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Breaking the Cycle of Overwork and Recuperation: Altering Somatic Engagement Across Boundaries

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Abstract. Past research often relegates the management of the ideal worker's overworking body to the nonwork environment. Reflecting a segmentation approach to managing the boundary between work and nonwork, the nonwork setting is treated as a context for recuperation. Yet, segmentation may, ironically, support the ideal worker image and reinforce the persistence of overwork. Drawing on two-year-long ethnographic studies of yoga teacher training, this paper considers how individuals shift how they manage the boundaries around their bodies. In doing so, we challenge the notion that segmentation of nonwork from work is an ideal boundary management strategy for addressing the negative impacts of overwork. Rather, we suggest that an integration strategy developed in a nonwork community may be productive for breaking the cycle of overwork and recuperation promoted by the ideal worker image and creating a virtuous cycle of activation and release. We bring forward the bodily basis to overwork and conceptualize somatic engagement as a form of engagement through which actors come to connect reflexively with their bodily experience across domains. Relatedly, in revealing how individuals come to connect reflexively with their bodily experience, we elaborate our understanding of the relational phenomena that enhance individuals' somatic experiences across boundaries.

Keywords: ideal worker • overwork • segmentation • integration • boundary management • somatic engagement • ethnography

Introduction

Organizational scholars have long been interested in understanding how individuals navigate the ideal worker image (Acker 1990, Ramarajan and Reid 2013, Dumas and Sanchez-Burks 2015, Reid 2015). Unencumbered by nonwork concerns, the ideal worker can be "always ready, willing and able to work" (Cooper 2000, p. 395). Yet, maintaining ideal worker norms can lead to overwork in the work setting (Michel 2011), which can have negative consequences, including bodily (Michel 2011, Nixon et al. 2011, Perlow and Kelly 2014) and psychological breakdowns (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001, Maslach et al. 2001). Research on boundary management examines how workers address harmful patterns of work engagement through segmentation or integration strategies (Nippert-Eng 1996, Rothbard 2001, Bulger et al. 2007) Proposing that an integration strategy, in which individuals create overlap between their work and nonwork domains, encourages harmful patterns of work engagement, researchers advocate segmentation as an optimal strategy for reducing role conflict and facilitating performance in work and nonwork roles (Kahn et al. 1964, Perlow 1998). Yet, ironically, segmentation can also maintain the image of the ideal worker (Sanchez-Burks 2002, 2005), ensuring the persistence of overwork. Unclear from existing boundary management research is how people navigating the ideal worker image can manage the boundaries between work and nonwork settings in ways that intervene in a vicious cycle of work and nonwork engagement.

Outside of the boundary management literature, research on off-job recovery underscores that the nonwork setting may be a particularly productive site to support segmentation by allowing individuals to disengage from work roles and separate from experienced workplace demands (Sonnentag et al. 2008a, Binnewies et al. 2010) through such activities as sleeping, relaxing (Thayer 1987, Scott and Judge 2006, Sonnentag et al. 2008b, Barnes et al. 2011), and spending time in restorative natural environments (Kaplan 1995). Accordingly, scholars have found that life away from work can help people who have experienced bodily and psychological breakdowns to recover sufficiently to re-engage at work (Perlow 1997, Sonnentag 2003, Hulsheger et al. 2014). Yet, engagement of the work body in research on recovery does not appear to change. Rather, despite time spent in a recuperative setting, the body at work continues to be used as a taken for granted instrument (Acker 1990), and its associated pattern of overworking remains. In this respect, a narrow treatment of nonwork settings and their role in addressing patterns of overwork as largely focused on recuperation ignores the

possibility that nonwork environments may also be settings that can alter harmful patterns of work engagement. For instance, organizations like the Omega Institute and the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health provide extensive programming for professionals designed to help them "prioritize the welfare of all their stakeholders" (Omega 2019, p. 37) and learn "tools to help make [their] work and life easier … and more effectively prevent burnout in the future" (Kripalu 2019, p. 44).

Our current understanding of the dynamics between nonwork and work settings suggests a potentially vicious cycle of overwork and replenishment. In comparison, in this paper, we analyze how individuals learn to manage the boundaries between work and nonwork settings in ways that break the persistence of overwork brought on by the ideal worker image. We draw on ethnographic data collected in two yoga teacher training programs which we refer to as *integrative communities*. In these nonwork communities, individuals were encouraged to adjust their bodily engagement in a variety of practices. An inductive longitudinal analysis led to theoretical insights about the emergent process through which individuals learned to alter the ways in which they engaged their bodies across work and nonwork domains.

We introduce the concept of somatic engagement to center on how people engage their bodily experiences in task behavior in different contexts (Kahn 1990). This concept leverages the pragmatist perspective on the body that offers a rich understanding of embodiment, viewing somatic engagement as following from social and cultural conditioning (Shusterman 2009, 2012; Johnson 2017). Somatic engagement shifts as individuals participate in socio-cultural processes that alter how they experience, use, and express their bodies. Specifically, we show how individuals' somatic engagement changes through a process of relational reflexivity in integrative communities. In social theory, relational reflexivity has been conceptualized as people actively engaging with the social reality they encounter and making meaningful choices from the different messages they receive to construct their worlds (Burnham 2005, Archer 2012, Dyke 2015). In this paper, we adopt a broader and more embodied definition of relational reflexivity as a socio-cultural process that involves exploring and experimenting with bodily experiences alongside relational partners who are enacting cultural values that support these experiences. In doing so, we illustrate how somatic engagement is both socially and culturally shaped.

This paper offers three main contributions to our understanding of work-nonwork boundary management and engagement. First, we challenge the notion that segmenting work and nonwork domains is an ideal boundary management strategy for addressing the negative impacts of overwork (Ashforth et al. 2000). Rather, we suggest that an integration strategy developed in a nonwork community may be productive for breaking the cycle of overwork and recuperation promoted by the ideal worker image. In so doing, we provide a more nuanced understanding of the contribution nonwork/community organizations make to boundary management. Second, we bring forward the bodily basis to overwork and conceptualize somatic engagement as a form of engagement through which actors come to connect reflexively with their bodily experience across domains. Our conceptualization of somatic engagement progresses theorizing on the bodily basis of overwork which to date has emphasized the body's role in overwork's obduracy (Michel 2011, Lupu and Empson 2015). Relatedly, in revealing how individuals come to connect reflexively with their bodily experience, we elaborate our understanding of the relational phenomena that enhance individuals' experiences in organizations (Ramarajan and Reid 2020). Specifically, we incorporate and extend research on relational reflexivity (Burnham 2005, Archer 2012, Dyke 2015) to illuminate a relational process that enables individuals to alter their somatic engagement across boundaries.

The Ideal Worker's Boundary Management and Engagement in Work and Nonwork Settings

How do individuals break the cycle of overwork and replenishment? To date, much of the boundary management literature has examined how individuals create and maintain the boundaries around their multiple roles, including those in their work, home (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, Nippert-Eng 1996), and third place social domains (e.g., churches, community; Oldenberg 1989, Ashforth et al. 2000). Of note, theories of boundary management in organizational research stem from several rich theoretical traditions (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks 2015), including role theory (Goode 1960, Kahn et al. 1964, Merton 1968, Katz and Kahn 1978), boundary theory (Ashforth et al. 2000, Rothbard et al. 2005), border theory (Clark 2000), and Protestant relational ideology (PRI) theory (Sanchez-Burks 2002, 2005).

Throughout the boundary management literature, organizational scholars have drawn on the work of Nippert-Eng (1996) in labeling boundary management strategies as either segmentation strategies or integration strategies (Rothbard 2001, Rothbard et al. 2005). Segmentation strategies reinforce the boundaries between different domains thereby separating work and nonwork activities whereas integration strategies blur the boundaries between different domains and allow for greater domain overlap (Nippert-Eng 1996). Historically, scholarship on work-nonwork boundary management views nonwork settings as impinging on the ideal worker image, creating inefficiency and tension at

work and conflict in the nonwork setting (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, Williams 2000, Rothbard 2001, Fox et al. 2011, Kossek and Lautsch 2012). In the context of maintaining the ideal worker image, segmentation is viewed as an optimal boundary management strategy. That is, segmentation is said to help reduce role conflict and enhance role concentration, focus (Ashforth et al. 2000), and performance in the work setting (Kahn et al. 1964). Yet, because segmentation is designed to allow employees to better contribute and devote themselves to work, it can actually reinforce the ideal worker image, ensuring a vicious cycle of overwork.

Although not drawing specifically on the boundary management literature or focused specifically on boundary management per se, research focused on off-job recuperation also reinforces the case for segmentation as an ideal boundary management strategy. Specifically, this stream of work makes salient how nonwork can be a source of rejuvenation from the ideal worker image that taxes the body, and it focuses on how the nonwork domain can be made productive for recuperation. Nonwork settings make possible specific recuperative activities, including sleeping, relaxing (Thayer 1987, Scott and Judge 2006, Sonnentag et al. 2008b, Barnes et al. 2011), spending time in restorative natural environments (Kaplan 1995), participating in athletic activities (Rook and Zijlstra 2006), volunteering (Mojza et al. 2010, Sonnentag et al. 2012), engaging in hobbies (Sonnentag 2012; Sonnentag et al. 2008a, b, 2012; Sonnentag and Kuhnel 2016), or even working temporarily in alternate organizations, such as performing military reserve service (Etzion et al. 1998).

To date, neither the boundary management literature nor the recovery literature examines how individuals can come to experience and engage their bodies differently at work through participation in nonwork settings. As such, we are left with an understanding of the dynamics of addressing overwork as a potentially vicious cycle of overwork and replenishment. Specifically, individuals recover from overwork with time spent in settings away from work, but this, in turn, enables them to continue overworking at work. Currently, little is known about how individuals break this cycle of overwork. At best, boundary management scholars have suggested that cultural norms that value integrating work and nonwork domains may weaken the ideal worker schema (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks 2015). Our paper builds on and extends these insights by revealing how individuals come to break the cycle of overwork and recuperation in communities focused on mind and body integration.

The Nature of the Ideal Worker's Embodied Experience

Our approach to understanding the nature of bodily engagement in work and nonwork settings is informed by perspectives on the body and body adjustment in contemporary pragmatism (Joas 1996, Johnson 2007) and especially Shusterman (2008, 2012, 2014) whose project "aims to enrich … our lived somatic experience and performance" (Shusterman 2012, p. 27). Pragmatists focus on our subjective experience of ourselves as embodied beings (Peirce 1934; Dewey 1938; James 1950; Joas 1996; Shusterman 2008, 2012). Following Shusterman (2008, 2012) and Csordas (1993), we use the term *somatic* to denote this embodied experience as sentient, dynamic, and purposive. Our somatic engagement comprises the immanent felt sense we have of ourselves in action: the feel of doing (Dewey 1938). Thus, the experience of overworking consistent with an ideal worker image has a particular bodily or somatic quality. It is situationally meaningful; our somatic engagement is a structuring presence that shapes how we perceive ourselves, others, the situations we confront, and the actions we are taking (Joas 1996, Johnson 2007, Shusterman 2008). Not only does exerting effort have a particular bodily feel, this feeling informs a sense of self as committed, dependable, willing to do whatever it takes, and so on. Somatic engagement is a consequence of not only physical but also social and cultural conditioning (Shusterman 2012, Johnson 2017). Through conditioning, we come to "throw like a girl," limiting the movement to the arm versus putting the whole body in directed motion (Young 1980, Allen 2015). We also learn to strive, "to do what it takes."

In most of our day-to-day experience, the bodily feel of action is a background presence; it is not an object of awareness (Leder 1990, Shusterman 2012). For example, feeling that "I am dragging: at work, I seek caffeine and continue pressing through the day's business. This ordinary occurrence highlights the body's inconspicuous participation in overwork. Furthermore, as Michel (2011) has noted, the background character of this mode of somatic engagement is a source of its strength and persistence. The ideal worker's bodily experience thus largely disconnects action from awareness: it informs relating to the body as a taken for granted instrument dedicated to pursuing organizational demands; it normalizes the embodied experience of overwork; and in doing so, it perpetuates a form of somatic engagement that is not sustainable (Michel 2011, Lupu and Empson 2015).

This perspective on the somatic basis of the ideal worker implicates the social and cultural conditioning of embodied experience in the persistence of overwork. However, Shusterman (1999, 2000) underscores that, although we have been socialized to take our bodies for granted, this pattern of relating to our embodied experience can change. We can connect action and awareness of bodily experience and, in doing so, improve our functioning. Shusterman who is both philosopher and a Feldenkrais[1] instructor, theorizes and advocates that by

enhancing body consciousness different forms of somatic engagement can be developed (Shusterman 2009, 2012). For these philosophers, reconnecting action with awareness of embodied experience in communities focused on improving movement patterns informed their theorizing and as well resulted in ameliorative adjustment to their own somatic habits. Building on this, we investigate how membership in a body-focused nonwork community can help individuals move toward connecting action and awareness to disrupt harmful patterns of overwork at work.

