when doing yoga alone and in a group. Individuals expressed their belonging by declaring their support for each other, learning from each other, sharing, and feeling similar things. Addressing individuals' belonging to the community in which they are located under different headings will show us this diversity.

4.3.1. Hatha Yoga Practice: Experience of Doing Yoga Alone and in a Group

I got various answers when I asked whether my interviewees liked to practice yoga alone or in a group. All interviewees except one stated that they like practicing both alone and in a group. Yet, one of my interviewees argued that he never practices alone. Half of the participants enjoy group practice more, while two of them like to practice alone and the rest like to experience both. When I asked about the area where participants preferred to practice yoga, most of them stated that they preferred to practice yoga in a yoga studio. Some said that they practice yoga in outdoor area, some practice at home, and some said that space is not important, that they can practice under any appropriate conditions. In this context, it is worth

saying that the pandemic process changed yoga practice alone and group practice experiences and preferences. It can be said that the pandemic process affects their practice positively or negatively, increasing the opportunity for those who love group practice to experience yoga practice alone.

A participant who liked to go to the studio started practicing alone at home due to the pandemic, and she liked it:

...At first, during the pandemic, I really liked coming to class. From the crowd, from being so one-to-one with the teacher, and I was saying, I cannot do it without going to the studio. I have to go to the studio. And then we started doing it at home, and I loved doing it at home because as soon as I lay down on my mat, I feel like I am in the studio. You know, I do not have to go any extra way. I do not need any extra effort. ...I did yoga on my own for the first time without any guidance and I enjoyed it too much. I am starting to like what I think I will never really like. I will never like, but of course I also like doing yoga, which I do as a group. I love them both (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

For individuals, there are differences between practicing alone and practicing in groups. First, let's examine what it means to practice yoga alone for individuals. Individuals express that they are freer when they practice alone. When they practice at home, they see poses as an area where they try, they work on poses and develop. Participants who talk about the difficulty of maintaining practice alone say that it is more difficult to be motivated at

home, the practice is divided and even the presence of a yoga expert affects the practice. In addition to one participant who stated that there can be no learning in yoga practice performed alone, another participant stated that it is difficult to discipline alone. The following few quotes are examples of participants practicing yoga alone. Expressing that there can be no learning in yoga alone, the participant states that the communication of individuals with each other supports better learning, in fact stating the importance of community support for each other, which is called belonging:

...You know, I can practice either alone or with a group depending on the situation. But I believe that a person cannot learn much alone, so in life, right? So, I am in reclusion somewhere by myself. I do not know from the outside; I do not know what other people are going through. That is how I see yoga. And I prefer the practice in class because there is a lot of different energy (participant 6, female, 46, 24.10.2020, İstanbul).

This argument highlights the fact that individuals are social beings and communicating with each other will carry them somewhere forward. In other words, being part of a group improves the individual. This reinforces the individual's belonging.

For many participants, practicing alone means being free, being creative and being able to practice as they wish to:

When I practice alone, I can be very free. I like it. At that moment, I suddenly want to throw my foot against the wall. And when I am

practicing with someone else, for example, I think about it; I wonder if he is feeling well right now? And what he thinks or feels. Instead, when I am alone, I can do it in any rhythm I want. My mind is relaxed, I suddenly find myself in a pose, and suddenly I can be more creative in the flow. I have loved practicing on my own from the beginning. Instead of practicing with someone, you know, I am in a class with the same attitude... ..But other than that, when I practice, I do not see anything but just focus in myself and my practice (participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul)

When they practice yoga alone, participants feel calmer, more focused on their own needs and return to their inner selves and feel like they do something for themselves. They also say that the ego gets vanished while practicing alone. On the contrary some of my interviewees mentioned that practicing alone makes them feel like they are repeating themselves and preventing them to get out from their comfort zone:

Feelings change. It is like a little ego is out of action. You are better at being yourself. For example, you see how powerful your practice is... It is not like you can say what I should not do, or no one sees you, ...You are going to take the quickest way to your pose instead of going through it with a flashy jump. Holding your breath, it has such effects. Yeah, I think there is something when someone else is watching, you know, there is always an effect that I am being watched (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Participants who practiced yoga in groups stated that they felt more motivated, improved themselves and learned from each other. Group dynamics supported both the ability to practice yoga better and the presence of a yoga expert or individuals to focus better and go beyond their potential in their practice. One of the reasons why this happens is because people practice in groups seem to be watching both themselves and each other. Therefore, while practicing in groups, individuals practice better compared to practicing alone. It would be fair to say that here individual' egos come into play and push them to do better.

In group practices, there are quite a few participants who say that they feel like they are being watched, that they are engaged in performance anxiety, and put way more effort to do better:

It is different. I feel higher emotions when I am in a group. But I do not know how to explain it now. I think I am more satisfied. That collective thing I do with others, raises me up a lot. I am calmer when I am alone, more for myself. I turn more to my inner place when I am alone. But when we are in a group together, it is not so internal. I feel like I am showing someone something. ...A teacher is always watching, though others are not watching. As the teacher says good job, I say haaa let me continue, I can stand it (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

These expressions of participants who feel more intense emotions and feel more holistic in group practice show their belonging to that group. The fact that individuals do similar things with other individuals at the same time also allows individuals to strengthen their belonging. At the same time, individuals who share the same space in similar states of emotion feel that they experience common things in a similar way. This creates a collective consciousness in the community they are in. In subcultures formed by relationship patterns of individuals, the concepts of identity, self and difference stand out. The subculture created by a collective consciousness expresses change (Aslan, 2013, p.1).

This feeling further connects individuals to each other and to the group in which they practice yoga:

Oh, what a beautiful community we are, we are all here, and we will do the same thing. I guess I feel like we are here for the same purpose, even if we all have different levels, I do not know. I mean, it is good to talk to A, B, C people or something like that, otherwise, I think it is very mechanical at home. ...But now, when I entered this pandemic, a little bit of this pandemic also made me feel lonely, the thought of practicing alone rather than with others is not good for me (participant 2, male, 53, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

In addition to all this, one participant emphasized that it would be difficult to continue practicing yoga alone for a long time, and that we need to be in the same place with others. One of the reasons they like group practice is because they feel social there. They say that

when they practice in a group, a greater energy is formed; a group consciousness is formed, which arises from being together. In addition, they stated that they felt more intense emotions in a group practice, they were not alone, they felt strong, and they experienced being whole, being “us.” There is also a participant who states that he will not practice without the group.

It is a cumulative thing, it is everyone’s energy, and it is probably something nice if I know myself a little bit. There are some egos in there. I will do it, I will do it, I will do it. See, I did it, I know there is stuff in it... I am someone who feeds on it, too. ...But I like the energy of that thing. Even well, it is nice to say “aum” together. I do not know what it adds to you. But it is good to me. I mean, it is really nice to feel like we are doing something together (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

All this learning from each other, socialization and togetherness is an indication that participants feel like they belong to that group. Doing the same thing together for the same purpose, supporting each other, building common consciousness contained in the concept of belonging. They can clearly be considered as reflections integrity.

I mean, if you are not in trouble, I mean, when you say it is hard, there is a pandemic that is going on, for example, you cannot go anywhere, there is no problem practicing alone. But I like the group energy better because it is the energy we do together. It is really yoga because we call it yoga right now. ...Whatever it is, it is something that calls you. Some

is called for with illness, some called for low back pain, some is called with resentment, some is called with disasters, some is called with accidents. And it brings everyone to a certain level of mind and gets them there. Thus, that energy is spreading in the class, I can feel it... A common consciousness is being created there, all together. I mean, do you want to swim in a pool or do you want to swim in the sea? I like the sea. The sea is what you call studio lessons, the pool is when you practice yoga alone (participant 5, male, 48, 23.10.2020, İstanbul).

With yoga, individuals create belonging to a community that they practice regularly, they feel higher emotions, and the integrity comes from belonging. Especially group practices make them connect to each other while individual practices help to push them to their inner journey. Learning from each other, they reinforce the sense of belonging by interacting with each other. They realize that they feel, think alike, they come across similar things, experience similar challenges in yoga practice as well as in life. The sense of belonging creates sense of “us” and “them.” This dichotomy shows us the first sign of creating yoga identity a very powerful belonging to a community. Aşkın (2007, p.214) suggests that social identity evolves with the groups to which individuals belong, stating that the behaviors, feelings, and thoughts of individuals are formed together with the social groups to which they are involved. In the following section we will focus on the “us” and “them” concepts and their relationship with the sense of belonging.

4.3.2. Us and Them

The individuals I interviewed expressed their belonging to the community they were in a different way. One of them is the connection that individuals establish with yoga experts, with other individuals practicing yoga and the yoga studio. In relation to this, individuals begin to trust other individuals, whom they know better. It is assumed that individuals who practice yoga adopt a certain form of understanding. Therefore, individuals think that they are accepted by the members of that group and feel that they belong to that group.

...This yoga, the presence of this yoga, after yoga has come into my life for me, you know, a person who does yoga anywhere or anywhere else in the world, even if it is on social media, you connect a lot with them. I mean, you feel these people, and when you go somewhere else, or you look for an environment where yoga is done, you want to find it, and you go there right away. I do not know if there is something like this, you know... (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

The studio wherein individuals practice yoga and the people, whom they practice yoga with can affect individuals' yoga practices either positively or negatively. Being with the people they know and the people they meet all the time gives them confidence. Most individuals say that at some point they are influenced by group dynamics. Few of the participants stated that they were not affected by this situation. According to Alptekin (2011 p.43) the group in which individuals are involved and the trust of group members is one of the most important indicators of group belonging. Moreover, Bauman (2017, p.41-43) says that the concepts of belonging, unity, and integrity cannot be mentioned in a community

where there is no trust. The following quote clearly shows community belonging in terms of acceptance and trust:

Having people around me that I know more and see more often, for example, makes me feel safer. It is about my personal experience, of course, but it can be a little bit about me not being too comfortable when I get into an environment where there are strangers. I get a little more nervous when there are people around me that I do not know. I wonder, I do not know, that is why it is warmer to have more people I know ... Every time I went to yoga, I felt like home. Because I know the teachers, I know the people at the desk. That is how I talk to everyone. I am chatting. It was becoming an extremely pleasant place for me. So, the intimacy of the people around me, that energy, actually changed the effect of the practice I did and that flow (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Individuals have demonstrated their belonging by using the concepts “we,” “like my home,” “like my family.” Although they continue to exist as individuals, we see that yoga strengthens individuals’ belonging to the group they are in. According to sociological theories, people are social beings and social life has an impact on the formation of identity (Aşkın, 2007, p.214). In relation to this, two participants expressed that they are social beings and “they want to belong” somewhere. The following quotes support the necessity and importance of individuals belonging to a group:

... You are a social being, so pull yourself in, get in those cabinets, and never talk to anyone again. That is not how it works, honey, so you cannot go through this life by hanging out there on your own. So, you should know what you are. ...And these people did not accept me. Look how good I can hang out here by myself. When he says I am like this, brother, and then you approach it with anger, it is not like that. ...I have been through all these processes...
 ...Calm down and look. So, we put a lot of people here. It is not that much. Okay, if you do not want to hang out with this, do not hang out. So, there is a person over there (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

The majority of my interviewees stated that yoga is perceived differently by those who do not practice yoga. Many participants argued that yoga must be experienced in order to be understood. In this context, individuals who do not practice yoga cannot be expected to understand and internalize yoga. Therefore, individuals who do not practice yoga have limited ideas about yoga and about those who practice yoga.

