

# SEMINARIS ISOR

## INVESTIGACIONS EN SOCIOLOGIA DE LA RELIGIÓ

# "Mindfulness Meditation and Secular Evolution"

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**Sala de reunions de la Fac. de CCPP i Sociologia (UAB)**

*While the practice of meditation is often considered to lie at the heart of Buddhism, it is also deemed the element most detachable from the tradition itself (McMahan 2008).*

Though studies of meditation through the frameworks of Buddhism, Hinduism, or indeed any other religious tradition remain vital, the present literature has overlooked the true sociological significance of this paradox more generally. This presentation begins by tracing the modern trajectory of meditation, starting with its role within various new religious movements in the latter half of the twentieth century through to its more recent co-option by the spiritual-but-not-religious, and finally the emergence of the contemporary milieu of mindfulness. While the current ubiquity of mindfulness meditation is typically identified as the latest culmination of the secularisation thesis, a closer look into the discourse and practice of mindfulness reveals many more characteristics that are typically associated with the religious. This potentially signals a turning point in the 'epistemic capacity' of modernity's building block - the secular (Caputo 2001), and raises a number of timely challenges and opportunities for the sociology of religion in particular, and the social sciences as a whole.