Methods

Research Context and Sample

This research originated in conversations among two authors who were introduced to each other because both conducted ethnographies of yoga teacher training programs. Initially, Stephanie was interested in examining how professional identities are formed in interactions with others in the organization (i.e., identity cocreation) and Karen was interested in the implications of mind-body practices for the workplace. Given our initial interests, we chose to study yoga teacher training because it expressly focuses on professional identity development (Stephanie) and is a site for development of mind-body practices (Karen). In our exploratory conversations, we discussed what each felt was the overall learning gained from our respective ethnographies. These highlighted that working for more ease were central to both a yogic identity and its practices. Confirming a shared interest in this general topic, we pursued this project and our initial research question, which was "How do individuals learn to change their bodily experiences from effort to ease in nonwork settings?" As we progressed, we fine-tuned our research question, which we state as "How do individuals learn to adjust somatic engagement across work and nonwork domains?"

Specifically, each researcher studied individuals participating in yoga teacher training at two nonresidential holistic centers in the eastern United States. Stephanie contacted multiple yoga teacher training programs via email and provided them with a summary of the proposed research study. She received consent via email only from one teacher training program director, which was the program she chose to study. Karen researched several local training programs, identifying one whose timing coincided with her research leave from the university. She met with the program director who agreed to the study. Each researcher studied yoga teacher training in a specific practice community: FlowA (Stephanie's site) and FlowB (Karen's site) (both pseudonyms).[2] As required by their institutional review boards, both researchers disclosed their dual roles as researcher and participant in the first formal session of the training programs.

Both programs were both registered as 200-hour training programs with the Yoga Alliance, the national education and support education for yoga in the United States. Yoga Alliance maintains a registry of yoga schools to recognize yoga teacher training programs that meet their minimum training standards. In addition, both programs traced their lineage and teachings to India, Tantric philosophy, and Sri Tirumalai Krishnamarcharya, an Indian yoga teacher who is considered the father of modern day yoga. This meant that program content was somewhat standardized across programs. Understanding the philosophy that underscored each program's approach to yoga was integral to understanding participants' experiences in these programs. Both training programs adopted a nondualistic philosophy or beliefs that experiences that seem separate, oppositional, or antagonistic in nature are actually integral to learning and developing self-awareness (Wallis 2012). Thus, practicing yoga is considered part of the path to self-realization where self-realization refers to the attainment of a state of consciousness in which an individual perceives himself or herself as a whole being rather than as a collection of disparate parts (Wallis 2012). Understanding this philosophy was critical for understanding how somatic engagement was discussed, explored, and altered in the context, including the Cartesian mind-body duality problem.

Members of the yoga communities we studied ranged in their years of experience practicing yoga from yogis who had been practicing for only a year to master teachers with decades of practice. Outside of the yoga community, members held a variety of professional roles as massage therapists, professors, teachers, lawyers, physical therapists, and spiritual leaders, as well as corporate roles, including marketing managers, accountants, and finance professionals. In the FlowA training program, there were initially 22 participants: 2 trainers and 20 trainees including the FlowA researcher. Two trainees did not complete the program. FlowB's program included 14 participants including FlowB's researcher, 2 master teachers, and 4 teachers who had completed the same program in prior years. One trainee dropped out after three weeks. Consistent with the gendered nature of yoga in the United States (Niiler 2013, Macy 2016), both the program senior instructors and a majority of the teacher training participants were female.

Participants joined the program for various reasons, although each was aware of larger challenges they faced in feeling good in their lives more broadly and hoped that the program would be helpful. This was also reflected in the marketing of both FlowA and FlowB programs; participation was framed as not necessarily leading to teaching yoga, but "a way to deepen your practice." Accordingly, the majority pointed to general self-improvement motives similar to those who

voluntarily enter self-help organizations (Scott 2010). Although some did plan to teach yoga, this was not the case for the majority of participants. Additionally, although participants joined for self-improvement reasons, all experienced overwork in various life domains, including at work. Over the course of the study, reducing overwork on and off the mat became a central theme in the teacher training and participants' broader lives.

Data Collection

Data related to individuals' experiences in each training program were collected over a 12-month period in FlowA and FlowB using four main data collection strategies intended to explore participants' own emic experience and understanding (Spradley 1979, Morey and Luthens 1984) of the yoga teacher training programs: participant observation, individual interviews, archival data gathering, and social media and email data.

Participant Observation. In FlowA training, the primary participant observation period occurred over 12 months during nine formal training weekends at a nonresidential holistic center, in yoga classes held outside of those weekends, and in email exchanges and social media posts with members of the FlowA practice community. In FlowB's training, participant observation occurred during weekly formal training meetings, monthly formal weekend workshops, social media posts, and a subsequent week-long specialty workshop. During this period, both FlowA and FlowB researchers participated in all activities that were expected of trainees (200 hours), apprenticing themselves to the community's practices (Wacquant 2004, Michel 2011). Common to ethnographic studies, all participants were aware of their dual role as a trainee and researcher (Whyte 1984, Pratt 2000). Specifically, they read texts on yoga philosophy and spirituality, wrote reflection papers, discussed readings with other trainees and teachers, practiced yoga postures and sequences, attended yoga classes held during the weekends, meditated, chanted, shared personal information in a large group setting, practiced teaching yoga sequences, completed several required projects, and took a final exam.

Both researchers took notes on their observations and what they did while participating in training sessions; the FlowA researcher made audio notes during breaks and at the end of each day and transcribed them into field notes. For example, after the first day of training, the FlowA researcher recorded an audio note that revealed all the day's activities, summaries of quotes related to people's motives for joining the training, and how she felt about participating in the training. FlowB researcher logged short notes on her laptop during sessions or in a notebook after classes and then filled them out within 24 hours. For example, during the second training session, she took notes on several participants' reflections on their experiences at work and home since the prior training session. Furthermore, in both FlowA and FlowB, researchers attended required classes and nonrequired workshops and classes and participated in the social life of the communities, for example, accepting invitations to meals and (in the case of FlowA) to stay overnight at fellow trainees' homes for eight of the nine weekends so that the researcher did not have to travel the considerable distance between her home and the training site on a daily basis. They also took notes on their observations and experiences in these settings. For example, the FlowA researcher's audio notes from day one of the second training weekend commented on how she had debriefed the challenges of the day's training activities with a fellow participant and the participant's husband that night after training while staying in their home. Following an off-site workshop, the FlowB researcher generated field notes, focusing on the stories the teacher told about injuries that could flow from indulging students desires to push themselves into poses they were not ready for.

Semistructured Interviews. In addition to participant observation, both researchers also conducted semistructured interviews (FlowA, $n = 29$; FlowB, $n = 15$) with trainers and all trainees who completed the training program. To recruit interviewees, both researchers emailed and asked participants in-person for their consent to participate in an interview following the procedures set forth in their institutional review board agreements. Initial and follow-up interviews lasted approximately one hour on average and were recorded and transcribed verbatim; notes were also taken during the interviews. As with prior inductive qualitative research (Locke 2001), tailored semistructured interview protocols guided these conversations. Because we were combining data sets, we compared each interview protocol to assess consistency and found that they were quite similar and generated similar content. Analysis of the follow-up interview protocol questions revealed the following similarities: their progress in the training program; how their aspirations had or had not changed since entering the program; practices that they engaged in as a member of the training program; their interactions with other participants inside and outside of the training program; and how yoga was showing up in their life outside of the yoga studio, including at work.

Small differences were noted in some of the questions. For example, the FlowA researcher's protocol had several detailed questions about interactions with participants, whereas the FlowB researcher's protocol included broader questions about practices. However, review of the FlowB researcher's transcripts revealed that, although her structured question about participants' interactions was slightly different, she had probed more deeply into informants'

interactions with other participants during the interviews. Likewise, the FlowB researcher's protocol contained more detailed questions about yoga practices than the FlowA researcher's protocol. However, review of the FlowA researcher's transcripts revealed that she had probed more deeply into the program's practices during the interviews. Thus, we believe that the semistructured interviewing practices each researcher engaged in allowed for comparable content to emerge from the interviews.

Archival Data. Participant observation and interview data were supplemented with data from several archival sources in order to gain greater insight into each program's belief system (Hill 1993). In both FlowA's and FlowB's programs, these sources included training manuals, particular books on yoga, and videos. For FlowA, the researcher also gained information from websites related to the training program as a way of understanding why individuals chose to enter that program in particular. Taken in total, archival data sources provided a richer context for understanding participants' experiences in both programs as a secondary data source.

Social Media and Email Data. Participant observation and interview data were also supplemented with data from email communications and social media postings specific to the yoga teacher training communities. Both email and social media were a way of elaborating what was learned in each community. Each group's email and social media posts were only open to members of those communities. For example, senior experienced teachers used email to elaborate homework assignments and participants used it to clarify them. Participants also used Facebook to disseminate reading material that reinforced their learning. Similar to archival data, social media and email data also provided a richer context for understanding participants' experiences as a secondary data source.

Data Analysis

Having made the decision to pursue a collaborative project, we each then reviewed and compiled a data set for shared discussion and coding. In an iterative fashion, we used a theory-building approach and analyzed the data by traveling back and forth between the data and an emerging data structure of theoretical arguments about somatic engagement in embodied integrative communities (Locke 2001, Corbin and Strauss 2008). We established a rhythm of summarizing our conversations in memos that were shared and fed into subsequent conversations (Locke 2001). These conversations and memos were shaped by and in turn shaped our coding practice.

Open Coding. Our initial coding of our combined data set entailed describing our informants' actions and views of the world via open coding (Locke 2001), which remained close to the data. Open codes were identified in multiple iterations that often brought us back to the raw data. They included statements about unquestioning overwork; ignoring the working body; understanding nonwork activities as a source of recuperation; joining a different community; elevating bodily experience; expressing nurturing relations among community members; overwork framed as a Western socio-cultural problem; awareness of body experience of overwork; extending identification of overwork among community members; letting go of overwork expectations; practicing the release of overwork; amplifying release among community members; questioning overwork; using bodily experience to stop overwork in the workplace; and staying engaged in the nonwork community to sustain activation and release.

Axial Coding. In the second stage of coding, we compared our open codes with each other to create broader axial codes (Locke 2001). As we were comparing codes and discussing their implications, we also drew on theoretical resources such as work from Perlow (1997), Perlow and Porter (2009), and Michel (2011) on overwork, work by Nippert-Eng (1996) on boundary management, and work by Shusterman (2008) theorizing on somesthetics to sharpen our understanding of what we understood to be happening our data. Ultimately, we derived several axial codes: overwork; recuperation; socio-cultural experience, bodily experience, relational experience; enacting cultural values; exploring overwork as a problem; experimenting with release; centering bodily experiences; cued adjusting between overwork and release; emergent self-guided adjusting between overwork and release; and centering and adjusting bodily experiences across settings. As an illustration, joining a different community, elevating bodily experience, and expressing nurturing relations among community members became evidence of enacting cultural values as an axial code, whereas overwork framed as a Western socio-cultural problem, awareness of bodily experience of overwork, and extending identification of overwork among community members were combined to form the axial code exploring overwork as a problem.

Theoretical Coding. During the third stage of analysis, these broader codes were considered together in order to understand how the concepts related to one another, so that our study's theoretical narrative could be established (Charmaz 2006). We derived several theoretical categories through this process: vicious cycle of overwork and recuperation; altering somatic engagement through relational reflexivity; and virtuous cycle of activation and release. These categories comprised our

broad theoretical picture of the data, which we refer to as "a theory of altering somatic engagement across boundaries" without doing undue violence to our experiences. To help ensure that we accomplished the latter, we discussed and modified our theory based on conversations with key informants and through peer debriefing activities (i.e., informal feedback sessions and formal presentations of our findings). These conversations with key informants also generated more observations regarding altering somatic engagement and these were incorporated into our shared data set and included in our analyses. Table 1 presents illustrative quotes that support our theoretical codes.

Findings

We characterize the yoga teacher training programs we studied as integrative communities. As communities, the programs were third places, places beyond work and home, where people gathered together to help one another complete tasks not bounded by space, time, or formal role requirements (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982, Oldenburg 1989). These communities were also integrative. By integrative, we mean that the communities were focused on self-improvement, participation in these communities was voluntary, participants were able to continue their engagement in the outside world while participating in them (Scott 2010, 2011), and participants were expected to carryover their learnings to other contexts and situations outside of the community. We also mean that they focused on connecting action and awareness, body, and mind. For the sake of simplicity, hereafter, we refer to the programs as communities.

