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Spillover of Spousal Rejection to Parental Rejection of Children: A New Line of PARTheory Research in Pakistan and Elsewhere

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Marital conflict is often associated with problematic and negative parenting (Erel & Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Sturge-Apple, Cummings, & Davies, 2010; Tatsuo et al, 2010). Maritally distressed parents often have a lowered capacity to deal effectively with the day-to-day challenges of raising their children. More specifically, marital conflict, hostility, disharmony, and other negative marital interactions make both spouses tense, angry, frustrated, and irritable. These negative emotions are then often displaced onto children in a process known as the "spillover effect" (Erel & Burman, 1995; Gerard, et al, 2006). Consistent with parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory), all these negative emotions and behaviors tend to be perceived by spouses as a form of rejection (Rohner 1986, 2004; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2012).

Studies worldwide generally support PARTheory's postulate that children and adults tend to organize their perceptions of interpersonal acceptance-rejection around the same four classes of behavior (Rohner, 2004). These include warmth and affection (or the opposite, coldness and lack of affection), hostility and aggression, indifference and neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Undifferentiated rejection refers to individuals' belief that their partner or parent does not really like, approve of, care about, or love them. Pancultural evidence also supports PARTheory's postulate that the experience of rejection tends to be associated with a specific constellation of 7-10 personality dispositions. These include 1) hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or problems with the management of hostility and aggression; 2) dependence or defensive independence depending on the form, frequency, timing, and duration of rejection; 3) impaired self-esteem;

4) impaired self-adequacy; 5) emotional unresponsiveness; 6) emotional instability; and, 7) negative worldview. Additionally, PARTheory postulates that the experience of interpersonal rejection is likely to be associated with 8) anxiety, 9) insecurity, and 10) cognitive distortions. Col-

"We conclude that marital conflict, hostility, disharmony, tensions, anger, irritability, and other negative emotions and behaviors in the marital interaction tend to 'spill over' into the parent-child relationship."

lectively these dispositions constitute one possible measure of overall psychological maladjustment.

Reinforced by North American research on the spillover effect of marital conflict, and by PARTheory's basic postulates, I conceived the idea of investigating these issues in Pakistan and elsewhere. It seemed reasonable to expect that parents' preoccupation with marital distress in conjunction with the associated negative personality dispositions described above make it difficult for parents to interact with their children in warm, loving, and accepting ways. Insofar as this is true, then the context is set for children to experience problematic parenting in the form of rejection (Doohan, et al, 2009).

Pakistan is an excellent country for studying this issue because the incidence of family conflict and violence tends to be high. A recent study by Ali, Mogren, and Krantz (2011), for example, reported a lifetime prevalence of psychological maltreatment (84%) and physical violence (58%) between spouses. These statistics occur in a sociocultural context where wives and children are considered to be property of male family members, and

where the use of authority, force, and violence are viewed as appropriate in child rearing and marital relations (Malik, 2001, 2003, 2010; Malik & Rizvi, 2009). Given these facts, we (Malik & Rohner, 2012) asked the question: Are Pakistani children's (boys' versus girls') perceptions of maternal and/or paternal rejection related to their parents' (mothers' versus fathers') perceptions of spousal rejection?

Four measures were translated from English to Urdu for this study. They were the Child form of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire: Mother and Father versions (Child PARQ/Control: Mother and Father; Rohner, 2005b); and, the Intimate Partner Acceptance-Rejection/Control Ques-

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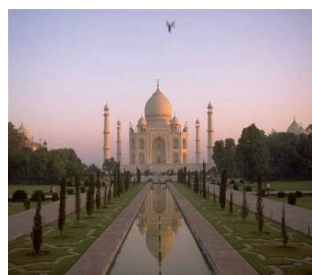
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tionnaire (IPAR/CQ; Rohner 2005a). Husbands and wives responded separately to the IPAR/CQ. Data were collected from 270 nine- through 13-year-old children and their parents (both fathers and mothers) using a snowball procedure. Results indicated that 22% of the children perceived their mothers (and 26% their fathers) to be qualitatively more rejecting than accepting. Twenty percent of the wives perceived their husbands to be qualitatively more rejecting than accepting, and 19% of the husbands perceived their wives to be the same. Results of hierarchical multiple regression showed that wives' perceptions of husbands' rejection predicted children's perceptions of maternal rejection, as well as—but to a significantly lesser extent—children's perceptions of paternal rejection. Similarly, husbands' perceptions of wives' rejection predicted children's perceptions of paternal rejection, as well as—but to a significantly lesser extent—children's perceptions of maternal rejection.