Of course, it is important to relax, but it is not just to relax. You know, sometimes you have to be forced, when you look at the big picture, it is something that relaxes you. I mean, that is one of those clichés. Another one; yoga is an exercise or a sport which has increased in recent years. Okay, yeah, so you are exercising. In fact, you are busy. There are a number of alignment principles. But beyond that, there are other things. If he has not experienced it, he does not understand it. It is very normal. If I had not experienced it, I wouldn't have understood it in my mind, because that mind is limited. You

should be experiencing it. It is a cliché. Apart from that, there are technical issues. You know, there are already too many views on how yoga should be done and not done. Someone fits me, someone does not. I am already keeping them apart. What else is there? Simple clichés. Can men practice yoga or something? I am not very flexible either. Can I practice yoga? So, of course you can. Of course, men are already, so until recently, only men did it or something like that. I mean these clichés. These are the ones I can think of (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

In relation to this, we can talk about two categories defined: those who practice yoga and those who do not practice yoga. From these two categories, “those who practice yoga” define individuals’ belonging “us” while those who do not practice yoga define “them.” Öztürk (2015, p.47-48) also emphasizes that identity occurs as a result of differentiation between the individual’s “self” and “others.” At the same time, this belonging is also involved in the identification of individuals’ yoga identities. This contributes to the argument that yoga practitioners form a subculture in the context of belonging /identity.

One of my interviewees expressed differences between individuals do not practice yoga, who are not in the same community, while emphasizing that they have commonalities with yoga practitioners:

Oh, we are being treated like aliens. I mean, we are like yogis and others. For example, when I started yoga, I realized this a lot, it gets to a point where people are only those who practice yoga. Because they understand each other’s languages. There are other people out there, other lives. ... I feel like they do

not understand us, and we do not understand them. So incredible... I will criticize. Yoga certainly does not have a unifying philosophy, but rather a separating philosophy. For example, when you talk to a banker or talk to a computer engineer, he does not understand what you are saying in any way. So, let's leave it to the flow of life. Because he has a job to do by five o'clock, there is no flow in his life. I mean, it is usually called yogis, your job is a job or something. So, I think yogis are building a wall against the outside. I am also included in it. I can find better common ground with my yoga friends. But outside, I practice yoga, when I say so; there is a very different perception (participant 1, female, 29,16.10.2020, İstanbul).

As mentioned before belong/identity concepts interconnected and they affect each other. Where there is a strong belonging, there exists a certain type of identity. Without belonging we can not talk about a social identity. As the the concept of body led individuals have things in common, which means had a role leading them to have a belonging to a group that they involve, belonging to a group also led them to create their yoga identity. According to social identity theory, the characteristics of the community that individual belong in plays an important role in shaping the individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. In other words, social identity is formed together with the community to which the individual belongs to (Aşkın, 2007, p.214). That's why below we will talk about how individual's identity shaped with time and what kind of transformation made them feel that they have a yoga identity.

4.4. Identity

As mentioned in detail in the literature section, individuals' identities develop along with their belonging to a particular group. The stronger their belonging to a group, the more their identity is shaped by the characteristics of that group. The concept of "we" is associated with their belonging. As I mentioned above, individuals practicing Hatha Yoga have expressed their belonging to the group they are in in many forms. Individuals' belonging is also effective in the formation of their identities. As I mentioned earlier in the belonging section, individuals create belonging all together through socializing and learning from each other. This is an important part of the transformation of their identities. This, in turn, indicates that their identity has changed within that group, or that yoga identity has begun to become part of their identity. Individuals have stated that they have a yoga identity, regarding changes in their attitudes and behaviors that changed after yoga. In addition, while some of my interviewees see themselves as yogis, some do not. In addition, those who say that there is uniformity in individuals who practice yoga also stand out. This uniformity is an indicator of the formation of yoga identity in those who practice yoga.

4.4.1. Changing Attitudes and Behaviors Along with Yoga

All the participants I interviewed mentioned that along with yoga, there is a change in their attitude and behavior and in their perspective on events. This, in turn, shows that the adjectives that individuals use when describing themselves have changed. Individuals expressed that they are calmer, more positive, more communicative, and more empathetic. Furthermore, they became more flexible instead of being very controlling individuals. They also became more understanding and non-judgmental. Finally, in terms of their action they could step back and think about situations.

In this context, most of the interviewees have stated that they have become different under the influence of yoga and that they have experienced changes in their characters:

I would say I am different from when I started yoga. I mean, I think my ego is a little bit, like I rasped a little bit. Although I would be very proud of everything. I resented people. I would take it all personally. I had melancholy. ...It is not like this now. I take no offense to anything. So, everyone has their own thing. Everyone has their own problems. So, it is not about me, it is about it. It does not bother too overly. Actually, my character has changed a lot. I think yoga has a lot of effect. Maybe it was going to change anyways, but in yoga I see my own ego. I do not take myself so seriously. I get it, of course, but sometimes I shake it (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

Yoga caused changes in individuals' bodies, while at the same time allowing individuals to undergo changes related to them. Participants expressed that with yoga, their self-confidence increased, they became more extroverted and more social and it is the yoga that encouraged them to do so. The reason for this is that individuals are accepted as they are by the people they live together, and that individuals feel supported by that community. Supporting my claim, Öngören (2015, p.29) states individuals' social acceptance has a significant impact on the development of their bodies.

Actually, it gave me courage. It made me do what I feared and express myself more comfortably in many things. It may be developed my timidity a little bit towards people, maybe my ability to express myself. Because when I was

doing yoga, when I went to the studio, I felt that the person in front of me did not judge me, accepted me for who I was. It also has an influence on the outside this time, and it can accept me or taught how to do it. And I am such a person, and I can express myself like this, or it actually encouraged me to express myself more comfortably, to communicate in a more comfortable person, to make bolder decisions (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

When I ask individuals how they define themselves, each of them said that what they define about themselves is different in advance. Yet, there are also interviewees, who say that they are always the same person, but there are small changes in some of their characteristics. Some participants added that their personality, which has undergone changes, does not only depend on yoga, but also on the age they receive and the experiences they have. Individuals have said that yoga allows them to be who they are now.

I can divide myself into two different persons, like I said, Look at it like this, before yoga and after yoga. It may not be for everyone, maybe I had more of a habit of rasping, maybe so I can say it more clearly now. By the way, people who know me clearly say that. Because it was later that I saw myself. But they saw it faster. You were like this, you were like this, you were reacting to it, and now you are not reacting at all. I mean, more really, more empathetic, you know, understanding the opposite party. I did not understand the other side before. I was looking more selfish. Now, when I started putting myself in the place of other party it reflected everything in me. My business sense or

business behavior, relationship, family, friendship, so I can say, you know, more understanding, more empathetic, clearer... (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

As a result of all these quotes, it would be fair to say that the concept of identity is a concept that can change. It is very important to note that what the individual calls “I” is not fixed or unchangeable. The individual changes depending on the experience he undergoes, the environment he enters, and the community he belongs to. Maalouf (2015, p.16-18) emphasizes that the identity of individuals consists of many elements that have no boundaries, that the individual can be connected to a religion, nation, ethnic group, social environment, family, and many other elements, but the belonging of individuals can be heard against many communities. Each of these affiliations are equally important and each has a meaning. The majority of these affiliations are innate. Explaining that different identities in the individual are subject to different meanings and order of importance at different times. Maalouf adds to this that identities are not invariant, they are transformed by time and have an impact on individuals’ behavior. He points out the importance that belonging, which is important in the lives of individuals, does not arise only from language, nation, class, or religion. The following quote is quite remarkable in this sense:

... What you call “I” is something that you always put meaning into conceptual bones. Apart from that, every cell in me is the organs, bacteria, cells, all of which are mine. ...Yeah, I can change, too. More conceptually, who are you? Here, teacher, who are you? I am a yoga instructor. This is who I am, you

know, this. I am a mechanical engineer. I am a sales & marketing director.

You understand? I mean, that is what I was talking about. ...I mean, now ...if you ask (he says his name), there is no such thing a you call “I”, and there is a thing that you call “us.” That is what I look at, as I separate myself (participant 5, male, 48, 23.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another subject that shows participants identity is whether they consider themselves as yogi or not. As mentioned in the literature part of yoga, to say it in simple words; yogi is the one who follows the path of yoga. To support my findings on identity as being a main subcultural element in my research to have information how my participant identified themselves as yogis will be discussed.

