

Abstract

The Role of Religion in the Legitimization of Political Decision-Making Processes: A Comparative Study of the Socio-Cultural Aspects of Secularization in Germany and Iran

by Anastasia Henß¹, Nourzaman Riazi¹

¹University of Cologne

doi: [10.61936/themind/202412129](https://doi.org/10.61936/themind/202412129)

Secularization is often considered, as a prerequisite for a democratically constituted society. The characterization by the institutional separation of religious beliefs and practices, and their transition from the public to private sphere, profoundly influences the application of mind-body medicine (MBM). The integration of practices such as yoga and mindfulness in various settings, including schools, hospitals, and businesses in the United States and Europe, exemplifies this impact. Through secularization, mindfulness has evolved into a scientifically endorsed tool, decoupled from its religious origins. As a result, it is gaining widespread acceptance and use in medical contexts, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

Sociologists have long argued that modernization, individualization, and democratization would lead to religion losing its significance both individually and socially, potentially disappearing altogether. For example, Max Weber linked secularization to the "disenchantment of the world," while Émile Durkheim highlighted the loss of religion's social function. However, recent studies challenge these theories by highlighting the

paradoxical resurgence of religious relevance in secular societies like the United States and Germany.

This research project examines the interplay between secularization and culture. By analysing these key terms and the socio-cultural factors that have driven secularization in Germany, the study employs a hermeneutic approach to explore the economic, legal, and political contexts of the 18th and 19th centuries. A comparative analysis of the secularization processes in Germany and Iran further elucidates the complex dynamics shaping the relationship between religion, culture, and politics.

This analysis ultimately aims to clarify the ongoing role of religion in secularized societies and to refine the concept of culture. Understanding the cultural implications of secularization is crucial for enhancing the relevance and applicability of MBM. These findings suggest that MBM could have a transformative impact on healthcare and education systems, further supporting the integration of secularized mindfulness practices into these fields.

Keywords: Secularization – Mind-body-medicine (MBM) – Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) – Modernization – Religion and culture – power balance - Comparative analysis (Germany and Iran)