The Vicious Cycle of Overwork and Recuperation

Our participants, as a requirement, had at least one year of experience participating in yoga classes before joining the teacher training community. Describing their journey to joining the yoga teacher training program, participants told stories that characterized their past selves as overworked and aligned with the Protestant work ethic (Weber 1904, 1958) and ideal worker norms around separating the body from work (Acker 1990; Williams 2000) wherein the body is treated as an instrument for action without attending to its cues (Michel 2011). Specifically, participants were unquestioning relative to experienced work demands; generally, unaware of bodily experience, they took for granted that their body should be subordinate to the demands of work. Indeed, they joined the yoga community to recuperate from the experienced effects of overworking, that is, as a setting where they could restore or repair the body (Sonnentag 2003), and their participation in yoga as a type of *weekend worship* practice. In other words, this was a self that had grown up to value overwork and take the body for granted, which was not the self they were now working to become (Markus and Nurius 1986).

Unquestioning Overwork

Participants regularly described themselves before yoga teacher training in ways that highlighted the taken-for-granted character of their tendency to overwork, for example, as a Type A personality or as holding on to responsibility, "I don't like to have to delegate: I'm a control freak—if I'm going to delegate it's going to be to someone who will do it right" [p5B].[3] Another participant, an immigration lawyer, shared a personal perspective demonstrating how overwork was taken for granted in her professional life. She commented:

> … the way I feel is that if you make a commitment to do something you have to do it well. I didn't lose many cases—had all kinds of alarms set at 3:00 a.m. to call Mumbai. I had a notepad at my bed … if there is a problem that needs to be solved my body is always working on it. I can't bring in the business, hand it off to someone else and hope for the best because I have a responsibility to them. [p4B]

Underscoring the need to perform work well, at all times and places (e.g., "alarms set at 3:00 a.m." at home), this participant reveals she has a responsibility and a self-characterization as always working when she has a case. This description indicates her pattern of taking overwork for granted while her description of her body as always working on it highlights the bodily basis to this pattern. Similarly, another participant described herself as taking on increasing amounts of work. In describing how her work was progressively consuming more and more of her life, she shared:

> Management was ruthless … they weren't growing their people, and it just started to feel like out of alignment …. It got really bad over the last three years. So it got to a point where there was no work-life balance, I was coming home, working all night, yelling at my kids, like the stress just seeped into my family life. [p12A]

Her account highlights a rote performance of overwork, coming home, working all night, yelling at my kids.

Ignoring the Working Body

In overworking, participants pushed themselves, largely ignored their bodily experiences, treating their bodies as instruments to support work performance. They worked generally unaware of what was happening with their bodies, until their bodies faltered. When there was work to be done and the body let them down, the prevailing response was often, "I don't have time for this, I need to be working," thereby demonstrating

Table 1. Data Tables

Axial code	Illustrative data
Theoretical code 1: Vicious cycle of overwork and recuperation	
Overwork	*Interview: Participant explains how she felt tired and got sick from working too much:* I was just like so out of balance. My body was so tired that I just needed–you know, that I got sick …. I just want every day to be slow because I feel like everything else is so fast around me. [p11A] *Participant compares what she learned in yoga to her habit of "pushing" at work:* Like you know how [the Celebrity Teacher] always says, pushing the river rather than moving with it? I was constantly pushing it, and I was pushing. [p12A] *Participant who is a physical therapist talking about upbringing and her striving orientation to work:* Well … growing up Catholic everything was just push push push. [p9B] *Participant who is a chief financial officer talks about the heavy managerial demands of her work:* I'm managing all these different people, different personality styles just takes so much energy – you know managing these different people – make sure everything's on task, you know accounting's all about deadlines, everything getting done when it needs to get done, every thing's done right, there's no errors … [p6B]
Recuperation	*Participant talking about how she started yoga to relieve back pain from sitting for long periods of time while working:* I started yoga as a result of some physical problems that I had, some back pain and really severe and I kind of just went into it thinking, 'Okay. I'll stretch by body and I'll feel better.' [p5A] *Participant talking about using yoga to help her cope with eating disorders that were exacerbated by work stress:* I've had this history of challenges in my life - eating disorders … [In] October, I came across a pilot study that they had done in the Journal for Adolescent Health … [The] yoga that they were using in this pilot study was helping men and women with their body image issues. So that I was just like "Ah, that's it! Use yoga." [p9A] *FlowB fieldnotes: At the second formal evening class, a participant describes her understanding of yoga in terms of physical care and dealing with stress:* I always tell people, if there's only one thing you can do, it's yoga. It has everything, strength, stretching, aerobic, stress. [p4B] *Participant explains she initially sought yoga as a way to counterbalance work:* I thought I needed something to counterbalance what I'm doing every day. And that's when I went to yoga classes because it was [voice change soothing tone] breathing and calm. [so you chose it as … it wasn't a replacement for physical workout] No it was in addition to … like I needed to go and just find a place to Ahhhhh [exhales]. At that time I was in a rehab hospital with head injuries and spinal cord injuries and strokes and serious stuff. [p9B]
Theoretical code 2: Altering somatic engagement through relational reflexivity	
Enacting cultural values	*FlowB field notes in which teacher training director is emphasizing expected unfamiliarity with yoga language in initial philosophy class:* "We will chant the invocation to Lord Patanjali in Sanskrit. We begin raja with chanting. Some teachers chant, some don't … it's a really great way to unite a class – even if you don't know what you're talking about." *She asks*, "How many of you have Krishna Das on your iPods? [singing Sanskrit]" *Lots of hands go up.* "How many of you know what he's saying." A*lmost all the hands come down.* "Exactly" s*ays L. smiling (indicating it doesn't matter). The vibration creates a domino effect that makes us feel better.* *FlowA field notes about unfamiliarity with human anatomy and other people attending the anatomy training session:* The other thing is we at different times had to turn to a partner and find some anatomical landmark so that's how we interacted with each other during these moments and of course the really anxious people were still anxious in this setting because they didn't have the information and it tended to be that people interacted with each other according to their training programs. So all the people in my training program, even it if was turned to one partner, made sure that they were only working with people who were in our training and then people in the other training only interacted with people in the other training; and then there was like the people who weren't part of a training program interacted with whomever was closest to them. So they were probably the most open to crossing group lines because well, they had to. *FlowB field notes on conversation between participants following a breathing workshop which generated unfamiliar sensations that highlighted yoga as different:* Out of nowhere I felt what I can only characterize as a "squirrel like" buzz of energy flash up my mid back toward my neck and then my upper back tingled for a while. Weird shit! So in the car back we were talking about this. Vivian started talking about Eastern knowledge and how in the West we think we've invented knowledge and what we're learning in the yoga [teacher trainings] is knowledge that is thousands of years old that has been forgotten.

Table 1. (Continued)

Axial code	Illustrative data
	FlowB field notes on the teacher training director emphasizing the bodily basis of yoga: Sitting around the room getting ready to learn to teach basic poses, Laura emphasizes, 'Yoga is 99% practice, 1% theory' [an often repeated statement attributed to the founder of the Ashtanga School of yoga] *FlowB field notes on a celebrity trainer's workshop for yoga teachers wherein she demonstrates how students should be instructed to connect with their bodies:* [Her voice strengthens, and she points to us sitting on our mats] 'You are adults, you are in charge of your body. With [your] teacher your responsibility is to do what they ask and see how it feels in your body' *FlowB Researcher's field notes describing the relational ease participants are expressing with each other:* [This evening's philosophy class] begins as others have with social interaction … people dipping into the chili one of the other participants has made in L's kitchen, fetching themselves cups of tea and glasses of wine. Everyone seems very comfortable. As one participant comes up the stairs into the living area, someone already there will go over and hug her... *Participant is speaking about another participant beginning to share information and contribute to her learning:* So yea I do some reading, go online a lot, look at that stuff- [Another participant] sent this very cool paper on ancient civilizations she had got from somebody when she was in Mexico.... She sent it to me.... we were talking about something and she had said that she had got this paper and I should read it. [p7B] *FlowA field notes: Researcher sharing how she and another participant reflected on their community experiences with one another:* The person I'm staying with [and I] …went out to dinner tonight. We ate at a great restaurant and we talked about what this whole process has been like for us and some of our interactions with our fellow coteachers … *Participant talking about her new friendship with another participant who was helping her to "try new things" outside of yoga teacher training to help her manage her anxiety:* So we spent a lot of time together. But she's someone that I'm very grateful to for giving me that push, but we also, she started paddle boarding I started going out and paddle boarding with her. We'd have like a girls day and just, do things like have a nice quiet lunch together, do a yoga retreat, go be more active. I just found myself being more adventurous, more active, more outgoing, trying new experiences rather than judging them beforehand, it was like "oh yeah let me try that." [p7A]
Exploring overwork as a problem	*Participant underscores the family expectations to strive she grew up with:* Oh man, definitely get a job get a career get a job, go go go. [p6B] *FlowA researcher's field notes on a session during yoga teacher training weekend where the FlowA senior teacher was trying to teach FlowA participants a new way to perform a headstand that would put less pressure on their necks - an unsafe landmark - and more on the top of their heads:* And then we made our way into sirsasana which was headstand which seemed to bring out a lot of emotions, irritation, frustration et cetera in the other teacher trainees because the way that the trainer showed us to do it was quite different and it was more challenging for many of us and definitely required us to trust that the way that she was teaching us was a good way to do it. So at one point, I think people have been pushing back quite a bit on this new technique. And she spent about five minutes or so just asking us to try it and to take a risk. And then another student who has known her for quite a while end up saying to everyone, you know, she knows what she is s- essentially, she was telling everyone that she knows – that the trainer knows what she's doing. *FlowB field notes: At a workshop a celebrity trainer highlights her own journey as a teacher which began problematically stressing overwork:* I taught power yoga- beat them into submission. Locked the doors, turned up the heat, beat them to a pulp with long sequences…. They're gonna hold the pose as long as I say, otherwise they will fail…. Even if they have never taken a beginner class. But people started getting hurt. *FlowA field notes on an overly strenuous practice teaching session held during a teacher training weekend:* I was in a [practice teaching] group with two other people who had a lot more anxiety about teaching than I did and so they needed to do it and say it over and over and over again, and there were points in which I actually did not want to keep doing it because my body was starting to ache, but I knew that they kind of needed me to do it. So, I would do that. *FlowB fieldnotes on director sitting cross legged in front of the class, emphasizing tendency toward striving and contrasting it with work in yoga:* Always working toward something else…goal…we think of where we are [her hand moves far from her body]…. Want to be there and sometimes that distance can feel like no big deal and sometimes it is an abyss. But success … success is a funny word in yoga … success is wherever you are in your journey finding rootedness [the teacher inhales, pushes firmly into her hands and lifts her legs, folding them behind her neck] finding ease in the breath.

Table 1. (Continued)

Axial code	Illustrative data
	Article posted to FlowB's Facebook group which helps the group see a practitioner confronting the tendency to overwork in the poses (something they grew up with): When I over-effort in class my friends hear me grunting and my teacher sees me staring intensely. I squeeze my muscles as if trying to choke the pose from my body. I am always determined to give the poses everything I have, undoubtedly a positive trait. After all, I grew up pushing my body through intensity. However, "open to grace" is revolutionary for a guy like me. Venturing into foreign territory, I am scared to surrender control. *FlowA field notes: During an anatomy class, a participant with a history of a concussion ignoring her body and trying to hide her injury from the trainer in order to keep participating fully in the program:* ...one person was telling a story about how she didn't say on her Yoga Teacher Training application to this program that she had a severe concussion a couple of years ago and she was saying to the assistant trainer and to the subtrainer...that she didn't want [the senior trainer] to know that she had this concussion, and it was this really odd thing that she kept saying back and forth as "Don't tell [the senior trainer] about this." But of course [the senior trainer] was going to find out because there are 40 of us there or probably fewer than that who know her, but obviously, [the senior trainer] should know that this woman has had a concussion before because it's going to affect the way that she instructs her in some of the asanas that we perform.
Experimenting with release	*Participant describes how she has been letting go of expectations to "push" herself:* I feel softer in my skin and I enjoy feeling softer and calmer whereas I was addicted for many years as you can probably tell so far as exercise exercise push push push push and this is the first time something … some ways of saying don't push anymore … you don't have to push and its ok not to push … you know. [p9B] *Interview with participant during "downtime" at the yoga studio who talks about dealing better with challenging issues in yoga:* I feel like I'm in a place of accepting myself. And I think I had a lot of fears … around what the training was going to look like in the end. And just in general and things in my life or how things are going to turn out. Fears and anxieties that I've had seem to have dissipated in a lot of ways. But I feel like the reading, a lot of it put a name to feelings that I was experiencing in my life. And made me make sense of it. So, all of the sudden I grasped [the philosophy] and can now recognize when things come up again and deal with them appropriately. [p5A] *Participant revealing how she uses breathing techniques to redirect her attention away from negative thoughts to feeling better physically in yoga:* So, for me what happens is … obviously, the coming inside which means I check in on where my breathing is which has been huge huge huge for me and then I can - based on what's going on in my breathing- I'll change my breathing and … when I get my breathing down into my belly and [it's] full, it will completely change how I feel. [p2B] *FlowA Researcher's field notes on a practice teaching session during which participants focused on supporting one another:* I was in a group and one person would say the sequence, another person would demo or flash card the sequence. And then they would ask questions about our sequence and others would join in to add. And in general, people were giving a lot of positive encouragement to students who were creating these sequences, telling them that they did a great job, and this was all happening in a large group so there was a lot of positive affirmation about people's ability to enact that – at least, that aspect of the yoga teacher identity. *Participant shares how participants were helping one another gain deeper understanding of what they were learning:* We're all here to learn and we're all learning from one another and assisting one another in this journey of learning about being in a yoga teacher training. So I think or I would hope for everyone that it would be a positive experience to say, "Hey, can you help out with this?" So yeah, I think it would all be positive...I think our email exchanges are helpful. Sometimes it's explaining something a little bit more and then sometimes it's maybe confusing me even more. But I think they're intended to explain and to kind of keep everyone in the loop and to give us more information. [p14A] *Post circulated in FlowB's Facebook community shared to underscore the point about letting go ("liked" by group members):* Selfless effort. Let go of the clinging. Chill out. Breathe... Literally and figuratively turned upside down, I have learned that to expand my asana practice and access some of yoga's fruits – less fear, anxiety, judgment, I need to slow down and soften the struggle. *Participant expressed how teacher training members supported one another in the community:* Usually, I would feel like it's a lot of comforting each other. I don't really interact with [other trainees] outside of the training. So it's only on the weekends and it's kind of like, "All right, how was this sitting with you?" Or, "Are you getting this?" Or "Always in this so much" or "wow." And kind of just talking about the logistics of the training, how is it making you feel. I think–I feel like there's lots of hugs. [p6A]