4.4.2. Being a Yogi

I asked if the individuals I interviewed considered themselves as yogis to see whether they see yoga as part of their identity or not. The majority of participants consider them as yogis. Two people said that they did not literally identify themselves as yogis, while the other two said that they did not consider themselves yogis because they did not fulfill all the stages that a yogi should perform. Although not all participants identify themselves as yogis, they have stated that yoga is in their lives and they are on their way to becoming yogis. In this context, yoga comes across as a phenomenon that individuals add to their lives and their identities. Beyond that, a participant expressed in his own words that yoga is part of his identity:

I mean, I am the one who does yoga. If we call it a yogi, then yes. I think I am a yogi, but other than that, I cannot be a vegan, a vegetarian, it is impossible. Or I am not too disconnected from society, too much

like that. ...I am not in the mood wherever I go. I still need to check things out. I do not have that much surrender. But I am a yogi, yes; I define myself as a yoga practitioner. I am a yogi, I would say. Because doing yoga is part of my identity. Because one of the areas in which I define myself is when they ask who you are, I say yes, I am an academician. I also practice yoga. I am saying I have a yoga side. I can say that I define myself in two things (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

Individuals have an idea in their mind about what a yogi should be like. The individual who does yoga is yogi according to the participants. Long periods of doing yoga show that they identify themselves as yogis. Especially at the beginning of yoga practice, there are people who do not identify themselves as yogis. Another reason why they do not accept themselves as yogis is that they think they do not meet the requirements of being a yogi. A participant says that, being a yogi requires regular yoga practice. A participant who does not exactly call himself a yogi describes himself as an individual who follows the path of yoga. As I mentioned above, even if individuals may not clearly indicate the place of yoga in their identity and belonging, their form of expression shows us the effect of yoga belonging on the formation of a yoga identity.

Yes, yes. I can say that with something big. I mean, I am glad I started. I am glad I am on this path. I always did yoga when the studio was closed. At home I did. I do not want to leave. Because the philosophy of yoga is also very beautiful. So, yes, if we think of it that way, I

consider myself a yogi. I consider myself a passenger of this road
(participant 6, female, 46, 24.10.2020, İstanbul).

According to a participant I interviewed, a yogi is trying to understand the relationship that has established with himself. A yogi is also trying to create positive values and be sensitive to the environment. Another individual says that to focus on the moment and being aware means yogi. This clearly expresses that he sees yoga as part of his own identity:

Actually, it is for me to be as aware as possible of everything I do and stay focused on the moment, to be a yogi. I am really in that moment when these things are happening. Because sometimes I realize, I do not listen to people. I did not notice anything like that before. And I noticed that. I look at him talking to me, but I do not listen at the time, for example, I noticed that. I always think it is because of yoga. I think that is what my yoga identity has added to me (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Individuals who do not fully consider themselves yogis believe that they cannot fully practice the philosophy of yoga. They are not fearless enough when performing some yoga asanas and cannot maintain regular meditation, or cannot do enough of what needs to be done. There are also participants who say that the traditional concept of yogi does not match today's conditions:

It would be difficult if I said that, no, I do not see it. I mean, it is not a hundred percent yes, but I would say 60 -70 percent. Because when I

say one hundred percent, there will surely be arrogance there. It is not completely over, there are still a lot of things we need to learn, we need to experience. So, one hundred percent yogi, I think, they are people who live in “ashrams.” I mean, I think yogi is a little bit of a popular word for me today. I mean, everyone practicing yoga is yogi. Everyone taking 200 hours training is yogi. Actually, yogi is really, you know, if I am a real yoga trainer, you have to be a pastor or something. After all, it does not happen in the city, in İstanbul, really. ...But we shouldn't be unfair... I mean, you make an effort, you change the way you behave, you change the way you think, so you know, that is the city version of yogi. If you say you are the city version of yogi, I would say a hundred percent yes, but if you say you are really a yogi, no. I think everyone is no (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

Having similar kind of understanding, sharing similar experiences and being in the same community and having changes in their way of being individuals created their yoga identity, with their own will and with their interaction of a certain group. It is obvious that my participants have a yoga identity. Depending on my observation as a result of having a belonging/identity, individuals who spend time together, share similar things and talk about similar topics with time they may lose their autenticity or they may act alike in the community they are in even without being aware of it. Yoga stereotype may appear accordingly as a result of being a part of a subculture. Yoga stereotype has immersed in my interviews me without specifly asking questions about

it. To involve the appearance of yoga stereotype will be beneficial for the future researches and for the lucidity of my research.

4.4.3. Yoga Stereotype

As a result of my interviews with individuals practicing Hatha Yoga, I can say that they perform similar experiences in many areas, such as their lifestyle, habits they have acquired, changes in their bodies and characters. Additionally, my personal experience from the sessions I attended and the discourses I encountered during random conversations with people, who practice Hatha Yoga showed that individuals have a common experiential denominator. Although it is not right to make a definitive judgment about whether a yoga stereotype exists based on the discourses of individuals within the scope of my research, some of the participants stated that they show great similarities with individuals who practice yoga. Moreover, these individuals talk about similar things, they dressed similarly and shared similar things. Thus, it would not be unjustified to argue that there is a yoga stereotype. Although there are only two participants who use the word stereotype, I have expressed these similarities in many titles I have covered.

One of my interviewees says that individuals have gradually lost their unique selves and become the same. This clearly shows us that they belong to the yoga community in which they are located, and this community becomes part of their identities. The same interviewee has also argued that, the environment in which she is located shapes her. Relying on her argument it is very likely to argue that the concept of identity can change according to the characteristics of the community which the individual is in:

...For example, I used to go in pajamas.... to yoga. I mean, I would wake up in the morning, go to class in my pajamas, wash up there, get dressed, go to school, and no one would look at what anyone was wearing, this is how it was. On the one hand, there was a space, and everyone was together, but there was also a space that we would be alone. It has changed more and more, and I am a little uncomfortable that it has changed. And the reason I am uncomfortable is because it is so crowded now, and then, I do not know, there, there is a stereotype. It is very disturbing because no one has authenticity, and when that happens, you are not just yourself anymore, or you are hiding when you are yourself. I think it affects and shapes individuals' social environment (participant 10, female, 33, 29.10.20220, İstanbul).

Another participant, whose father is a nature documentarian, had a little bit unusual life, she told me that her childhood was spent in a caravan. For her, being apart from the community that she wanted to be with affects her relationship with the members of this community and made her to face difficulties in adapting other communities. Being able to get into a group requires showing certain stereotypical behaviors. In this way, the individual ceases to be himself. He becomes a part of the community, and the person he calls "I" begin to show some changes.

...There were times when I was friendless; there were times when I was alone. Did you ever have a hard time getting into a social group in yoga, even 6 years ago? ...In fact, it was easy for me because my

energy was high, but a person forgets their own language. If you are not an idiot somewhere in that thing to get into that stereotypical thing, you see, that is what they do. They like it, and then if I go to this place, it makes it much better, much more, you go into that group as laps. But that is what happened. Then where are you here? Where is that guy? Where did the girl in the trailer go? Were you not that guy? But, no one wants me when I am me. I felt all alone while I was being me. ...What yoga says is that you will find your own language, you will be yourself. ...Can we be ourselves then? Then will you take me in? I mean, questions like can I get into this community, then it was... (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

Participant says that uniformization in yoga is also associated with the approach of the instructor, and that the participating person is a social being and begins with the need to belong to a community. For a person to exist within a certain group, he must adapt himself to the characteristics of that group. Because when the individual differs, he becomes an outsider:

It is very much related to the attitude of the instructor. If he is a domineering instructor, like what I say will be done; it is my field, my show, my presentation. And when he says that everything has to happen as much as I can control, the uniformity begins. And you have to make yourself look like everyone else there. Therefore, all the qualities and conditions that are unique to you disappear. You catch yourself trying to adapt to a group. You do not even catch it. Because

we are social beings. ...We learn by imitating, we want to belong, when we feel different, because we did not want to go to that area when we were the black sheep. If he is an instructor who has a high anxiety of controlling, if he has a terrifying personality, there he would want to take things in control. He will limit his own space instead of creating areas that he fears, he cannot interfere with. He will keep everything as similar as possible to each other. It'll bring it closer together, so it is easier to control. It becomes easier to control groups, that is, the masses of people. Not one person, of course. A one-on-one relationship is certainly not that easy, but if you are addressing a few people, it is enough to create a tiny dynamic to drag them all in the same direction. Because everyone else will start following the others in the group, so you need 2 people waving your flag. The other two or three will wave that flag immediately. So, do not be mistaken, we all came here for this (participant 10, female, 33, 29.10.2020, İstanbul).

Yoga appears as a way of living according to the result of my findings. The way my participants talk about yoga, the way they benefit from yoga and the way they change with yoga shows a specific frame. To accept a thing as a life style one should have internalize the principles of that dicipline or tool and they should be applying the requirements or the philosophy of it in their daily life. My observations about yoga practioners show that they accept yoga as a lifestyle. How yoga became their life style, in which part of their life they use yoga will indicate the importance of yoga in my participants life and how they internalize their yoga identity.

4.5. Yoga as a Lifestyle

The collected data showed that, yoga is not practiced only because of its benefit to the body and mind, but also because yoga is considered as a tool in the socialization of individuals, a way of life that affects them positively in most of their lives by allowing them to change their friendship relationships, social lives, and habits. Yoga is not only a practice that individuals practice in the studio or at home, but also a concept that is part of their social identity that they carry to every aspect of their lives. Individuals choose their own lifestyle, participate in the social group of their choice also create and rebuild their own belonging/identity. By looking at the impact of yoga on individuals' friendships, social relationships, social lives, habits, and lives, it will be possible to understand that individuals adopt yoga as a lifestyle and add it to their identity.

Some of the individuals expressed how they adopted yoga as a lifestyle very directly, while some stated that their lifestyle changed under different topics. Either way we can clearly argue that individuals make yoga a part of their lives.

I am not a yogi in that sense. So, something I do not waive. I mean, I do not know, I did not give up my sexuality; I did not give up my family. I live in the material world. It must have something to do with my age. And so, I do not think I am a yogi. I mean, that is why I am not a yogi, but I think I have embraced the yoga lifestyle, and I have been deeply added to my life. I am a yoga practitioner (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

The effect of yoga in my participants lives had an impact for considering yoga as a lifestyle. Having radical changes made their lives better, thus, they included yoga in many areas of their lives. Moreover, their habits and social lives did not remain the same. All those effects they shaped their life and created yoga lifestyle.

4.5.1. Effects of Yoga on Life

Yoga has a great impact on the lives of all the people I interviewed. We have worked under other headings that yoga changes in individuals' bodies, how they perceive themselves, how they view events, their belonging, how they define themselves, and their identity. In this context, when we talk about the effects of yoga, we clearly see that individuals add yoga to their lives. But in order to understand whether they adopt it as a lifestyle or not, I asked what kind of effects yoga ensured on their lives. Interviewees have stated that they have been re-created, they have continued their lives thanks to yoga. They also said that, yoga brings them the courage, helps them develop the ability to express themselves, yoga changes their communication behavior, yoga makes them to be more aware of many things in life. Furthermore, it is argued that yoga subdued their lives, yoga helped them to develop a more positive perspective, yoga changed their character and made them a more powerful more thoughtful and more combative beings.

