

Religious exclusivity and psychosocial functioning

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In the present study we sought to clarify links between religious exclusivity, as form of intergroup favoritism, and indices of psychosocial functioning. (The study of in group favoritism has generally been invoked within Social Identity Theory and related perspectives). However, there is a lack of literature regarding religious exclusivity from the standpoint of social identity. In particular, the ways in which religious exclusivity is linked with other dimensions of religious belief and practice and with psychosocial functioning, (psychological well-being and self-esteem, aggression and rule breaking, depression and anxiety) among individuals from different religious backgrounds are not well understood. A sample of 8545 emerging-adult students from 30 US universities completed special measures. Measure of religious exclusivity was developed and validated for this group. The results suggest negative correlations between exclusivity, psychological well-being and self-esteem, also positive correlations between aggression and rule breaking, depression and anxiety. Exclusivity appears as predictor for impaired psychosocial functioning low self-esteem and low psychosocial well-being in for individuals from organized faiths, as well as for those identifying as agnostic, atheist or spiritual/nonreligious. The necessity of creating similar national sensitive religious exclusivity measure for Georgian population and study of religion exclusivity is being discussed. These findings are discussed in terms of Social Identity Theory and Terror Management Theory (TMT).

Biography

Marina Gegelashvili is a Psychiatrist and an Associate Professor of Faculty of Art and Science in Ilia State University, Republic of Georgia. He is also the Head of Mental Health Department in Neuro-developmental Centre from 2014-2015 and a Fulbright Scholar in University of Miami, Florida.

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