Table 1. (Continued)

Axial code	Illustrative data
Theoretical code 3: Virtuous cycle of activation and release	
Activation and release	*Participant describes how she becomes more "prepared" to encounter a challenging situation at work by first focusing on her breath rather than the situation:* As I enter the lockdown residential facilities to check on a kid after he or she has experienced a staff intervention- aka a physical restraint of some sort- I begin to recognize the sensations in my body. I begin to notice my breath. And by practicing awareness of myself, I am more attuned to the kiddos and staff around me. It helps me to enter their world with some clarity, some peace, and openness. I feel more prepared to encounter the atmosphere these children and staff reside in and to not numb myself or tune it out. I also believe that I'm able to complete a more thorough assessment both physically and psychologically of the child because I'm fully engaged and listening to verbal and nonverbal communication. [p15A] *Participant who is a teacher talking about meeting a student who frustrates her "where he is":* There are times where like I get frustrated with [a kid at school]...he is goofy and he's in 7th grade, so he's just, you know, at that in-between awkward stage but he worries himself to death … .But then I look at him and go, 'Wow,' like I – and I get it, you know. But I get him and so, it brings me back to this place that – I don't know, meeting him where he is instead of trying to overpower it or try to teach him how to overcome it … .So, [there's] more room, more space, there's more space somewhere in there to work with people … [p3A] *Participant shared what she was doing to practice yoga at work (carrying a particular yoga teaching "be friendly to happy folk, compassionate toward unhappy, take joy in good action and try not to get to heated up about the bad stuff"):* I wrote this on the clipboard I carry everywhere at work and whenever I feel my heart skip or my dander rise, I'd look at it. So much of behavior is reactive and what this Sutra asks us to do is choose how we respond. Don't react, respond, and do that with consideration … for your own peace. [p14B] *Participant shared what she was doing to "pick [her] battle" at work in when recognizing the potential "harm" that may come to her body in the form of stress from confronting her colleagues:* If it's not harming me in some way, I usually will just keep the peace and just find a way to like gently keep extricating myself and move away from [the situation].... if nobody is getting hurt and it's just somebody dealing with their own shit, then I just don't take on their shit and I just smile and nod, and find a way to get away … .I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings … .[but] there would be no way to [tell them to stop what they are doing] without it becoming a huge, dramatic stress fest. [p. 13A] *Participant is talking about not "pushing" other people at work:* I think that my improved overall mood and reduced stress level [from yoga teacher training] make me a better employee since I take very few sick days. I think it also makes me a better coworker since, the practice of nonjudgement and balance make me more likely to listen and work as a teammate rather than push my own agendas of what I think is right or expedient. [p10A] *Participant who was a manager for development talked about how she was softening her expectations of the department's assistant, accepting "everything as it is":* ...[she] and I really butted heads from the moment that I started...I'm a go getter and if I see something that can be a challenge, then I'm going to figure out 5 ways to get it done and then I'll take the best approach that seems right...I guess it could be perceived by somebody else as bullyish and being not a team player. Ummm so in my practice of pulling back from trying so hard and taking everything as it is and going with the flow instead of trying to force the flow, she and I have developed a great rapport with one another now and she's actually come to me and said to me how much I've changed and how much I've grown since I've been a part of the organization. [p10B] *Participant talking about how she quit her job, took a severance, and is taking time off from work:* ...it just started to feel like out of alignment with why I wanted a work-balance job...I just remember [the senior teacher] saying you know 'are you living in alignment with your true self?' And it just kept eating at me... I'm like "this is not"...I have severance till the end of July....we're financially secure...because I was so diligent before, I feel comfortable in being able to take this time off. [p11A] *Participant who was an accountant revealed how she learned to recognize and modify unhealthy overwork practices:* ...a lot of it came back to the stuff I was learning in yoga, and just wanting to be in alignment with what I learned from the training and my job just wasn't serving [me]. [My job] was just mentally, physically, emotionally draining me. My health went down. So, in the last six months I started to say 'you know what? I'm only gonna put in so many hours. I'm not putting in all this extra time,' and I scaled back so that I was happier at home … [p12A]

how participants assumed that pushing themselves bodily was appropriate and that their body should not be pressing itself into their work lives as it was subordinate to work demands. A participant's story about her response to a medical condition, emphasized this:

> I was hemorrhaging, bleeding and I was at the office, changing tampons every 10 minutes. I wouldn't go to the doctor or do anything about it because I had an interview with my client…. On my way to the interview, I called my doctor, who said, "You really need to come in." I said, "I can't till after this interview." So, I went in [to see the doctor after the interview] and [the] next morning had surgery. [p4B]

Although she was bleeding, and her doctor was urging her to come in, she pushed forward with her work and set aside addressing her medical needs until she had completed the interview for work. Interestingly, even as participants began practicing yoga for recuperation, as described later, they expressed the same orientation to their bodies.

Understanding Nonwork Activities as a Source of Recuperation

With the earlier perspective on overwork, participants indicated they held an initial understanding of yoga as a recuperative practice that helped them address the stress and wear and tear on their bodies brought about by overwork. Accordingly, one participant shared, "[yoga] is really helpful for my body … [I have] arthritis head to toe" [p4A], whereas another who disclosed that she had back pain explained, "I went into [the teacher training] thinking, 'Okay. I'll stretch my body and I'll feel better'" [p5A]. A participant who was practicing consistently and "always felt good afterward" decided to join her community when her marriage was in difficulty because she "needed to take some space for [her]self" and "deepen her practice" [p10B]. Another participant recounted her experience with beginning yoga once wherein she could "tell within a few weeks that it was starting to help some with the flexibility" and how she began incorporating yoga stretches in her hotel room into her work travel routines [p5B]. Although this perspective on yoga certainly provided participants with some degree of ease, it did not alleviate the mode of being that was constantly pushing them to achieve work demands.

Altering Somatic Engagement Through Relational Reflexivity

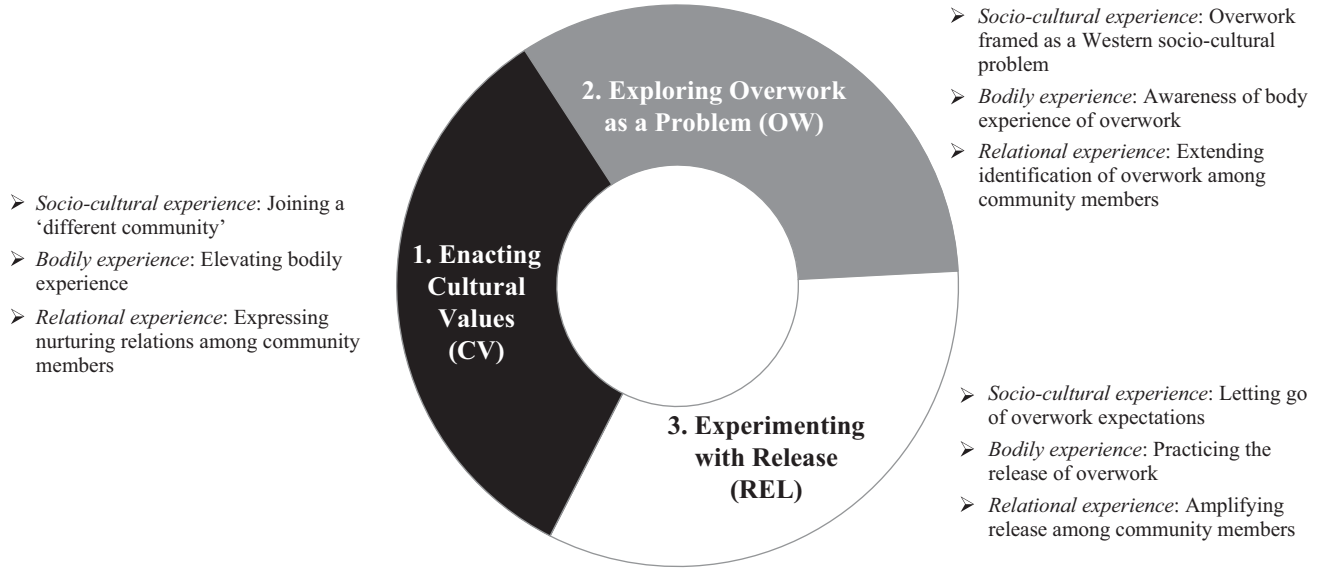
Over the course of our study, participants, in collaboration with other community members, learned to connect awareness to how they engaged their bodies to take action in different settings; that is, they learned to alter their *somatic engagement*. We define somatic engagement as a form of personal engagement, which refers to "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence… and active, full role performances" (Kahn 1990, p. 700). Our use of the word *somatic* foregrounds the culturally sanctioned bodily feel (Shusterman 2008) of this personal engagement that our study participants developed and that evolved through a process we characterize as relational reflexivity. Relational reflexivity consists of three subprocesses, which are detailed in Figure 1: enacting cultural values, exploring overwork as a problem, and experimenting with release. Within the community and through these subprocesses, participants were introduced to yogic beliefs and expectations regarding overwork, encouraged to reflect on and engage with their bodily experiences, and support one another as they developed greater somatic awareness and facility. Thus, these subprocesses entailed socio-cultural, bodily, and relational experiences, which are also revealed in Figure 1. Hereafter, we provide an account, generated from field notes, interviews, archival data, social media postings, and email exchanges, that illustrates the rich dynamics observed as participants learned to alter their somatic engagement.

Enacting Cultural Values

Although taking yoga classes had started as a recuperative project, participants joined teacher training programs to more fully immerse themselves in yoga practice and the values associated with it. Through participation in the community, members recognized it as culturally distinct, becoming comfortable with its different ways, elevated embodied experience making individual bodies and experiences salient, and engaged in nurturing community relations. This established community (i.e., yogic) beliefs and practices regarding bodily experience as different from that which they were familiar with.

Joining a Different Community. In various ways, participation in the community underscored that participants were undergoing a new and different experience, setting the stage for them to develop a distinct perspective. FlowB binders handed out on the first day of the program contained pictures of bearded, robed gurus that represented the lineage that participants were working to join. Incense sticks were often burned during raja sessions, and teachers shared their favorite scents and where to buy them. In addition, the training program instructor and senior trainers regularly eased participants into trying out and performing unfamiliar practices. For example, at one weekly raja, or yoga philosophy, session (centered on reading and discussion of the yoga sutras), the instructor encouraged students in the practice of chanting Om as something they would

Figure 1. Relational Reflexivity Process



be using to begin classes by emphasizing first, its mundaneness and, second, that it was not required. She recounted, "In India, Om is everywhere, on the taxi dashboards, drink bottles, it is the vibration that brings us together." Then, recognizing that practices such as this may be experienced as dissonant for participants, she encouraged, "if you have a problem with what I'm doing, come and talk to me. I can do something about it. There are options to be comfortable" [p1B]. Similarly, another participant revealed how new her community's practices were to her. When asked about FlowA yoga in particular, she said, "I don't know it. I can't embody it. I can't speak from a heart space truth about what it is … It's a different style [of yoga]" [p1A].

