

Resocializing Corporate Mindfulness and Meditation: A Relational-Sociological Account of Mindfulness Course Curricula in the Workplace

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Abstract : This paper investigates how corporate actors forge commensurability between Buddhist-based mindfulness techniques and day-to-day organizational life. In-depth interviews were conducted with mindfulness instructors certified through Google's Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI), an organization that designs corporate mindfulness program curricula based on their experiences guiding courses in Fortune 500 companies. Drawing from anti-essentialist sociology and interpretive data analysis, this paper describes instructors' use of their standardized teacher guidebooks, a regulatory script all SIYLI-certified instructors must adhere to, and instructors' reinterpretations of teaching protocols at the local level. Instructors mediate standardized rules through their embodied knowledge, perceived receptivity and effect of a given audience, and their political values. Instructors also resist standardizing practices by developing creative, under-the-radar tactics to deviate from the guidebook and assert their own spiritual autonomy. This research contributes to growing debates challenging critical and neoliberal accounts of capitalist abstraction.

Keywords : anti-essentialism, corporate culture, interpretive methods, mindfulness and meditation, relational sociology

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