From the way people talk about the effects of yoga on their lives, we understand that they experience yoga as a lifestyle. In other words, as yoga begins to become the lifestyle of individuals, their yoga identities begin to form simultaneously. Wheaton (2004, p.4), who conducted research on windsurfing and other activities says that participants define it as a lifestyle rather than calling the activity they do as a sport. This lifestyle reflects the meaning and way of experiencing windsurfing. Wheaton (2004) emphasizes that the fact that participants indicate that windsurfing is different and that it is a lifestyle clearly shows the

social identity of individuals. Accordingly, the activities that individuals describe as a lifestyle and the meanings they impose on these activities are part of their social identity. The expressions of a participant who has acquired a sustainable life through yoga clearly shows the role of yoga on formation of a person's yoga identity:

Because it affected me a lot. No. Actually, I feel like I survive thanks to yoga. I cannot think what would happen if there was no yoga. I cannot think of the last 6 years of my life at work. Because it seemed to be on a road that was always going down, going bad. So, something happened that put me together, resurrected me like this, rebelled me up and said stand up. And it keeps it going, you know, at least I say it exists, so I do not know anything like that. From that point of view, for me, it was like a part of me. I mean, I feel that way, yeah, that is all (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Many of the participants said that yoga is a lifestyle. For them, yoga is part of their daily routines. It is a factor in shaping their daily lives. Yoga, in which individuals practice physically and mentally, affects the way they perform their lives. In addition, as I will mention below, individuals have transformed their social lives, habits together with yoga and started to live according to it.

I mean, I think yoga is one of those daily routines that need to be done to your body as much as eating, drinking, and sleeping. It is like how we get up in the morning and wash our hands and faces in yoga like

that? I think it is something that adds a lot to me and that needs to happen, that needs to happen in your life every day. ...But yoga is a way of life, so I think it is a beautiful way of life (participant 2, male, 53, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Before talking about the changing habits of my participants I would like to emphasize that a certain type of lifestyles show subcultural characteristics. Subcultural groups differ from the main culture because of the way they dress, they way day live their lives, the way they become, and the identity that they create. Subculture reflects lifestyles that vary according to certain social categories within the dominant culture. On the other hand, subcultures as groups that differ from the traditional values and lifestyles of the society to which they belong (Ökeli, 2014, p.19).

4.5.2. Habits

The participants I interviewed observed a change in their habits. Almost all of the participants expressed one of the habits that changed with the introduction of yoga into their lives is their nutrition. Even if people were already eating healthy, they started to pay more attention to what they eat along with yoga, they start paying attention to the contents of what they eat, and they start eating healthier. Individuals who have fast food in their lives have given up on this eating habit. They began to become individuals who began to prepare their own food. In addition, individuals began adjusting their meal times according to the time they practice yoga. This include eating lighter things before yoga, or not eating at all. One participant stated that he was vegan, though not entirely influenced by yoga. Another participant stated that she was a vegetarian, that she was fed raw for a period, but started eating meat again.

Participants changing their eating habit together with yoga shows the effect of the yoga community and yoga practice in which the individual is located on transforming their habits and lifestyles of the individuals.

I am a person who likes to listen. I thought I was becoming a calmer person. Something like this happened. I think I am starting to eat a little healthier and with the people there talking about food, that is what to eat and not to eat. Although I am careful, but I do not know, for example, I do a kombucha at home. I drink it, I am more careful, in the evening; I probably used to drink a little more. Now I have set a limit for myself like this, not crossing it, but once a week or twice a week. I thought I should treat my body a little bit better like this (participant 2, male, 53, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Some people said that they reduced alcohol consumption along with yoga, while others said that they quit drinking and smoking:

I mean, before yoga, that chronic disease affects, for example. Anymore. I was a drinker, I loved it, I had to cut it down a little bit, but I never thought about getting it out of my life completely. I was smoking. I was reducing it but did not quit. I thought alcohol was really bothering me now. It bothers me the moment I drink, but for example, I come back in a week and drink again. I am uncomfortable again. ...But anyway, it is completely out of my life. So, you do not have any ever. I

probably quit smoking in the 3 years I started this yoga. I have not smoked for the last 3 years. I was on antidepressants all the time. I have given up medication; I have given up medication for my health. After that, of course, I was smoking other things, smoking pot. I gave up, too. (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

A high number of interviewees have stated that they started to meditate along with yoga and carried the meditation into their daily lives. There are also people who said that they started to walk slower, stopped making plans, got started to go to yoga every morning and needed to move more. They turned all these into a routine. They started doing breathing work together with yoga in difficult moments and established the habit of taking notes. Another participant said that with yoga, he began to become more disciplined in his life and his routines began to change, and finally added that he had acquired the habit of listening to himself.

I did not have anything like that for a while, but I started doing morning meditations. Before, of course, I did not do such things, or when I felt so cramped, I threw it away, I did something like work on my breath, get back inside a little. I started doing them with yoga (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Besides having new habits and quitting the old ones according to my research findings my participants also had new social circle which is yoga circle. Because they were going to the studios regularly the people they come across has changed. The

more they practice yoga the more they were changing their social life. Below how my participants social life has changed will be noticed.

4.5.3. Social Life

Although the social lives of my interviewees show quite similarities compared to their lives before yoga, we can say that it has changed with yoga. Individuals have social lives ranging from going fishing, going to the cinema, theatre, concert, doing yoga, taking photos, participating in art events, traveling, participating in environmental actions, to exchanging ideas.

In their social lives, there were those who started activities that they had not done before, but also those who stated that they continued to do frequent activities that they did more rarely. As yoga entered their lives, there were those who noted that their nightlife decreased, and they went out less. Some of them also expressed that the introduction of yoga camps in their life allowed them to explore more virgin places, and thus began to travel.

A participant who begins to acquire new activities along with yoga expresses the change in her social life:

No, I would not, I would do a lot of these before I started yoga, so I would not go to new places like this. I met yoga camps with yoga. I have discovered virgin places where yoga camps are really around the corner on the coast. After that, I got into a mind like this. Aaaa, there are many beautiful places in Turkey to visit. There are virgin places, İstanbul has many beautiful places, look, and I found places like I can go here. ...I liked to plan a little, and for example, where to eat dinner is a concept that should be obvious to me. I gave up these habits as I

encountered yoga camps and these new places... (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

There were four participants stating that they do not socialize much. One of them says that he spends more time with herself. Spending time with her family, giving yoga lessons or living in an ecological farm was enough for her. This is because she likes individual activities more than socializing.

Participants expressed that while they were seeing more people; they started seeing fewer people and preferred to go to places where there were fewer people. On the other hand, there are also people who say that their friends circle began to consist of people who practice yoga. They started meeting less with their old friends, who do not practice yoga. In this context, the circle of friends of individuals began to consist of individuals who practiced yoga after they started yoga. Yet, this of course does not mean that individuals have completely stopped seeing their old friends. The reason for this transformation is both the change of social life and the change of perspective.

The following quotes shows that a person no longer meets his old friends, but his circle of friends also changes as he changes himself. Because a person who reaches a certain point of view likes to spend time with people who are from a similar point of view:

Again, this is a general conversation. Again, there is more going on than life, so because I am on this path, you reach a certain frequency. Let's just say you are in a department of university, working medicine. All your friends become doctors after a while, something like that. And when you look, it is more philosophical, more material, when you start

talking, that is what happens around you. I mean, because of what I have been through, I do not meet 60-70 percent of my friends that I met until 5 years ago. For example, I am not seeing anyone. I always have new people in my life. They should be in my vibration and also in my frequency. He'll stay at that level to understand what I am talking about, or he'll add something to me. I am with such people (participant 5, male, 48, 23.10.2020, İstanbul).

Along with yoga, it is possible to observe that the social lives of individuals become simpler. They started seeing mostly only their core friends. People said that when they met with their friends, they mostly liked to chat together, eat, and have a drink.

It became more and more simple because of yoga, because I got it as a job, that is, it covered my entire life and became my life itself. I started giving my hobbies the time I devoted to people. So, it was, and so it was simplified, but before that, before I started yoga... ...There is no big difference between being in nature, dealing with agriculture, dealing with animals, caring for animals, reading books, watching movies, exchanging ideas, they have not changed. These did not change (participants 10, female, 33, 29.10.2020, İstanbul).

Individuals said that they adjusted the time of socialization according to yoga, and their relations with their friends has also changed. As I mentioned in the experience of individuals who are practicing in groups, yoga group practice creates a space for

individuals to socialize. Similar to my finding Bakıroğlu (2013, p.1048) says, the process of socialization creates a space in which individuals form their identity and feel part of the whole. Social events include coffee dates after a group session, or going to a yoga session together, people asking each other questions about poses after the session. Yoga has become a part of individuals' social life, a form of socialization. This, in turn, shows the how yoga changed the social dimension of individuals' lifestyles.

The following quotes state that a field of socialization was created before and after the yoga session. At the same time, this social field creates common shares by strengthening the belonging of individuals leading to creating of a subculture.

Yeah, so when I go to group class, you socialize before practice. After practice, you do not experience the mind you got from yoga. You are socializing again. You are going through something else, but I think it is in your head again. I think that is where a subculture is forming. You are with those people. You share something with them, and you like it. Of course, that is not what you do alone... (participant 3, male, 42, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Bakıroğlu (2013, p.1048) explains that during the socialization process, the individual builds his identity, learns the values and norms of society. In this process he defines how the individual should behave in society, which behaviors will be accepted. Socialization reaches the outermost layers, starting with the family, and is effective in creating an individual's identity. Influence from the environment and

cultural and social values are formed within this social space when creating an individual's identity. The individual is a socio-cultural being and forms his identity together with the social space in which he is located. Socialization has a very important role in shaping yoga subculture, as I had mentioned in many sections based on my findings and observation. Everything starting from body awareness, to belonging to a group and creating a yoga identity is built in a specific social environment. As we know only a social group creates a community, and within that community my participants build the yoga subculture by socializing and learning from each other about that culture. Though it is clear that my concepts; body, belonging/identity have mainspring in generating yoga subculture, concrete subcultural elements emerged will help us to see the main picture of the research.