Elevating Bodily Experience. As a part of this community, bodily experience was regularly brought into the center of awareness and individual members' subjective bodily experience was emphasized as a key referent. Thus, members were encouraged to prioritize attention to bodily experience and to engage with it directly in performing their yoga practice. One of the canonical texts all participants were encouraged to read was BKS Iyengar's Light on Life, which highlighted this teaching in the following way:

> The brain may say: 'We can do it?'
>
> But the knee says: 'Who are you to dictate to me. It is for me to say whether I can do it or not' So we have to listen to what the body says. (Iyengar et al. 2005, p. 30)

The excerpt not only highlights the body specifically, in this case the knee. However, it elevates the status of the knee so that it has a say in the performance of yoga asanas. This emphasis on body experience was also evident in the FlowA researcher's field notes that revealed how her trainer was helping participants understand that knowing where they were in their practice was essential to the trainer being able to teach them to perform yoga postures (i.e., asana) and sequences (i.e., sun salutation) effectively:

> We spent … the first part of the morning just going over- … what we were going to do for the day and then we worked our way into our first kind of hands-on asana workshops, which are essentially teaching us how to do yoga or doing the different postures in the way that this school does them, more classical foundational moves … .we had a little mini practice with sun–the classical sun salutation and sun salutation A and B and incorporated … lots of new things … I think the trainer learned a little bit more about us and our styles, so she spent some time correcting the various things that we did … she [said] "You know you guys need to learn how to do it this way because that's going to affect how you teach other people that are going to copy your patterns." And then we reflected a lot on … - what we learned and what we need to do in the future … .

That the trainer emphasized to students the need to focus on understanding individual participants and their styles in order to be able to correct them appropriately as the way to teach others underscored that individual bodies were a key referent for performance. To teach them and for them to teach others, the starting point was where their bodies were individually in their practice. In this way, embodied experience was highlighted as salient and important.

Expressing Nurturing Relations Among Community Members. Participants enacted nurturing relations in which contributing to one another's developing yoga

awareness and learning was normalized. These nurturing relations were evident in FlowB's ritual practice of greeting each other for weekly raja sessions. As members arrived one by one, someone already present would move forward to greet them with a deep extended hug, look at them directly, and ask the question, "How are you doing?" The FlowB researcher's field notes remarked on these interactions as noticeable, "Wow these hugs are longer and deeper than any seen in the yoga studio—not entirely comfortable with them."

Consistent with this, participants were expected to contribute to one another's learning in each community. In this respect, strong norms of egalitarianism guided community member interactions and was evident in the idea that everyone, including those with different levels of experience should contribute to community members' learning. Thus, although the most experienced yoga teachers directed the programs and provided opportunities for self-improvement, members without positional authority were vital cocreators of these experiences and were expected to help participants attain appropriate levels of performance (Scott 2010). In the following instance, a participant shared how her peers and her trainer all aided her development:

> I think just in general [it was helpful] for [my peers] to show up and kind of be vulnerable and reveal themselves. Like, you need that verbal and non-verbal support, you know. You need to know that it's recognized and that someone is there. And [the teacher has] really been there for each of us. You know what I mean? Even thinking about the Friday night, I mean, she was kind of quiet those nights. She kind of let us just kind of guide our way. And if she needed to intervene, she would, or redirect or whatever …. And the food [everyone brought], even something simple as that was, like, perfect, you know, we're nourishing each other, you know. It's just–it's always a common theme for us. [p9A]

Exploring Overwork as a Problem

Overwork was a form of experience that both communities were interested in altering. Overwork as a form of action was frequently made salient as a socio-cultural problem consistent with Western cultures. Trainers emphasized that overworking is something that our society values, setting it up as a specific point of differentiation from that expressed by yogis. Awareness of the bodily experience of overwork in action was made explicit in each community and it was underscored and extended by community members who helped each other identify and respond to each other's instances of overwork as needing to be addressed.

Overwork Framed as a Western Socio-Cultural Problem. Trainers characterized overwork critically as a Western socio-cultural problem, distinguishing this orientation to work from yogic forms. For instance, from a cultural standpoint, one celebrity trainer described the characteristics of people "who liked to see things happen" and routinely engaged in overwork in the "Western world":

> … people who, in the Western world, might be dubbed 'Type A" … get really frustrated if their [energy] gets stuck in mundane ways. They like to see things happen. They like to feel engaged. Often, if they don't get to exercise, they start to feel stagnant and toxic. [FlowA article]

Similarly, a FlowB celebrity trainer teaching a workshop jokingly pointed out to participants that people bring this overworking orientation with them to the yoga studio as they take up the practice "'First they come for the sweat and the work out, two months later they're crying like a baby, and within 8 months they're in an Ashram in PA.' Everyone laughs knowingly." (FlowB fieldnotes). Reference to participants "in an Ashram in PA" (that is a place for pursuing yoga, meditation, and other spiritual practices in the state of Pennsylvania) underscores the transformation that occurs in participants that comes about as a result of their leaving behind Western culture's overworking orientation in the context of exercise. Some participants identified overwork as part of their upbringing and what the broader culture communicated to them. Thus, one participant noted," In the West, we're never taught to say you can't … my Mom would kill me. We have to do it all, soccer mum, mother, friend" [p3B].

Awareness of Body Experience of Overwork. Ongoing and repeated calling attention to the overworking body enabled participants to become aware of their subjective bodily experience of overwork, connecting awareness, and action. As an example of this building awareness, during the physical asana practice, the training in FlowB regularly invited participants to examine themselves as they held a challenging pose, such as *revolved triangle* (involving balance and deep twisting), inviting them to find where their body felt like it was tense and straining. "Scan your body, find where you are straining, are you clenching your jaw?" Similarly, a story told by a celebrity teacher in the FlowB community about a participant's efforts to learn meditation highlighted the awareness that was missing from the student's efforts to overwork:

> [The teacher] told the story of a student who had approached her after a yoga class and declared, "I'm going to meditate 40 minutes a day, five times per week." In response, the teacher had replied, "You're going to meditate for three minutes, twice per week." To this, the student insisted, "No, I'm going to meditate 40 minutes, five times per week" to which the teacher firmly stated, "So, you're going to meditate

for three minutes once a week. You have to build your practice." (FlowB fieldnotes)

Participants began to become more aware of instances of overwork like these in the community. One participant revealed her learning:

> Some of the more complicated asanas are challenging for me. The weekend that we did hips and inversions I think I cried during lunch on both of those days. At one point, I was like, "I want to go home, and I don't want to come back today." [p16A]

Extending Identification of Overwork Among Community Members. Community members underscored and extended awareness of the bodily experience of overwork in action when they called attention to instances of overwork in each other and shared stories of recognizing overwork in themselves. For example, when a participant was struggling to understand how to apply the yoga techniques and concepts, she recounts herself as sitting there unable to draft a teaching plan for a hypothetical yoga class (i.e., write out an asana sequence). She shared:

> For me the thought of sitting down and having to write out a sequence was … so far away from my knowledge base …. I just remember sitting there. I mean at one point, one of our fellow peers asked me … 'Are you alright? You normally talk.' And I said, 'I have no idea where to start …. I do not know where things go at all.'[p5A]

Her recollection highlights how a fellow participant recognized that she was struggling with the action, "You normally talk" and her situation required intervention, 'Are you alright?' In another illustration, during dinner at a fellow participant's house, the participant talked about being agitated and aggravated because of the competition in yoga classes and wanting to practice alone in her own home instead. She shared:

> I don't like going to [yoga] practice …. The more I go the more I'm like, 'I hate this.' …. I noticed that every time I come back home, I'm freaking agitated. I'm so aggravated because I'm in a classroom and that somebody is telling me what to do …. I think it's me. I've got these people around and I feel like I have to compete … [p2A]

In sharing this story, this participant is exploring with community members her experience of struggling to let go of the need to strive and overwork. Her remarks that she noticed her agitation and reflected that it was connected to a need to compete indicates her growing ability to discern what she was experiencing bodily.

Another instance of the community helping participants to recognize and examine when they were pushing themselves beyond their abilities is evident in informal conversation among community members. Following a particularly challenging FlowB asana class, as students sat on cubbies putting on their shoes and jackets, students were speaking and joking about the difficulty of the poses and the intensity of the class overall. "Now where are you tightening, holding tension" asked one of the participants who imitated the trainer's voice. The students laughed, "I know even when you know not to push, it's so hard to not do it" another remarked [FlowB fieldnotes].

Thus, community members were interested in and began helping each other explore their shared and individual experiences of overwork to amplify the community teachings. Through such exchanges, community members recognized and more broadly explored their bodily experiences of overwork to begin helping them integrate their acting and aware bodies. Thus, as participants were learning to prioritize their attention to the body and engage with their bodily experiences, they were also learning to identify where and when they were pushing themselves.

Experimenting with Release

As participants began to explore and become more aware of their overwork experiences, they began learning and introducing an alternate form of engagement into their activities that was more easeful; that is, they began experimenting with release, making more choiceful and reflective adjustments to their bodily experience (Shusterman 2009). This was accomplished through highlighting the importance of releasing overwork expectations in favor of expectations centered on individual selves as part of yoga, practicing the adjustment of overeffort to more easeful action, and enacting emergent instances of doing so among community members.

Letting Go of Overwork Expectations. Community trainers underscored that rather than maintaining expectations for overwork, being a part of the yoga community meant participants should let them go and redirect their exertions to ones that were less effortful and based on their own desired selves. Aphorisms such as "practice only leads to more practice" and "the only thing you can be advanced in in yoga is the quality of your being" were regularly uttered by trainers when students expressed frustration that they were not getting their asanas and their sequences correct. These emphasized what distinguished a yogic approach to expectations for pushing oneself to get it right. Teachers underscored this pushing as inconsistent with yoga. During an early philosophy class, a senior teacher and alumna of the program described the transformation of her expectations. She described her prior self as "a pleaser, artist, scientist" always concerned that her yoga practice did not live up to expectations of what it should be. "My practice isn't coming," she recounted

she would regularly say to herself. She described she was now in a different place, namely, "You set your own practice and that's the best thing" [p3B]. In another instance, one participant revealed how early in the training program the teacher alerted her to her "overthink[ing]" of yoga philosophy, suggesting that she set aside that effort. The exhortation to "just go with it" or "let that go" was familiar. She recounted the incident:

> The Gita was a little different but reading the Sutras, I was like, again, a little confused by all of that. It's not super accessible even though the commentary is really helpful in that book … [The lead teacher] said on the first day, and she said this to me beforehand. She was like, 'Just go with it. Just go with it. Don't overthink anything. Don't overthink it, just go with it and feel it and then it will come to you.' [p16A]

The teacher's suggestion to "go with it" suggested that she need not build expectations for complete understanding of the Sutras into her reading efforts but should work with where she was. The student's recounting the exchange as happening on the first day underscored that this was a value and norm central to the yoga community.

Practicing the Release of Overwork. As in the instance described previously, trainers regularly cued participants to reduce overwork and find moments of release in their bodies: to "find somewhere you can soften" their bodies, building awareness of enacted release. Thus, directions such as the following were regularly given: "Pay attention to the way your body feels in the pose … cultivate that ease, bliss in the pose. As we get older, we are going to lose our ability to perform certain asana, but we are always going to be able to have that feeling" [p18A]. In this way, trainers cued participants to be aware of and to experience release. In another instance, participants discussed their concerns about being able to teach yoga asana sequences without making mistakes or forgetting what pose was supposed to come next, one experienced community alumna remarked, "if it doesn't come to you, don't worry, put them in child's pose" [p13B]. All participants were familiar with child's pose, and it represented an asana they could always introduce into a sequence to make room for recollection, enacting the very release the trainer was recommending for the stressed students.

Initially, participants relied on cues from trainers to reduce overwork and find moments of release. For instance, one participant described how the trainers helped her to let go of the distress she was feeling as she tried to simultaneously learn Sanskrit and philosophy (i.e., dualism):

> [My emotions] just sort of opened up and it was the Sanskrit and all the dualism and all that stuff. So, I just said to [the assistant trainer] … that I was just having a hard time …. I believe she told [the lead trainer] and then [the lead trainer] just caught my eye and caught up with me. She said, 'What's going on?' and I said, 'I'll start crying if I talk to you.' She said, 'God! Imagine if I gave you a hug.' That's when she said, 'You're going through a lot. You're opening it all up. Just let that stuff go' …. Now, I try to let [challenging experiences like these] pass through …. [and] I'm just putting the Sanskrit to the side. [p1A]

Thus, in addition to providing participants with broad tips for reducing overwork, such as "just let that stuff go," trainers reinforced instances of physical release in order to motivate its future enactment.

