THE ROLE OF STATE AND MARKETS IN THE INTEGRATION OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE INTO AMERICAN HEALTH CARE: AN INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE


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The importance of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is growing in American health care, yet is largely absent from the medical sociology literature. Especially unexamined is the role of state and markets, two key institutional factors shaping the role of CAM in the contemporary society. This dissertation begins to fill that lacuna by using a mixed-methods design to investigate how state policy toward CAM practices has developed at the local and federal level, and with what effect on the proliferation of CAM practices. I also examine how the dominant health care market shapes the niche market for CAM health services. I conclude that CAM could not have developed if not in the presence of friendly state policies and by utilizing existing market mechanisms available in the mainstream medical system, becoming effectively a "market within a market" rather than an alternative to it.

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