4.6. Subcultural Elements Emerging in Those Practicing Hatha Yoga

As part of my research, I first tried to understand a yoga subculture in İstanbul within the yoga studio I worked on. Although my main concepts were about body, belonging/identity, in order to have an idea of whether yoga is a subculture, I had to learn about the subcultural elements within the community I was addressing. In this context, I explored whether my interviewees had a language used by those who do Hatha Yoga, clothing style, music style and any kind of spiritual habit or not. Seeking answer to this question would give us an idea about the subculture that yoga created.

4.6.1. Language

First of all, when I was transcribing the interviews, I saw that the interviews were full of concepts of yoga. There were many words, concepts that someone who had nothing to do with yoga could not understand. In addition, all individuals said they had a common language

used by yoga practitioners. The words used by individuals in this language can be related to yoga poses, philosophy, or anatomy, but also the similarities of the words used in their communication languages are due to the partnership of the shares made by individuals. Here, we see that the language used by those who practice yoga differs, that yoga is part of the lives of individuals, and that the language spoken has an effect that distinguishes those who practice yoga and those who do not:

There is very much, it is certain. In fact, when someone comes in who does not practice yoga does not understand what they say; I think they have a unique language. Because, who said that? Because you always talk about yoga, we really talk about it. When you talk about my anger, you talk about it differently, like this. Anyway, we are talking about practice. If we are going to talk about its philosophy, there are terms that those who do not practice yoga already do not know. If we are talking about “karma,” “samsara,” here are the “sutras.” ...We are in a university that we do not know when it is going to end. When you read “ayurveda,” the words about it start to come. So, there are terms, there are technical terms, there are narratives. For example, you call it a chakra, in everyone’s language, blah, blah, blah, but we are very certain that you and I are talking about it. We even have a clear language that someone who does not understand, someone who does not care, may be bored (participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

The words of this participant who says that individuals who practice yoga are uncomfortable with their similarity in the language used, that some styles of speech turn into stereotypes and do not reflect the truth, show the impact of language on the subcultural formation. In the formation of a subculture, language is a means by which we communicate, and the cultural elements created are reflected in this form.

Let's leave it in the flow, for example, let's lie on the side of the world, let's slide, let's not leave it in the flow at all. Why do not we say it like this, for example? Let's do our best. It is also because, in fact, it has a place in the same philosophy. To do our best "tapas." A discipline, devotional. What does it mean to let it flow? Acceptance, surrender. Either I surrendered, I gave up, I let go, I accepted and delivered, I let go, in fact, I will no longer agree with this issue, and we are starting to do a spiritual bypass of many things. I think it is what we use, at some point, what a person talks about, because it reprograms and amplifies existing programs, or the brain. OK, I understand this, so it is like someone who has just started a nice yoga is gradually integrating these concepts into their language, learning a new language. What does it mean to let it flow? Think about it as much as you can, or, I do not know, what else we talked about, what we said? It is supposed to be like this, I am not ready yet, everything is happening as it should be. I forgive you, I forgive him, I am not like that, you know, okay, but at some point, well, we need a deeper interrogation, but unfortunately, we have a common terrible, common language. It is empty. I think we are

unaware of what we are saying most of the time when I am communicating with people (participant 10, female, 33, 29.10.2020, İstanbul).

When I asked people, who do not practice yoga whether they would have any difficulty explaining yoga, most of them said they would, and some said that they preferred to tell it more clearly or not at all:

Much, much. I mean, I will say it very clearly. ... he is at what point in life and what he can get, that is, if he is a person who can get it, and if he is a person that I care about, he can be such a dear friend, he can be my lover, he can be someone in the family. Then I am really motivated to make an effort. I will tell you, let me make you experience it, look, there may be benefits in these areas of you, but during any chat like this, I am in a random environment of friends, friends of a friend, or in a way that I will never see again that day. I never, ever tell. ...I mean, there is a difference between year one and year five, because it is like this, so everyone does not have to be on the same mindset and on the same life path as you. It is a little bit like maintaining your own energy and the other side does not perceive you and can put you somewhere else... (participant 11, female 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

On the other hand, there have been those who have considered the way people who practice yoga look at life and behave as the common language used. Because the language we

express in words is a tool to reflect a way of thinking, a culture. In this context, language presents to us the cultural structure of the group I research.

I think it is like, yeah, there is. Because you are in a certain discipline, you get that language that we do at the beginning of that conversation. To say a certain language, to look at it from a certain common point of view, we look at it first from a common camera. After that, you start distributing this camera in yourself... (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

Clothing style is an element that can be observed easily, in order to verify what I see and how my participants think about yoga clothing style I both asked how they wear in their daily life, if there was any change in clothing style and if they see a specific yoga clothing style.

4.6.2. Clothing Style

When I observed the clothing style of those who practice Hatha Yoga, I can say that they were usually casual and sportswear style. On the other hand, I found that people who were observed to work in a corporate firm had more formal, stylish clothes on those who came from work to a yoga session or went to work after a yoga session. What I observed during the yoga session was that women wore tights and men mostly wore shorts. It was among the details I noticed that while some preferred certain brands, some preferred more ordinary things. I asked how individuals who practice yoga dress in their daily lives to see if they have a particular style of clothing. In general, the answers I get are that individuals prefer simple, comfortable and sportswear. One of the effects of yoga is that individuals' self-

confidence increases as a result of their physical and mental status change. This self-confidence has affected the way they dress.

I think I was a governess before yoga. Because I am telling you, I did not like my body. And when I did not like my body, I wore the clothes I had. I do not have that; I do not have any perception. After yoga, I started dressing more colorful, shorter, narrower, the way I wanted to be, I started dressing more freely. Because I was not alone ashamed of my body anymore. I am looking at my clothes now when I first started yoga. Much has changed. ... Of course, of course. It has changed. I am more colorful first of all. Sometimes I even think that my sex appeal also comes out. Things like that happened. But yes, along with yoga, my clothing style has changed (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

Individuals who practice yoga have previously stated that they dress in a similar style, while at the same time they buy less clothing, start to dress a little more comfortably and more colorful.

I am starting to be against consumption, so I have not taken anything on myself for a very long time. I am wearing old clothes. My wife, my daughters, they say you dress badly. I dress whatever I find. ...Possibly. I did not have a big change in that regard, but my opposition to this consumption began more after yoga (participant 7, male, 59, 26.10.2020, İstanbul).

I asked if there was a particular way of dressing to those who practice yoga in order to learn the ideas of the individuals I interviewed. While the majority said there is a culture of tights. And some also said that yoga is made up of individuals who dress more simply and comfortably. On the other hand, there have been a few who have said that they cannot generalize because everyone reflects their style.

I guess it is a little more comfortable. I did not know if it was Bohemian. But tights sit in all our lives too much. And I am starting to see a lot of women styling tights, so here's a sweet trench coat on yoga tights or a nice sweater and some necklaces. She is ready for practice when he takes off his sweater. She is actually ready to go to the cafe when she is wearing a sweater or something. Maybe she is even ready for dinner, in her boots and shorts, in her bag or something. Yeah, there is a common style around tights. He he he. But it is something that is not applied for men. Do not say that, there are even silvery tights now. There are even Jean-shaped tights (participant 10, female, 33, 29.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another element that stands out is that there have been a few people who wear a certain brand every time they practice yoga:

I guess we are, little sportier, so comfortable, casual clothes are preferred. It is already like that when you are doing yoga. I think there

is a brand obsession these days. So, there is. I mean, people are attracted by it, too. She affords money, she goes, she buys tights that look like a brand, he buys shorts, and so on. There are such things. It is like I am doing yoga and I am wearing Alo Yoga, I am wearing Lululemon, you know uniform, yoga uniform (participant 8, male, 32).

Music was an element that we come across in some of the yoga session. There was a certain type of music that instructors play while teaching or before the yoga session starts. Individuals who practice at home was practicing with a certain type of music. To know whether there is a yoga music style or not we can pay attention to the next section.

4.6.3. Music Style

I asked my interviewees whether there were any differences between the music style that they are listening now and the music style they were listening before they started yoga in order to understand if there was a specific style of music that those who practice Hatha Yoga listen. The majority of participants stated that they listen various music styles. These include pop, rock, electronics, indie Turkish acoustics, blue jazz, folk music, rock and roll, grunge, and jazz, new Jazz, smooth jazz, classical music, folk music, and mantra extends. Yet, they also stated that they started to listen calmer and more relaxing songs after they have started yoga. On the other hand, there has been no change in the musical style of some of them. Some of them began to listen to the mantra. When I asked them whether they think that there might be a common music style that yoga practitioners would prefer, they said they have no idea but maybe yoga practitioners would prefer quieter music.

...People who practice yoga, play something they already love when they do it. So, it is not obvious, because you play it to feel good. Or rather, you are playing something that you can put your thoughts together. That is what happens with my case. Whatever thing you can put your thoughts together at that moment, some of them with metal music. Some of them play “dupstep.” It is not for me, for example, so. I prefer something slower. Even when I am doing sports, I can choose something with a slower rhythm while people like this listen to something more “up beat.” ...It does not matter if it comes slow to people. I think there are people out there listening to their loved ones... (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

It is not possible to say that those who practice Hatha Yoga listen to a particular style of music. The style of music that individuals listen to has evolved and varied over time. The collected data showed that, several participants began to listen to slower music. Also, the idea that the majority of people who practice yoga listen to the mantra is not true. This only addresses a certain part. Only two of my interviewees stated that they do not like to listen to mantras because they do not understand the lyrics, and it sounds like a prayer to them. In addition, there have been individuals who have said that the mantra has entered their lives along with yoga.

Now for me, this is where I work all day, I work in the studio. In the photo studio. So, we listen to music all day. Because I listen to all kinds of music, I try not to listen to too much afterwards. Because I am

already exposed to enough music all day. And when I listen to it, it is softer general songs, not so much bang-bang stuff, but more Indie, Turkish acoustic songs. Again, I try to listen to calmer, relaxing things (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

Yoga is a tool in individuals' inner journey, and a tool that helps individuals to explore their mental processes. When we examine the reasons why individuals start yoga, we come across with various reasons. Some individuals have started yoga for the purpose of a spiritual quest. Even if there is often a need to start yoga on a bodily need, individuals have become acquainted with the spiritual world in the process, gained awareness and made it a part of their lives. The next section we will talk about what being spiritual is to understand the effect of yoga in spiritualism.