Amplifying Release Among Community Members. Learning to respond to cued instances of somatic release provided participants with a model for helping other community members find release when needed, extending the enactment of ease. Community members, then began to encourage each other to experiment with release, amplifying it. For instance, as part of the program, participants were required to practice teaching yoga sequences to small groups of their peers. However, practice teaching was often a frustrating experience for both the person instructing and those being instructed. For the practicing teacher, there were feelings of inadequacy as they mentally and verbally searched for the Sanskrit names of yoga poses while also struggling to recall how the poses were to be aligned in a sequence. For the participants being instructed, there were experiences of physical strain as they held yoga poses for unpredictable periods of time while waiting for the practicing teacher to call out the name of the next pose. The FlowA researcher's field notes revealed how one of her groups decided to make their practice teaching session easier and less overwhelming for all:

> Each person led each version of sun salutation, and then after that my group decided that we were struggling mostly with the Sanskrit so we just sat in a circle and just practiced saying the Sanskrit attached to each of the asanas together as a group, and one of the people in my group felt that this was really helpful because all she did was concentrate on one aspect of what we need to know as opposed to talking, teaching, instructing, etc. all at the same time, which can be a little bit overwhelming [for everyone].

During challenging times like these, participants provided one another with support to help them experience greater ease. As an example of informational support, a FlowB participant shared an article with her community about navigating physical injuries following a discussion on the same topic. The article provided participants with tips on how to manage pain (i.e., obstructions) with greater ease:

> … it is essential to see that the obstructions that appear in your path, whether physical or mental, are meant to be there for your learning and growth. Somehow you have to trust the process, let go and see the potential openings.

Patterns of Relational Reflexivity and Shifts in Somatic Engagement over Time

Taken in total, the three subprocesses of relational reflexivity helped participants alter their somatic engagement in the community. Our data also suggest that different elements of relational reflexivity were prioritized at different points in time and these patterns contributed to shifts in somatic engagement. Figure 2 illustrates these patterns and shifts in more detail, which we discuss hereafter.

Centering Bodily Experiences. The earliest pattern of relational reflexivity helped participants to center their bodily experiences in the community. Much of the learning priority early on in the program was focused on enacting cultural values and, more specifically, learning how to adapt to new and different experiences. An example of this in the FlowA community was in the unveiling the "logistics" of the yoga teacher training program. The FlowA researcher's field notes revealed:

> … we reviewed the syllabus that the trainer put together for quite some time and people seemed to be very overwhelmed. People asked a lot of questions about everything … each moment that she went through one assignment that was due. We spent a good deal of time on that.

Exploring overwork as a problem and experimenting with release early on were also important since these processes gave participants a chance to become more aware of their bodily experiences upon entering the community, including a tendency to subordinate their body to other demands. For instance, participants often struggled to enact community values that was evident in their constant pushing. One participant reflected on a challenging yoga class early on in the program in which she and her fellow participants felt tired and exhausted from treating the body as an instrument:

> The hardest part was the hip openers and inversions day. I think that tore everybody down and not even in terms of being physically tiring. It was mentally exhausting. [p13A]

For this participant, experimenting with release was an emotional experience. She revealed: "I definitely went home and cried for a little while … " [p13A].

Learning to lean on fellow participants for support also emerged as a core early learning and was especially helpful in beginning to find moments of release. For instance, FlowB participants created a Facebook community and regularly posted affirmations and instructional resources for all participants. One early post was from an article titled, "10 things yoga students need to stop saying." Item number two stated, "I'm sorry. Whether you're sorry about your performance or how it's affecting others, it's all something you and your classmates should welcome as a learning experience, not a burden."

Cued Adjusting Between Overwork and Release. By the midpoint of yoga teacher training, relational reflexivity was helping participants adjust between overwork and release more regularly when cued by other community members. Cultural values were being reinforced through different interactions with community members, which also magnified overwork as a problem and release as a solution. Yet, exploring overwork and experimenting with release were key priorities at this point in time. In this respect, participants were learning to adjust between overwork and release more regularly in different community activities and practices. For example, the FlowB researcher's field notes revealed a moment when Terri, a FlowB participant, walked into the space in front of the FlowB senior teacher just vacated by another participant as students were rolling up their mats from a required Saturday class. The FlowB director was sitting cross-legged on her blanket. She looked up at Terri and said:

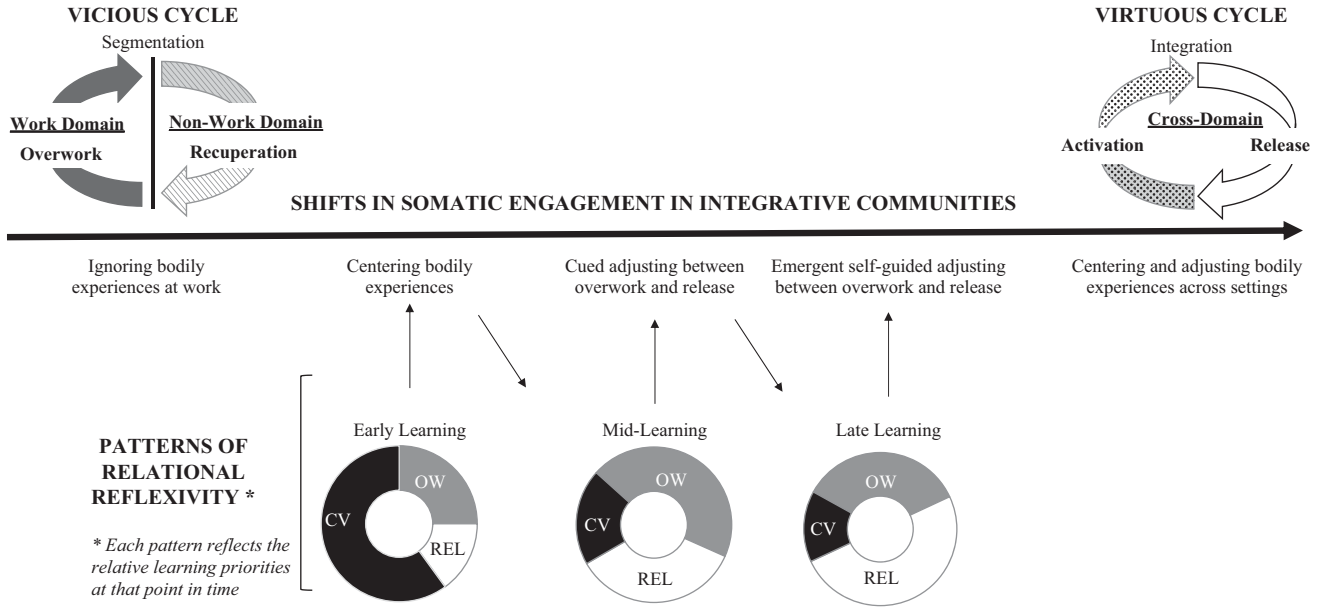
> "I've been watching you. You've got a lot going on right now." Talking to Terri for a while, the director raises her voice making eye contact with the students still in the studio, saying, "that's a term you'll hear me use … Swaha—give it up. Let go."

Cues from the senior teacher and other participants to let go of instances of overwork enabled Terri and other participants to find moments of release in the community. The FlowA researcher's field notes illustrated moments of letting go in a yoga class that were cued through the words of the song *Amazing Grace*, which was sung by the teacher toward the end of a yoga class. The researcher commented:

> [The end of class] was very moving because there was this woman who apparently is a yoga teacher who does lots of things—a beautiful singer. She sang while we were in savasana at the end of the class, and I think everybody cried because the class was so moving and so emotional in many respects, and then to have this beautiful voice come in there and sing these wonderful songs about being on your journey and Amazing Grace, and already I think being kind of emotionally exhausted …. I think it was just easy just to let the tears go. That's the first time I have ever cried in a yoga class. It was quite an interesting experience.

Emergent Self-Guided Adjusting Between Overwork and Release. By the end of yoga teacher training, relational reflexivity was helping participants adjust

Figure 2. Model of Altering Somatic Engagement Across Boundaries



between overwork and release much more independently; that is, as they experienced overwork in the community, they learned to adjust and release in a much more self-guided way. In this respect, adjusting one's experiences of overwork on one's own became the dominant learning priority toward the end of the program. Enacting cultural values and exploring overwork continued to be reinforced. An example of self-guided adjustment was in the experience of one participant who was nervous about taking the final yoga teacher training certification exam. She revealed:

> I actually sent [the senior teacher] an email and said, 'I'm going to retake the test. I'm going to take it, but I'm retaking it … because I don't feel as confident in the information …. Then, I started thinking about trusting the process … it's okay to just be where you are. It's going to be alright. The information is there. [p9A]

Although retaking the test and notifying the teacher that this is what she wanted to do was one option for releasing her test-taking anxiety, this participant believed that avoiding what felt uncomfortable was her traditional response to stress, which did not usually reduce her stress. Instead, she decided to experiment with release, trusting the process, which was something that she had learned to do in the community whenever she was experiencing overwork (e.g., emotional anxiety).

As another example, the FlowB researcher's field notes revealed an encounter with another participant where they were comparing weird experiences that occurred during a three-hour breathing class session the week before, for example, sensations that felt like "a squirrel running up my back" and "a twitch in my throat." In response to the researcher's inquiry into how she responded to those experiences, the participant's reply demonstrated self-guided adjusting between overwork release. She said "I get nervous at first and kind of tense up and try to push it away and once it kinda keeps resurfacing I just kind of go with it" [p7B]. "I get nervous … and … tense up" reflects her experience of overwork and "I just kind of go with it" illustrates her self-cued release.

The Virtuous Cycle of Activation and Release

Over time, participants applied their growing ability to connect awareness and action in their bodily experience more broadly in their lives outside of the yoga community. Thus, they began to integrate their learned somatic engagement and experience a greater sense of "wholeness" across contexts and situations (Nippert-Eng 1996). Specifically, participants began to question their overworking patterns broadly. They drew on their bodily experiences to practice release to make adjustments to their overworking patterns in the workplace, and they integrated this nonwork community into their whole lives. This self recognizes overwork and takes their awareness and experience of their own acting body into account to integrate yoga into their lives more broadly. This new integrated self who is more complex, for example, a physical therapist who is also a yogi, maintains engagement with the yoga community given that overwork is still valued in the workplace. Thus, sustaining engagement in the yoga community that views overwork as a problem and encourages release is important for resisting overwork in all domains, including work.

Questioning Overwork

Participants now questioned their approach to overwork. They questioned prior reactivity at work: inserting themselves into situations unnecessarily; they challenged how much they were pushing themselves to accomplish work, and they questioned how much time they were working. For example, one participant who was also a pastor of a Christian church revealed how she wanted to become less reactive to challenges at work and how she wanted to teach her congregants the same principle. She said, "instead of 'Living Sadhana' it's called 'Living in Christ' and it's trying to kind of make people think about it on a daily basis … [teaching them to develop] new patterns of thinking" [p8A]. Similarly, another participant described a coworker who has annoyed her in the past because "rather than listening to what you're saying, they're waiting for their turn to speak." The participant described how "picking [her] battle" was the new approach she was taking to engage with this and other coworkers at work.

> I'm not afraid of confrontation, but I pick my battle- … this training, it's taught me a lot of patience …. Rather than making a big deal about something … [I accept when it's] not going to change …. I avoid drama like the plague [p13A]

For this participant, her lived experience of overwork at work is confrontation with coworkers that result in a drama. As a result of yoga teacher training, she now continually questions whether different workplace situations like automatically confronting a seemingly self-centered coworker are the right battle for her to fight.

Participants also underscored their newly gained ability to challenge the necessity of doing too much at work. One participant remarked on the change that now allowed her to examine her response to work demands: "That's been a big shift for me. I am deliberate in using my energy more wisely. Sometimes I'm like, 'I have to get it done, I have to get it done … ' and I know now to pull back and evaluate does this really need to get done now" [p8B]. Another participant highlighted her reconsideration of how much she was working, noting that she was more deliberate in how hard she pushed herself. She now had:

> … the tools to create better spaces to make choices … absolutely conscious of the choices that you make … you know … that corporate world is … it's … it's … everybody out (well not everybody) … it's political … 'I want to impress the new CEO'. It's all about people getting ahead … people getting promotions looking out for yourself. [p6B]

Justifying her reconsideration, she remarked of her colleagues who continued to push themselves, that it did not bring them happiness, "so it's like, dude, whatever you're doing it's not working for you … " [p6B].

In addition, participants questioned the time they were spending engaged in work. Questioning time spent working is evident in an exchange between the researcher and another participant at the beginning of a yoga class they rendezvoused at. The participant was a university instructor. In response to the researcher asking "How was your week?," the participant talked about spending the week focused on getting her grades in. She reflected:

> I used to get really stressed about getting grades in on time. I didn't stress it this year —I didn't grade all weekend. I gave my final Friday and turned the grades in Tuesday [instead of Monday] … no lightning bolts. I figured I earned a weekend. Maybe yoga helped. [p7B]

This participant now questioned her prior pattern of taking the need to overwork for granted—that because her final was scheduled for a Friday, she just would have to work through the weekend to meet the Monday deadline. She resisted the assumption of overwork and noted, through reference to "lightning bolts," that no terrible repercussions followed from living her new ideal. She had successfully resisted the old ideal. As another example of questioning time spent working, a participant who was an accountant shared how she was now questioning the long hours that she worked that prevented her from spending time with her family:

> I worked … 60 to 80 hours a week. I was doing that, traveling to Boston, tons of hours … I'm like "alright, I don't wanna work like this, I wanna have a family. I don't believe in having a family and not being around". My father had his own business and tells me to this day his biggest regret is that he worked too much, didn't spend enough time with us. So I take that to heart now. I became an accountant because that's what my grandfather said to do, it was a good job. I made a lot of decisions like that without checking in with me. Doing what the expectations were, and just pushing along. [p11A]

This participant resisted overwork by reconsidering the values that she had been taught by her grandfather and her willingness to push along with others' expectations. As the comments and stories recounted by these participants indicate, they had come to reconsider their patterns of overwork in various ways, and, as we now demonstrate, they successfully made specific adjustments to them.

Using Bodily Experience to Stop Overwork in the Workplace

Participants now engaged with their bodily experiences differently. Specifically, they drew on the principles of somatic engagement cultivated in the community setting, to catch themselves, pause, and pull back from overwork. We refer to this *pausing point* as a bodily

experience of activation. They reduced their bodily muscular exertion; they lessened their reactivity, and they lowered time spent working. As an example, a participant who underscored that her muscular effort at work had changed, shared an experience of practicing activation and its release while she was working on her computer at work:

> I remember the day I was sitting at my computer with my hand on the mouse and I went like this [*right shoulder adjusts and lowers itself*] … I'm like, 'Why did I do that?' I haven't done that with anything before … something had happened in a relatively short period of time where, not consciously but unconsciously, I knew that my shoulder was up in my ear and that wasn't where it should be. And I thought, 'Whoa.'[p2B]

Similarly, a participant who was a Spanish teacher shared how she stopped pushing herself and was also teaching her students to breathe whenever tension and stress were palpable:

> I think that my yoga [teacher training] really shows up in physical manifestation in my work through … .releasing any built-up tension in the body so that stressful and daily discipline issues do not create long-term effects on my body and therefore, health. [I also help] students find a "cool" zone by directing them to simply "breathe" thereby making the learning environment a better place. [p10A]

"Releasing any built-up tension" in her body and teaching students how to find a "cool zone" and "breathe" exemplify the dynamics of using bodily experiences—her own and her students'—to lessen the amount of muscular effort and energy she was expending at work.

Participants also applied what they had learned in the yoga community to connect with their bodily experience to become less reactive at work. One participant revealed her strategy for using her heightened ability to connect action and body awareness, "to catch [her]self" and to redirect her attention away from what was making her "angry" at work to making the effort to "pause" before responding:

> I'm able to catch myself and, before I respond, usually, to things, I can be more discerning and make more of a choice about what my behavior and what my response will be … that also makes a difference for my work because my relationships with people are better because of the way that I think and I pause, and I check in with myself, most of the time, before doing anything. Like, if I get angry, you know, if someone's doing something, I'm really able to take some time with it and pause before I just react to it. [p6A]

Another shared what she was doing with children she taught who had behavioral challenges that she experienced as annoying with limited attention span were frustrating to her. She underscored how connecting with body experience through "com[ing] into yourself" and breathing techniques enabled her and her students to be more relaxed:

> … I have the kids at work … [I taught them] breathing techniques and then I just started doing some guided inventory with them, at the end when they're like laying in *Savasana* … It's [also] really cool to see them doing … child's pose [and to teach them that] … this is where you can kind of just come into yourself and just kind of relax and be in your own little space … .these are tools that they can take with them ultimately for the rest of their lives. [p3A]

Similarly, another participant who is a chief financial officer talked about her weekly department meetings where she had a tendency to push. She noted, that she could now catch herself getting tight and used a technique like the one recommended by the FlowB celebrity trainer at work to move away from irritated at work not progressing to making the effort to a deep breath, which calms [her] and enables her to pull back from impatiently pushing her subordinates to move forward work. She said:

> I use [yoga at work] if I feel there is something and people aren't getting it or understanding it, I can be very impatient and irritated and it's like, 'what is wrong with you' … you know blah blah blah blah. So, when I catch myself, you know I get very tight – I get … . I mean I know it because it is me … I'll do a [*inhales fully and exhales*] deep breath and then I'll just start my breathing … you … nothing elaborate, no alternate nostril breathing [*laughing*] … just paying attention to the inhale and paying attention to the exhale and that calms me physically which helps me to get away from my impatience which does not help those situations. And that is about a once-a-week scenario. [p6B]

Participants also highlighted how their learned somatic engagement helped them to pull back from the need to do too much—pushing themselves and others. A development manager described an adjustment to how she conducted herself at work that enabled her to stop doing too much. This made both her and her work environment more easeful. She noted, "I'm just letting everything happen naturally and organically and living in my body and perceiving things from it instead of trying to do too much which is great—just makes everything kind of relax—including me" [p10B]. She now moderated her own efforts and her tendency to push her direct reports.

Finally, participants engaged with their bodily experience to reduce time spent working. Accordingly, a teacher noted that when she feels she has to keep working regardless of time, which she experiences bodily as a feeling of "I've got to finish, I've got to finish"; now

being "more aware of her body habit for tension," she can "consciously undo it" [p8B] and make decision to come back to a project at another time. Another teacher highlighted that whereas in the past she has prided herself on never taking time off regardless of how she was feeling, she now "honored her body" and took personal time when she felt she needed it [p2B].

Staying Engaged in the Nonwork Community to Sustain Activation and Release

Because participants' broader social context outside of the yoga teacher training community—including their workplaces—largely supported ideal worker norms and remained unchanged during the course of their engagement in the community, participating in the community beyond the training programs supported participants in bringing their new orientation to their working bodies with them into the work domain. This aided their resistance to these overwork norms. Thus, as a nonwork setting, the yoga community became a source of enrichment that participants valued and deliberately maintained to help stop their overwork patterns. For example, at a community gathering, a participant expressed her desire to integrate her life more fully with the yoga teacher training community, doing so in a way that sustained release from overwork tendencies. She made the following proposal:

> Like I really think we should have like a-a football day or like some kind of big potluck outside of like not the weekend. Like a big movie night. Whatever. So we can all get together and maybe we can go hang out at somebody's house. [p10A]

This participant's suggestion that something like a football day or a potluck take place on a weeknight, "not the weekend"—that is on a work night—underscores that there is more to life than working all the time and highlights the role that continuing the yoga community is playing in resisting overwork and bringing more release into her work life. Furthermore, through their maintained engagement with the community, participants shared with each other what was going on in their lives outside the community, including how they were bringing their new orientation to work to their workplace, and they supported each other and helped to normalize these changes. They met for coffee, hosting yoga movie events, identified and shared information about unique opportunities to practice together such as sunset classes on paddle boards and even coordinated trips out of town to attend celebrity classes, and shared what they were doing. In one instance, a participant who worked for a nonprofit organization focused on ending domestic violence invited participants to a play that her organization was sponsoring. In her invitation to the other participants, she revealed the following:

> The people involved, including me, are helping to write this and we are also performing in it!!!! We are all very nervous and excited about this fantastic opportunity. We all have experience on stage…. Sooooo, please come support us. If you can make it, I would be thrilled to see you!!! I personally am trying to plan a party following the play [because] I know I'll need to let loose, maybe even a few down dogs after all that!!! [p2A]

Inviting her community to participate in a stressful work-related event with the possibility of doing a "few down dogs" following the event illustrates how this participant was attempting to both bring the community into her work life and to keep the community going in order to maintain their new view of the self.

Discussion

This paper considers how individuals break the vicious cycle of overwork and recuperation and move toward a virtuous cycle of activation and release. Unquestioning overwork and taking the body for granted so that the body is subordinated to the demands of work is a valued pattern of somatic engagement that is aligned with the image of the ideal worker. Yet, in navigating this image, individuals operate as if they are essentially disembodied, treating the body as a mere instrument that is largely relegated to the nonwork setting, which they view as a context for recuperation and repair. As a result, individuals recover sufficiently with time spent away from work but continue overworking at work, which establishes a vicious cycle of overwork and recuperation between work and nonwork settings.

We identify how individuals develop alternative means of somatic engagement across work and nonwork settings. By voluntarily joining a nonwork community where self-improvement is made possible through learning about the body, individuals call into question the principles that underlay their somatic engagement in different settings. They do not raise these principles in general terms but instead engage in a relational reflexivity process that teaches them to enact new cultural values, explore overwork as a problem, and experiment with release. Aided by other community members, individuals become more aware of and learn to respond to their socio-cultural, bodily, and relational experiences in the community. Initially, they learn to center their bodily experiences by prioritizing their attention to learning new norms in a different community, elevating their bodily experience, and expressing nurturing relations among community members while also exploring work as a problem and learning to experiment with release. As their learning progressed, individuals become more facile in responding to cues to adjust between overwork and release by prioritizing understanding overwork as a Western socio-cultural problem while also letting go of overwork expectations,

becoming more aware of their bodily experience of overwork while also practicing the release of overwork, and extending identification of overwork among community members while also amplifying release among community members. Later, individuals become more adept at self-guided adjusting between overwork and release by prioritizing the release of both their own and their community members' experience of overwork. As participants grow in their awareness and capacity to adjust between overwork and release, they begin to integrate their learned somatic engagement across contexts, applying them to their lives more generally. Specifically, they embody cues to experience release across contexts by replicating activities learned in the community in other settings including work, experiencing the nonwork setting as enriching other life domains including work.

Contributions to Theory

Our study makes several key contributions to past research on work-nonwork boundary management and engagement in work and nonwork settings. Prior research examines how individuals create and maintain boundaries between their work and nonwork domains (Oldenberg 1989, Nippert-Eng 1996, Ashforth et al. 2000). Segmentation or reinforcing the boundaries between nonwork and work settings has been characterized as an optimal boundary management strategy for maintaining the ideal worker image (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks 2015) and, in doing so, can ensure the persistence of overwork and bodily breakdown.

Our study moves forward theorization on the relationships among boundary management, overwork, and the body by providing a positive example of adjusting the ideal worker's assumptions of overwork across work and nonwork settings, highlighting the importance of somatic experience. In doing so, our study demonstrates an alternate path; membership in a nonwork community that brings forward somatic engagement helps members to reconnect reflexively with their bodies across a range of contexts, discriminate between overwork and more easeful bodily experiences, and value and find ways to express the latter. In this respect, our paper reveals how individuals come to reconsider the value and break the persistent cycle of overwork and replenishment through integrative approaches to boundary management in nonwork communities focused on mind and body integration. This helps them experience and engage their bodies differently in work and nonwork settings. That is, in comparison with past research on boundary management that views nonwork settings as impinging on work and creating conflict at work (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, Williams 2000, Rothbard 2001, Fox et al. 2011, Kossek and Lautsch 2012), we reveal a situation in which nonwork experiences enrich people's experiences of work through integrative boundary management strategies. Furthermore, whereas boundary theory research has been criticized for narrow focus on family (nonwork) and work (Piszczek and Berg 2014) contexts, our study demonstrates that it is enriched by considering the impact of third place (Oldenburg 1989) nonwork communities on how actors manage the intersection of different life domains.

In some ways, our insights align with research on off-job recuperation outside of the boundary management literature that suggests that engaging in recuperative activities in the nonwork domain can enable people to re-engage and be productive upon return to work (Sonnentag 2003, Sonnentag et al. 2008a). Prior research highlights that participation in nonwork domains such as in volunteer organizations (Mojza et al. 2010, Sonnentag et al. 2012), hobby communities (Sonnentag and Fritz 2007; Sonnentag et al. 2008a, b, 2012; Sonnentag 2012; Sonnentag and Kuhnel 2016), and even alternative work organizations (Etzion et al. 1998) can help organization members rejuvenate their bodies for work. However, in doing so, this research maintains the ideal worker's separation of work and nonwork that enables individuals to treat recuperative activities as a type of *weekend worship* practice.

In contrast, our work suggests a new avenue for theorization. Rather than seeing such nonwork communities as only sites for personal and bodily recovery and rejuvenation, we theorize that nonwork settings may be productive in helping organization members connect with their bodily experience and develop a more complex and enriching sense of self (Caza et al. 2018). We propose that participation in integrative communities that center bodily experiences and engagement with them can assist organization members in overcoming the disposition that contributes to overworking and often leads to bodily breakdown. In so doing, our findings extend insights from past research on the positive possibilities of including multiple identities at work (Creary et al. 2015). Seeing nonwork settings (and identities) as enriching to work is counter normative in many organizations (Ramarajan and Reid 2013), which means that little research to date has examined how these views may become culturally embedded in the broader work context. Thus, future research may elaborate existing insights on socialization and organizational culture (Michel 2011) by investigating the role of nonwork communities as socialization agents in changing organizational norms around somatic engagement.