4.6.4. Being Spiritual

Depending on my participant observations, I saw after yoga sessions individuals were turning into themselves. Being aware of what they do in their daily life, feeling the unity in yoga sessions was also a part their spirituality. When I ask my interviewees whether they define themselves as spiritual or not, the majority identified themselves as spiritual. Yet, there were also some, who said they are not spiritual. In addition, the area in which individuals practice yoga also affects their spiritual experience. In group practice, they stated that they felt like they are in a spiritual space. Here are the statements of a participant who does not identify himself as spiritual, but explains that he has discovered spirituality through yoga:

When I started yoga, I was absolutely not interested in the philosophy of yoga. I did not care; I was taking care of asana. And then I

discovered spirituality by socializing with people, reading books recommended by some teachers or something like that, but still part of me is very attached to the Positive Sciences. I am very committed to Positive Sciences. There were the Bhagavad Gitas, there was something. OK, they are very beautiful, they exist... so I am not very spiritual (participant 1, female, 29, 16.10.2020, İstanbul).

Another participant stated that he feels more connected with the practice of yoga and enters his spiritual space, which develops over time:

As a matter of fact, lately, yes. But before that I had no such connection in any way, it was about myself. I mean, has not it been like this lately? It is probably such. How much is already in your practice, when you start talking to yourself. In that context, when you learn that language, is not it your soul that you speak within yourself? So, you learn that spirituality. And that is when you start to approach it from a different point of view. I do not think there isn't a place without a soul. I mean, I am in a way that I have just been able to understand myself and more or less have just started reading, but I am good at feeling the spirit of my own place, etc. (participant 12, female, 37, 01.11.2020, İstanbul).

One of my interviewees said that spiritualism experienced together with yoga begins with the body and continues first towards the mind then towards into himself. For him, spirituality is the state of integrity with the release of the ego:

That is what yoga philosophy is all about. I passed its philosophy, and so did experience. There is a body. The body is part of it. There is a flow of energy. Here's the ego mentally. It is part of a job, so it is not bad stuff. But there are other things deeper in them. I mean, as you go there in yoga, you know, when you get to that deep spot, I am beyond ego, but there is a place beyond me. I mean, for me, too. As long as we capture the state of integrity. That experience of integrity is probably a little spiritual. You probably go back and forth to what the Sufi calls love. You go to that place and come back. I mean, it is the spirituality for me. I mean, leave that ego somewhere in the right place. Being able to communicate with that mind deeper, I think, is what he calls spirituality. Or to see beyond yourself. To be able to see that state of integrity. Okay, you know, you can go so deep, sometimes you know, okay, maybe people will go extinct on earth. But maybe it is a good thing. It is good for life, is not it? (participant 8, male, 32, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

Besides being spiritual according to my interviewees, yoga practioners have many things in common, the way they express they think Hatha Yoga prationers have a common understanding. In the next section all the common things yoga practioners

have will show us the tight that keep the community together is that their commonalities.

4.6.5. Common Things Among Hatha Yoga Practitioners

According to my interviewees, those who practice yoga have something in common. These commonalities are based on impressions that individuals get from the yoga community in which they are located, or from individuals who practice yoga in their environment, or from their own experience. As part of the research, I tried to present the similarities and differences expressed under many sub-headings in order to understand whether Hatha Yoga is a subculture within the yoga studio in İstanbul. When I asked individuals if those who practice yoga had something in common, they all mentioned that they had something in common, and in many ways, they expressed these commonalities.

Data collection suggested that yoga practitioners are more insightful, more flexible, non-judgmental individuals. In addition, there have been those who have stated that individuals who practice yoga try to be healthier, share similar experiences physically and mentally, read similar books and talk about common things, and they wake up with the same awareness. In addition, those who practice yoga are physically stronger and more flexible. They are more aware individuals, more compassionate, clearer and they hold common intentions. Another participant talks about the common interest in the psychological and spiritual world. Finally, there is also a participant who explains that individuals who practice yoga are calmer, they are more likely to listen and accept.

The following quotes show us that Hatha Yoga practitioners have common intentions, which can also be seen from the outside. One of my interviewees says that Hatha Yoga practitioners are more understanding, compassionate and open beings and she shows being “at the moment” as the main reason for this:

...I think the first one is that we are more understanding of each other.

...We have this, we have this understanding. Whatever happened, happened here. ...I think we are more compassionate, which is why it is always called, you do so much yoga. ...Because really, we have a more compassionate and more understanding side. I think we are clearer, more open. I think we have a relationship with openness somewhere beyond kindness. ...We have a common way, you know, in every sense. I think it is in our posture. Maybe our posture, in our sitting, in our standing up. I think we can say, look at it from the outside. We can see that attitude. I think it is more insightful...

(participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

There was another participant who mentioned that those who practice yoga are individuals who make efforts, they start to notice things going wrong in their lives and want to fix them by making efforts. In this context, she says that each person has numerous problems, but those who start yoga are the ones, who are looking for a solution and this separates them from other people:

...People who make an effort. ...But people who come to yoga are always people who realize that something has gone wrong in their lives and come. So, he realizes and comes to make an effort to fix it. ...Or yes, there is a problem, he knows it more or less, maybe he does not even know it much. ...I mean, of course, it comes to a point where it

was before at first. It was something we talked about when we were at yoga. ...Not normal people, abnormal people. ...I think people who want to solve it come to yoga. ... There are those who solve, there are those who do not solve, or there are those who discover other things, now it is everyone's own journey... (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

Lastly, it will be meaningful conclude my findings with the meaning of yoga. For my participants yoga has a considerable role and what meanings they attributed to it will show us about their belonging, their identity, and how they see each other as a part of the community in other words, how they see themselves in the yoga subculture.

4.7. The Symbolic Meaning of Yoga: What Is Yoga and What is Not?

For each individual I interview, yoga has a symbolic meaning. Apart from the fact that yoga is a discipline that covers many layers, yoga for individuals has many meanings and is very important in their lives. When I asked my interviews what yoga means to them, I have received various answers. Relying on these arguments stemmed from the interviews, I will try to present what yoga is and is not.

When I asked what yoga means to my interviewees, most of them said that yoga is an exploratory journey, a way of life, a tool to help individuals both mentally and physically. Moreover, they perceived yoga as a tool to explore and understand themselves. Yoga also helps individuals to connect with the world they live in and create a space for themselves to be aware of every moment. In addition, yoga describes the universe as a whole. My

interviewees also stated that yoga is two-way practice, while the first consists of physical movements, the second helps people to recognize their relationship with their environment and themselves. Moreover, yoga is a tool and understanding that helps breathing and improves the quality of life. It is an art of life and a science, philosophy, and discipline. Finally, there have been those who have said that yoga is a way of looking at life, a point of view and balance. Yoga is the ability to look at you and hear yourself. As can be seen from the answers I have received, yoga is a discipline and way of life for individuals that gives awareness to the individual beyond physical movement and helps them use it in their lives and reach their soul. Yoga plays a role in the relationship of the individuals with themselves and their environment, allowing them to see the universe.

The following quotes simultaneously describe the contribution of yoga to the individuals' relationship with herself and his environment as:

It tells us where we live. The world, the universe. Yoga is actually a whole. Yoga actually describes a huge whole. In any case, you are in this whole. It is the chip of the whole, you have it. We are its chip, right? We are a flash drive. Yoga actually describes a whole. It is telling you about you. And my favorite part of yoga, it has a lot of respect for nature. I think yoga is something that describes the entire universe, because it constantly advances respect for nature and the rights of life of other living things by constantly telling it, processing it. I see that. It is not just yoga, so you cannot do only "handstand." ...It describes a whole. It tells you the whole thing with you. That is yoga (participant 6, female, 46, 24.10.2020, İstanbul).

As we see, yoga affects a person's life both in physical and social terms. But yoga is more than just a physical dimension for many people. For one of my participants, yoga means understanding. And it helps us to develop consciousness:

I think yoga is something that improves the quality of life and helps you breathe, because I do not know. Through all this fuss, I remember. ... You know, in the mental layer, and you make sure you do not pick up trash there. I mean, you live a more attentive and knowing life. In your body, you know, let me come from all the process I have been through. You appreciate your body, and you understand that your body can only heal itself. I mean, that is what takes me above all that physical stuff. Because there is an understanding, so yoga is an understanding. Yoga develops an understanding of how valuable this place is, how valuable it is, how unique it is. I think it means when you say whatever you do, you do better. You do it by breathing more (participant 9, female, 38, 27.10.2020, İstanbul).

All participants hold the yoga practice in a different place in their lives than other practices. In explaining this difference, they gave details about what yoga is and what it is not. According to some, yoga practice focuses more on how the movement feels than on how it is made. The difference in yoga is that it is more focused on the integrity of the body, mind and soul than on movement. According to some, the 8 steps of yoga and its meditative nature carry the individual to another dimension. In addition, yoga differs from other practices

because it is a way of life. Another participant states that yoga is done with a focus on breathing, and this is what distinguishes yoga from other disciplines. They also emphasized that, individuals communicate with something, which is not material in yoga. On the other hand, there are also some, who stated that yoga is complementary, it is the basis for many things, and that the yoga person will do other things better because yoga has a philosophy and develops understanding; yoga is a path to enlightenment. Finally, some of my interviewees stated that yoga helps the individual to recognize himself and creates awareness, mind, and body unity. In short, yoga has technical differences.

Yoga's focus on breathing is an important aspect that distinguishes it from other disciplines:

I mean, I think the biggest difference in yoga is that you move with your breath. I mean, moving with the comfort of that breath. In other sports or dancing or something like that, the attention is not focused on your breath. You do not think so much about your breath when you do that. You are more focused on your action in the others. In yoga, you communicate differently with your body (participant 4, female, 30, 22.10.2020, İstanbul).

One of the outstanding elements throughout the interviews is that individuals express what yoga is not. The most obvious of these is that yoga is not a race. It is a place to grow up. This, in turn, focuses individuals on the awareness of the moment. This makes yoga different from other practices. To give an example from my participant observation, at a yoga session I

attended, a yoga expert mentioned that yoga is not a race, saying that yoga is about a person's relationship with themselves, it is about developing awareness.