Furthermore, we extend research on the bodily basis of overwork by demonstrating that through participation in an integrative community that values integrating work and nonwork domains, individuals can come to give primacy to how they are feeling in their bodies and draw on this to monitor and adjust their bodily experiences in the community and then at work. Organizational ethnographers taking a socio-cultural approach to

the body similarly underscore that it is implicated in overwork's obduracy. Thus, Michel (2011, p. 327) explicitly argues that socializing overwork through the body is particularly effective because it is a form of unobtrusive control. Lupu and Empson (2015) show how senior professionals who, although no longer subject to pressures to overwork, lose their capacity to be reflexive about doing so. These studies demonstrate how, because of it's taken-for-granted character, overwork generated through years of repeated action patterns "imposes itself in a very corporeal, automatic manner, and is perceived as normality" (Lupu and Empson 2015, p. 1325). By and large, organizational ethnographers have theorized how patterns of overwork come to persist (Kunda 1992; Pentland 1993; Covaleski et al. 1998; Mazmanian et al. 2005, 2013; Michel 2011; Lupu and Empson 2015). Thus, internalized embodied norms are theorized to be a powerful form of unobtrusive control (Perrow 1986) through which, of their own accord, organizational actors restrict the range of behaviors considered appropriate and thereby keep cultural norms stable. Although Michel (2011) does demonstrate that transcending these socio-cultural norms is possible, it happens through body breakdown which makes overwork patterns unviable and occasions some individuals to seek creative solutions.

In comparison, our study offers an alternate path to transcending overwork norms through membership in an integrative nonwork community that enables participants to learn to shift their somatic engagement and break down the separation of work and nonwork. Our theorization of the relational reflexivity process not only illuminates the processes that shift somatic engagement in the community (i.e., enacting cultural values, exploring overwork, and experimenting with release), but also the socio-cultural, bodily, and relational experiences that shift as part of these processes. In centering the body, we address a limitation in both the therapeutic (Burnham 2005) and sociological (Archer 2012, Dyke 2015) literature that also theorize the concept of relational reflexivity. Specifically, we reveal how relational reflexivity helped our participants to change the ways that they engaged with their body by re-examining patterns of overwork and developing new ways of reconnecting to their bodies. In introducing the concept of somatic engagement, we leverage insights on personal engagement (Kahn 1990) and the pragmatist perspective on bodily engagement as following from social and cultural conditioning (Shusterman 2009, 2012; Johnson 2017) to underscore how somatic experience can be the ground for deconstructing overwork norms associated with the ideal worker. In doing so, we also contribute to theorizing on the corporeal basis of culture (Giorgi et al. 2015).

Much of what we currently know about relational phenomena that enhance individuals' experiences in organizations is focused on the interpersonal level (Ramarajan and Reid 2020) and focused on cognitive or emotional outcomes (Colbert et al. 2016). We complement this research by offering a somatic perspective on positive relational processes that examines how communities support personal engagement. Specifically, the dynamics of relational reflexivity wherein community members engage with each other to enact its cultural values, explore overwork, and experiment with somatic release echo and underscore the importance of relationships to organization members' ability to do boundary work (Trefalt 2013, Reid 2015). Although past research highlights the importance of workplace relationships, for example, in determining the type of boundary work organization members might engage in (Trefalt 2013) or accessing informal fixes to the structure of work (Reid 2015), relationships in the integrative community help its members develop new kinds of relational experiences and community that connect with bodily experience and adjust between overwork and release across contexts.

Contributions to Practice

In terms of implications for practice, our study proposes that individuals can offset overwork by becoming more aware of their bodily experiences in at least two ways. First, organization members could benefit from reconsidering the narrowness of somatic engagement encouraged by the organizations they participate in, taking responsibility for seeking out communities that foster a broader range of somatic experiences, including more easeful ones. Second, to support more sustainable patterns of somatic engagement, this study does suggest there is value to actively developing practices to enhance awareness and flexibility in how the body is used: practices long present in non-Western cultures whose efficacy is increasingly recognized by both scholars (Good et al. 2016) and practitioners (Gelles 2016). Accordingly, there has been an explosion of interest in the application of mindfulness-based training at work (Hulsheger et al. 2014, Black 2015, Good et al. 2016). Our findings reinforce that developing this awareness and flexibility cannot be willed or be learned in general abstract terms but must take place through bodily practice.

How is the process of relational reflectivity we studied in integrative communities related to mindfulness practice? At the core of mindfulness practice is attention to the present moment with deliberate nonjudgmental awareness (Kabat-Zinn 1994, 2013; Brown et al. 2007; Good et al. 2016; Kachan et al. 2017). Accordingly, among the reflexive processes this study brings forward, exploring overwork is generally consistent with attention to the present moment and awareness that are at the core of mindfulness practice. Additionally, to the extent that present moment awareness stabilizes attention in the present it can engender reduced cognitive

activation (Good et al. 2016); mindfulness is thus consistent with more ease. However, relational reflexivity also differs from current considerations of mindfulness in at least three respects. First, the process we identify takes into consideration the internalization and enactment of community values around the centrality of somatic experience in shaping somatic engagement. In this respect, our process makes explicit the socio-cultural factors that also shape somatic engagement, which is different from mindfulness' emphasis on the individual ones. Second, the process we identify involves recognizing that overwork is present and an intentionality to adjust somatic engagement so that performance is less strenuous. This involves making assessments and judgments about somatic engagement and acting on them. In this respect, namely, intentional assessment and specific interventions, the process we identify is different from mindfulness' awareness: as just noticing what is happening without interfering with the experience through reflection and evaluation (Bishop et al. 2004, Brown et al. 2007). Third, relatedly, this neutral noticing, which is characterized as comprising a cognitive decentering (Bishop et al. 2004) or a *being/nondoing mode* (Good et al. 2016) is viewed as facilitating detachment from work consistent with the recuperative approach to nonwork engagement (Hulsheger et al. 2014). This is the way that yoga is popularly understood: as a site for stress reduction through recovery. In contrast, the relational reflexivity process we identify is oriented toward a *doing* mode. To that extent, this process may more readily transfer into organizational settings than *being/nondoing*-oriented practices such as meditation (Lyddy and Good 2017).

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

This study has a few limitations based on our specific method and our research context. Like all ethnographic research, the strength of our study lies in the richness of our data and our context rather than statistical generalizability (McGrath and Brinberg 1983). With regard to the former, our research is likely to transfer to similar contexts. Our study focused on the experiences of practitioners participating in two different yoga teacher training programs raising the question of how transferable the findings are to other organizations. We selected yoga teacher training as a site because it expressly focused on self-improvement, providing a context to view how it occurs and to explore its implications for the workplace. Although our context may be unconventional, the ease of visibility it offered enabled us to examine "phenomena that are uniquely or more easily observed in nonbusiness or nonmanagerial settings but nonetheless have critical implications for management theory" (Bamberger and Pratt 2010, p. 668). Furthermore, as Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 124) note, "transference can take place between contexts A and B if B is sufficiently like A on those elements or factors or circumstances that the A inquiry found to be significant." However, this limitation is mitigated to some degree by the naturalistic generalizability and analytical generalizability of our study.

Thus, at a minimum, our findings and insights on relational reflexivity in particular might apply to people who are interested in improving their somatic experiences in nonwork communities, including people who regularly participate in fitness, athletic, or other embodied practices such as capoeira where through community interaction people reconsider the body and learn to see it as a place of self-acceptance rather than as instrument. However, they may apply less to some fitness approaches such as running marathons, CrossFit, or ballroom dancing where performative, competitive, and perfectionist cultural ideals may be reinforcing overwork norms (Rader 1991, McKenzie 2013) or may be considered recuperative. Our insights on relational reflexivity might also transfer to therapeutic (Burnham 2005) or coaching contexts (e.g., fitness training, physical therapy, fitness, or professional coaches) in which individuals are helping others/one another to explore and experiment with bodily experiences by enacting cultural values that support these experiences. In addition, our findings might apply to professionals who are using their temporary memberships in off-site educational institutions, executive education, and professional development programs for self-change. In these institutional environments, deep immersion is required for fostering desired and desirable self-change (Petriglieri and Petriglieri 2010, Petriglieri et al. 2017).

Furthermore, our study highlights that self-change can be brought about through nonwork arrangements that maintain contact with the outside world, questioning the assumptions of total encapsulation as a necessary condition. Future research might also explore variations in the virtuous cycle of activation and release and how different variations are influenced by participation in an integrative community. In addition, an outstanding question is whether activation and release experiences have implications for others' perceptions of their prototypicality. Do individuals feel that they have to express particular forms of somatic engagement such as overwork in order to become more prototypical members of a profession? Are those who are perceived to overwork more than others considered more prototypical members of a profession? Then, does release help or hinder how others' view one's commitment to their professional growth and development? Future research might consider more specifically the relation among somatic engagement and professional identity in using organizations.

Both limitations and opportunities for future research flow from the gender composition of our studies. Most of our participants were female. Unlike in India, where

historically, most teachers, yoga gurus, and students have been men (Singleton 2010), in the United States, women comprise the majority of yoga students and yoga teachers. In 2016, approximately 72% of students were female (Macy 2016), although recently men have been participating at a growing rate (Macy 2016). Although this difference can be accounted for by popular perceptions of yoga as offering a *chick workout* (Niiler 2013), consistent with theorizing on the gendered nature of sports activities where feminine activities are characterized by gracefulness and nonaggressiveness (Klumsten et al. 2005), it does raise questions as to how gender might interact with identified somatic practices. We can only speculate that women were especially attracted to this particular type of integrative community and that, from a practical perspective, yoga teacher training may be especially useful for engaging women in altering their somatic engagement.

At the same time, we speculate that the desire to find a body-centered integrative community and the desire to practice body-centered integration in the work domain may be heightened in this context because the context amplifies the experiences of those who may already be struggling to fit the ideal worker prototype (Acker 1990, Correll et al. 2007). In addition to the general challenges women face fitting this prototype, in the United States, women continue to carry a larger share of the domestic burden in the nonwork context, with the companies in which they work having few mandates to support them (Hochschild and Machung 1990, Perlow 1997, Pfeffer 2018), a reality only emphasized by the current COVID-19 pandemic (Cohen and Hsu 2020, Kniffin et al. 2020). Furthermore, their continued stagnant labor force participation rates suggest they find their efforts to fit the ideal worker prototype unsustainable (Pfeffer 2018). Accordingly, it is reasonable to argue that women may be particularly drawn to alternate communities (consistent with feminist ideals) that seek to undo separations between work and nonwork, to give primacy to personal concerns and to foster individual well-being (Martin et al. 1998), and that they would practice the body-centered integration learned and normalized in these alternate communities across life contexts. Future research should examine more closely the gender dynamics of integrative communities and explore any potential linkages to gender dynamics in the workplace.

Furthermore, although we did not explicitly account for the racial/ethnic composition of our communities, on the surface, participants in each community appeared to belong to a variety of racial/ethnic groups. We did not find any evidence in our study to suggest that the demographics of the community including the gender and racial/ethnic composition shapes whether and how somatic engagement shifted over time. However, given research on relationships across differences in the workplace in the field of studies that suggests that demographics shape people's lived experiences in organizations (Phillips et al. 2009, Creary et al. 2015), we believe that a good avenue for future research on somatic engagement would be to examine the role of demographic differences including race/ethnicity explicitly.

The boundary conditions around transferability, however, would be a critical issue for future research. For example, it is not clear that our model would apply equally to in-house and on-site training programs, and what variations might be introduced by examining gender or race/ethnicity explicitly. However, the principle of analytic generalizability suggests that by contributing to theory, inductive research may also facilitate greater understandings of the theory to which it is contributing (Pratt 2009). Namely, our research incorporates different members' accounts of their somatic experiences in order to build a theory of altering somatic engagement across boundaries.

Conclusion

Past research often maintains the image of the ideal worker's separation of work and nonwork domains, which can have negative consequences including bodily and psychological breakdowns. The nonwork setting, if not treated as a source of conflict, is often treated as a recuperative site for undoing the harmful effects of work on the body. Yet, our study builds beyond these insights to reveal how integrative communities situated in the nonwork setting can help individuals learn to engage with their bodies in more sustainable ways. Relational reflexivity is a critical process for altering somatic engagement and helping individuals to break the cycle of overwork and recuperation. Our theory of altering somatic engagement across boundaries provides new ground for understanding the nonwork setting as enriching work and other life domains. We hope our insights will stimulate future research in this regard in the field of organizational studies and its relation to other work and life domains.

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Endnotes

[1] The Feldenkrais method uses gentle movement and directed attention to adjust ways of moving and acting.

[2] Both FlowA and FlowB studies were reviewed by each institution's institutional review board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research and approved as minimal risk (Protocols 12.065.01 and 2011-10-03-7471, respectively).

[3] When quoting participants in our study, we include notation that identifies them by their participant number and yoga community. For example, [p5B] means participant number 5 in the FlowB yoga community. [p13A] means participant number 13 in the FlowA yoga community.

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