So, yoga is very different from the others. But on the one hand, this can also be my point of view, that is, a person can also have a meditative mind structure when playing tennis, singing very well, or dancing. I mean, he is fishing, he is going to fishing, and he is meditating. I mean, I can separate yoga from the sports I do, because what I do is more performance and more results-oriented. so yoga differs from there. Yoga, you know, a little more stopping, a little more looking at yourself, I do not know, it is not a result, but it is something that separates looking at the journey, but as I said, I can separate it with other sports I do. Because I am not a dancer, if I was dancing professionally, I probably couldn't say it, I wouldn't say it. I would say that dancing is something that speaks to my soul, or my heart (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

Finally, throughout the interviews, there have also been those who expressed opinions about what yoga gradually is becoming. Yet, it would not be right to spread these points of view across the entire research result, because they are discourses expressed by a small number of individuals. It is not directly aimed at the purpose of the research. But I think it will also be important to mention these few elements that appeared.

One of my interviewees stated that yoga can become a part of popular culture and if that happens, yoga would lose its quality because everything that becomes popular culture is

multiplying and their quality is declining. She was highly concerned that yoga would become an element of popular culture. On the other hand, although yoga has a stance against consumption, individuals have expressed that they buy less clothing, there was also a participant who said that yoga clothing brands have turned into sales strategy as some of yoga practitioners identify themselves socio-culturally by wearing a particular brand.

Because, for example, it happens in popular culture. Everything that is popular culture is starting to increase. When it increases, its quality drops this time. Or it is changing inside. People say the same thing when you do 10 things. But when 1000 people do, it always goes to different places. Some are too “asana” oriented, others are too spiritually oriented, shutting themselves down. ...If we’ve all as different as fingerprints, the way we all perceive and reflect it becomes different. I hope everyone reflects on one thing at some point. It reflects more in a way that they have something in common. All I want is that I hope it does not break down with the popular culture stimulus (participant 11, female, 38, 30.10.2020, İstanbul).

Depending on my data collected and my observation about the topic shows that there is a yoga subculture in İstanbul. In the conclusion section I will try to clear out my findings and try to present my results. Moreover, I will also try to give my insight for the previous research.

5. CONCLUSION

In this research I examined whether yoga is a subculture or not. I have done my research in three branches of a yoga studio in İstanbul. I conducted in-depth interviews with 12 participants in order to clarify my claim I also made participant observations. While doing this, I tried to acquire the data about the construction of the body, belonging/identity process through individuals' experience of their transformation on body, mind, soul. Both my main concepts and the concrete subcultural elements like language, clothing, having communities shows that the group I worked on is a subculture. My thesis does not enclose other provinces, and the working area is limited with some regions of İstanbul, which can be the limitation of the research. This area should be discovered more in order to widen the working area and to diversify the researches. Yoga is not just a physical practice, as it is understood from my finding results, it has great benefits for health, it works as a healing tool both physically, mentally, and spiritually. According to my data yoga appears as a guiding tool to find the right way to reach one's self. It provides physical, mental, and spiritual transformation. With all those changes it leads individual to his inner journey.

Relying on my own observations under the scope of this thesis, my experience in the process of Hatha Yoga expertise and practice, and my findings from interviews with my participants who contributed the most to me in my thesis, it would be correct to say that those who practice Hatha Yoga in İstanbul within the yoga studio where I conducted the research have formed a subcultural community.

As can be seen from the texts mentioned in the findings section, we can say that the

reasons that push individuals to yoga are conceptually physical, mental, emotional, and social. The need for bodily movement is one of the reasons behind starting yoga and led people to think about their body. Whereas the social dimension allowed them to communicate with the group they were in, to shape their social life, to create a space in which they felt like they belonged to and add yoga to their identity by feeling part of the community they were in. In this context, the concepts of body, belonging/identity is related to each other in the formation of yoga subculture in this research.

The physical, mental, emotional, and social change mentioned in the community in which I conducted my research is one of the obvious results. This change comes across as a transformation that is built mutually and together with the common consciousness of individuals.

The body is the most tangible element in Hatha Yoga that can be perceived by five sensory organs. With yoga, the body changes, and transforms. Identity building begins with body building. Change and awareness in the body effect the perception of the body. The first sharings and common points begin with the body. A common denominator is formed about what the body can do, how it does and how it feels. The formation of the yoga subculture begins to be built with the body, and then with the establishment of the concept of belonging. Individual begins to develop an identity with yoga, adding a yoga identity next to their existing identity. In this context, body, which is a cultural phenomenon bears the characteristics of the yoga community. Everyone who enters the yoga community performs the bodily requirements of that culture at their own will, and the body begins to change and transform. In a subcultural context, we can say that the body is a concept created and built by both individuals and culture.

As part of the research, the body appears as a form of expression of individuals; they

notice it and understand the world with it. Physical changes and state of healing that begin with the spine are reflected in their attitudes and behaviors. Participants' arguments with respect to the difference between pre-yoga and post-yoga perceptions have happened to be similar. The connection established with the body goes beyond from a form or pain and becomes a significant part of them and something that they feel. In other words, the ways in which individuals perceive their bodies begin to change, just like the meanings that they burden on their identity. In other words, what they call "I" begin to change.

Another result can mention from the data I collected is that the dedication and change in eating habits expressed by the vast majority of individuals show the importance that individuals give to their bodies. Eating healthier and eating more aware is synonymous with "new" and "healthy" bodies for them which we can call "yoga body." All this awareness is effective in the emotional, mental processes of individuals. In this way, yoga begins to become a cultural space where people discover themselves. They begin to practice yoga not only in yoga sessions but also in their daily lives. Simply put, yoga becomes a crucial part of individuals' lives. The yoga body comes across as a changing, transforming, feeling and conscious body. Relying on the data obtained, we can say that the concept of body plays a crucial role in turning yoga into a subculture.

In my research, individuals expressed their belonging to the yoga community in different ways. Among the main reasons that push them to start yoga are their need to acquire a hobby, socialize and physical healing. The main motivation behind practicing yoga regularly is the fact that yoga makes people feel good both physically mentally, and emotionally. The common denominators of individuals strengthen their sense of belonging both to each other and to the studio, wherein they practice yoga. The practice of yoga has allowed individuals to change their perspective on events and situations in a mental and

emotional sense. All this physical, mental, emotional, and social processes have led them to change themselves and call yoga as a part of their identity. Individuals with similar experiences stated that they do not feel alone anymore instead they feel way better and belong to a group. This proves how yoga strengthens the sense of belonging.

Although very few people have started yoga by learning about Hatha Yoga, the area in which they practice yoga appears as a place of healing, escaping, and socializing. Yoga has had such an impact on the lives of individuals that they continue to practice yoga. In the lives of many participants, yoga has been a turning point, a tool that pulls them out of a difficult physical process or pushes them into a bright space after a deep depression as my participants' quotes demonstrate. Although yoga is a space in which individuals escape from the chaos of their daily lives or a self-space, we cannot perceive yoga as a resistance towards the dominant culture.

Other elements that strengthen the belonging of individuals are the yoga studios in which they practice yoga, the connection they establish with other individuals who practice yoga and with yoga experts. This bond causes a deepening of trust in each other. Individuals who practice yoga have a certain understanding and they are accepted by other group members.

Yoga practice with group members is the first place where individuals share, learn from each other, and experience similar feelings. Although they are freer when they practice alone, they move forward way quicker when they practice in a group. Group practice is the practice that holds them together and creates a social space. Yoga group practice influences the formation of yoga identity. As individuals practice yoga, they feel more belonging to this area, and this awareness of belonging is the starting point of building a yoga identity. At this point, the question of how the belonging of those who like to practice yoga individually is

developed may come to mind. At some point, although there are those who like to practice alone, the consciousness of unity and integrity in yoga makes them feel stronger because they feel that they are part of the whole, even if they practice yoga alone. It is therefore that the presence of a yoga community in a country they have never known makes them feel good. Although individuals express their belonging in various ways, the most noticeable concepts are “us,” “like my family,” “like my home.”

As a result of the work, two concepts arise from my data as “those who do yoga” and “those who do not do yoga.” This is another way for individuals to show their belonging and yoga identity. While the perception of yoga differs for non-practitioners of yoga, it is not possible to understand yoga without experiencing it. An individual’s identity develops together with the community in which he is located. In this context, the socialization processes of individuals with the community they are in are effective in identity formation. Certain behavioral patterns occur with this community.

The ways in which individuals identify themselves before and after yoga shows great differences. The person they call “I” has changed, the attitudes and behaviors of individuals have changed, they have emphasized the existence of their parts by practicing yoga and yoga identities while defining themselves. The fact that they see yoga as a part of their lives also supports this view. It is possible to say that individuals who practice yoga are empathetic, more flexible, and calm individuals with a positive thinking structure. The process of socialization leads to a change in individuals’ attitudes and behaviors according to the community in which they are involved, and allows them to learn certain values. Socialization occurs through mutual interaction, and each group member affects each other’s behavior. Thanks to yoga, individuals’ postures in their lives have changed, and yoga has made them more confident. All these perspective and change show that individuals’ identities can change

and transform. The experience undergone by individuals, the social community in which they are located shows that their identity is neither fixed nor unchangeable. Instead, this change is desirable. Although not all the individuals consider themselves as a “yogi,” they have adopted the yoga lifestyle and yoga will always be in their lives. Those who consider themselves “yogis” are also outnumbered.

Although not most participants, those who indicate that the yoga stereotype exists show the existence of yoga identity much more clearly, they reveal the reflections of the concept of identity in yoga as a subculture. Being in a group brings with it certain similar patterns of behavior. Acceptance of an individual into a community is possible by fulfilling the requirements of that society. This process occurs through experience and learning.

Looking at the overall research, it is clear from my findings that people adopt yoga as a lifestyle within the context I have interviewed. Yoga lifestyle is reflected in people’s habits, social lives, friendship relationships and daily lives. Yoga is part of individuals’ social identity because individuals have moved yoga to every aspect of their lives. Individuals participate in the social group of their choice, creating their own lifestyle within the characteristics of that group. The positive effect of yoga can be realized first on their bodies and then on their lives. This has enabled them to adopt yoga as a lifestyle. The reflection of yoga in their lifestyle has improved the relationships of individuals with their bodies, increased their belonging to the community and enabled them to carry the identity of yoga.

For each individual, yoga has a symbolic meaning. Apart from being a discipline, yoga has different meanings that occupy an important place in the lives of individuals. In addition, individuals have ideas about what yoga is or is not in their minds. Yoga is a discipline and way of life that brings awareness for many people, in which they communicate with themselves and their environment, understand the universe, experience being whole. The

meanings attached to yoga are revealed by the communication of individuals with the community in which they are located. The meanings attached to yoga support that yoga is a subculture. One of the meanings attached to yoga is that yoga is not a race, and another is that yoga practice is breath-oriented. These two symbolic meanings indicate that individuals distinguish yoga from other disciplines.

Individuals have changed their way of eating, most prominently in their lifestyle. They began to eat healthier and organize their meals according to yoga practices. Alcohol consumption and smoking have been given up along with yoga. Individuals' social environment and social life practices have changed. Individuals started to live a simpler social life meet fewer people. The most important factor that shows that the yoga lifestyle is internalized and individuals adjust their socialization time according to their yoga practices, as well as view the community in which they practice yoga as part of their socialization. Yoga creates a space for individuals to socialize. The influence of this field is important in shaping the concepts of body, belonging/identity and in the formation of yoga as a subcultural community.

Apart from the concepts I have covered in the scope of the research, it would also be useful to share the results I have obtained from my in-depth interviews, the subcultural elements that support the formation of a yoga subculture community in İstanbul. First of all, those who practice yoga have a very distinctive common language. This language also reflects a common point of view, a culture, and a way of thinking. Although we cannot say very sharply that yoga brings a common style of clothing, it is possible to express that with yoga, individuals are simplified in the style of clothing and a "tights" culture has emerged. We can say that individuals dress more comfortably and confidently. Although when we look at the musical style, it is often said that along with yoga, individuals can listen to calmer

music; participants listen to all kinds of musical styles. In this context, we cannot talk about a common musical style. Although we cannot say that all individuals practicing yoga are spiritual. Instead, we can say that yoga practice affects spiritual state, allowing individuals to explore their inner world. Finally, what my participants shared is that those who practice Hatha Yoga are thought to have something in common. This, in turn, is that individuals who practice yoga are more insightful, more flexible, and non-judgmental.

Consequently, the data collected under the scope of this thesis suggests that a yoga subculture community has formed in İstanbul. With yoga, individuals first begin to experience common experiences through their bodies. Awareness is gained through the change of body perception. With this awareness, the body becomes a new and healthy body. In other words, subcultural formation begins with the construction of the body. This construction makes individuals feel like they belong to the community where they practice Hatha Yoga. Individuals go through common experiences and belonging is strengthened in the social space created by yoga. On this occasion, individuals carry yoga into their lives over time. Yoga goes from being just a physical, mental, and spiritual practice to a practice that directs the individual to their inner world. So, yoga becomes a lifestyle. With yoga, which becomes a lifestyle, the habits of individuals, forms of socialization begin to transform and resemble each other, hence common points emerge gradually. Thus, caring physical practices and deepening belonging allow a person to identify themselves with the identity of yoga. A common language is formed that reflects a cultural point of view and thought, this language requires both communication and a common understanding. Thus, it would be right to talk about the existence of a yoga subculture in İstanbul.

This thesis has ensured a great study and a starting point for those who would like to work in the area of subculture. Yoga harbours many cultural elements in it to work on. This

research on the yoga subculture, though it can be expanded with another similar researches, will inspire other researches to work some other aspects of yoga. Because of the time and topic limitation I could not touch on the subjects that appeared naturally on my research as a result. I would advice for the researchers who would like to work on the yoga area that to analyze other Hatha Yoga practitioners in other cities in other yoga studios would make it interesting to see the results. Another subject topic can be to research yoga as a part of consuming culture. Though at the begin of yoga tradition yoga was not allowed to be taught to women, most of the yoga practitioners are women nowadays. It is possible to analyse woman yoga practitioners from a feminist point of view. As it was one of the prominent topics that a few of my participants mentioned in my research, researchers can work on the similarities between yoga and sufism.

Yoga is not a single practice. It includes many values, philosophy, esoteric knowledge, and, physical, mental, and spiritual systems. Hereupon, it embraces a lot of individual, it keeps growing each and everyday. Everyone who wants to discover himself will find at least one thing that will pull him towards yoga. In this global world we lose our connection with our nature, our environment, with living beings and ourselves day by day. Yoga as an old tradition, the way of life, breaks our old habits, helps us to destroy the walls we create towards others, heal our own wounds so that we can heal others, reminds us our inner power whenever we fall, helps us to feel the oneness. Yoga as a path for inner journey will continue to grow and touch individuals' life till we all understand and feel that we are one.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Demographic Information of Participants

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Participants	Place of Birth	Age	Sex	Education Status	Marital Status	Child Status	Employment Status	Job Type
Participant 1 (16.10.2020)	District	29	Female	Doctorate	Single	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 2 (22.10.2020)	Village	53	Male	Graduate	Divorced	Kids	Employed	Retired
Participant 3 (22.10.2020)	District	42	Male	Postgraduate	Single	No kids	Unemployed	None
Participant 4 (22.10.2020)	District	30	Female	Graduate	Single	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 5 (23.10.2020)	District	48	Male	Graduate	Married	Kids	Employed	Private Sector

Participant 6 (24.10.2020)	Village	46	Female	High School Graduate	Divorced	Kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 7 (26.10.2020)	District	59	Male	Graduate	Married	Kids	Unemployed	Retired
Participant 8 (27.10.2020)	District	32	Male	Graduate	Single	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 9 (27.10.2020)	District	38	Female	Graduate	Divorced	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 10 (29.10.2020)	District	33	Female	Graduate	Single	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 11 (30.10.2020)	District	38	Female	Graduate	Single	No kids	Employed	Private Sector
Participant 12 (01.11.2020)	District	37	Female	Graduate	Married	Kids	Employed	Private Sector

Appendix 2 Interview Guide Form

Yoga Subculture in İstanbul;

Body, Belonging, Identity

Interview Guide Form

Name/Surname of Interviewer: Gamze Demirhan

Number of Interviewee:

Place of Interview:

Date of Interview:

Duration of Interview:

Denial Reason of Interview:

Permission and Statements

I am Gamze Demirhan, I am a student at Yeditepe University. The questions in this interview guide form are prepared for my master thesis in Social Anthropology Department at Yeditepe University. The purpose of those questions is to examine whether there is a yoga subculture or not in the institute that I searched in İstanbul within the context of subcultural approaches, in this sense to present the concepts of body, belonging, identity, which is generated in the subculture process.

In this interview form your name, surname and address information will absolutely not be included. All your answers will be only used in university studies, and will not be shared with any institution or organization.

Your answers to the interview questions have great importance in terms of having the objective result, validity, and accuracy of the research. Your sincerity in answering the questions will help to understand whether yoga is a subculture or not, and to reflect the meaning of concepts of body, belonging/identity correctly as a result of my field work.

It is quite important to get an answer to all questions for the extent of the research. However, you can renounce answering the questions whenever you want. I request your permission in order to ask my research questions.

Thank you for your support and interest in advance.

Gamze Demirhan

Yeditepe University Institute of Social Sciences

Social Anthropology Master Degree Program

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographic Informations

1. Place of birth:

1 () Village

2 () District

3 () Province

4 () Abroad

5 () Other

2. Age:

3. Sex:

1 () Female

2 () Male

4. Education status:

1 () Illiterate

2 () Literate

3 () Primary School Graduate Abandonment Continuation

4 () Middle School Graduate Abandonment Continuation

5 () High School Graduate Abandonment Continuation

6 () Academy

7 () University

5. Marital status:

1 () Married

2 () Divorced

4 () Widowed

5 () Other

6. Do you have any child?

1 () Yes

2 () No

7. What is your occupation if you have any?

1 () Unemployed

2 () Retired

3 () Officer

4 () Employee – public

5 () Employee – private sector

6 () Craft – artisan

7 () Self-employment – self job

8 () Self-employment – little informal jobs

8. Do you work?

1 () Yes

2 () Other

YOGA

10. When did you start yoga? How long have you been practicing yoga?

11. Why did you start yoga? Can you tell the process?

12. What was your interest towards yoga?

13. Did you have any idea about yoga before starting yoga?

BODY

14. Were you doing any physical exercises before starting yoga?

15. How was your perception about your body before starting yoga?

16. Were there any changes in your body after you started yoga? If you had any, can you explain?

17. How was your perception about your body after you started yoga?

18. Do you have any habits that you gained or left before and after starting yoga? If you have any, can you explain?

BELONGING

19. Do you like practicing yoga by yourself or in a group? Why?

20. How do you feel when you practice yoga by yourself?

21. How do you feel when you practice yoga in a group?

22. Where do you prefer practicing yoga?

23. Do the place you practice yoga, and people you practice with affect your experience?

24. Do you identify yourself as a spiritual being? If yes, can you explain?

25. Do the place you practice yoga affect you in a spiritual way? If yes, in which ways?

26. Do you have any concepts that you have a difficulty in explaining people who do not practice yoga? If you have any, what are they?

IDENTITY

27. What would you like to do in your social life? Were you doing the similar things before you started yoga?

28. Did you have any changes in your social life after you started yoga?

29. What do you do when you come together with friends?

30. Did you have any changes in your behavior and/or in your point of views towards situations after you started yoga?

31. How do you define yourself?

32. Would you define yourself the same way before you started yoga?

CULTURE-SUBCULTURE

33. How do you dress in your daily life? Would you always dress the same way?
34. Do you think that yoga practioners have a common clothing style?
35. What kind of music do you listen in your daily life? Would you always listen to the same kind?
36. Do you think that yoga practioners have a music style which they listen to?
37. Do yoga pratictioners have a common language that they use? If there is, what is it?
38. Are there any elements that distinguish and differentiate yoga from other holistic diciplines? If there is, what are they? Why?
39. Do you think yoga practioners have common points?
40. Do you see yourself as a yogi? In your oppinion, how is a yogi?
41. How did yoga affect your life?
42. What is yoga for you?
43. Is there anything that you want to add lastly?

Appendix 3 Yoga Asanas

ॐ THE YOGA TRADITION



Various advanced Hatha-Yoga postures

Note. Cited from p. 394 *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice*. Georg Feuerstein. (2008).