Following this study we (Malik & Rohner, 2011) conducted a second study, this time among Pakistani Americans. Data were drawn from 102 families living in the USA. Children ranged in age from nine through 13 years. The same four measures were used as in the study within Pakistan itself. Results of this study were similar to the results found in Pakistan. That is, wives' perceptions of husbands' rejection predicted children's perceptions of both maternal and paternal rejection. Similarly, husband's perceptions of wives' rejection predicted children's perceptions of both paternal and maternal rejection.

Following the completion of those two studies, Gürmen and Rohner (2012) conducted a third study. This one was among adolescents in Turkey. This study, however, explored the effects of marital distress between spouses on adolescents' psychological adjustment, as mediated by youth's perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance-rejection. The sample consisted of 180 12-through-18-year-old adolescents and their parents. Turkish translations of the Child PARQ/Control, IPAR/CQ, and the child version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Child PAQ) were used. Results revealed that on the average husbands and wives perceived each other to be quite loving (accepting) and only moderately controlling (behavioral control). Similarly, the adolescents tended to perceive both parents to be quite accepting and only moderately controlling. Beyond this, results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that the effects of spousal acceptance-rejection on adolescents' psychological adjustment were mediated by adolescents' perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance. However, there were slight differences for daughters versus sons. Specifically, wives' perception of husbands' acceptance (but not husbands' perception of wives' acceptance) significantly predicted sons' psychological adjustment. For daughters, however, both maternal and paternal acceptance were significant predictors of adjustment.

In summary, we conclude that marital relations tend internationally to be predictive of parenting and psychological adjustment of children through the mechanism commonly called the spillover effect. Parents' preoccupation with marital distress in combination with their personality dispositions make it difficult for them to interact in the same warm, loving way they might if they were in a less stress-producing marital relationship. Psychological factors such as interparental conflict and even parental physiological reactivity to conflict and parent-child relationships may mediate to some degree parent-child

relations (Sturge-Apple et al, 2009). Results such as these may be more meaningful in cultures like Pakistan where family relations are defined by authority, force, and violence. Questions addressed here need to be further tested in other cultures and samples. However, these studies suggest important new directions for research in PARTheory.

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Quiz: How Well Do You Know Your Society?

- 1) In what year was ISIPAR founded?
 - a) 1999
 - b) 2002
 - c) 2006
 - d) 2008
- 2) How often are the international Congresses held?
 - a) Once a year
 - b) Every two years
 - c) Every three years
 - d) Every four years
- 3) Which of the following is NOT an ISIPAR officer?
 - a) Secretary
 - b) Past president
 - c) Vice president
 - d) All are officers
- 4) How many sociocultural/geographic regions is the world divided into for determination of regional representation?
 - a) 5
 - b) 10
 - c) 15
 - d) 20

WISDOM QUOTES

Quotations to inspire and challenge

<http://www.wisdomquotes.com>

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

-Leo Buscaglia

- 5) Which member of the Executive Council may NOT be re-elected for two consecutive terms of office?
 - a) President
 - b) Secretary
 - c) Treasurer
 - d) Regional Representative
- 6) In what country did the Society hold its first meeting?
 - a) Italy
 - b) USA
 - c) Greece
 - d) Turkey
- 7) How many times a year is *Interpersonal Acceptance* (the Society's Newsletter) published?
 - a) Two
 - b) Three
 - c) Four
 - d) On an irregular basis

True/False

- 8) T/F: Membership in the Society is open to anyone who subscribes to its purpose, which is to support and encourage research and practice related to issues of interpersonal acceptance and rejection.
- 9) T/F: The Executive Council consists of the Society's officers plus its Regional Representatives.
- 10) T/F: According to the Society's Bylaws, only members are allowed to attend general Society meetings.
- 11) T/F: According to the Society's Bylaws, one responsibility of the President Elect is to organize the biennial meetings.

Answers

1.C 2.B 3.C 4.B 5.A 6.D 7.B 8. True 9. True
10. False (Visitors are welcome at these meetings) 11. True

Editor: Ronald P. Rohner
Editorial Assistant: Cybeles Onuegbulem

Student Involvement in ISIPAR

Student Research on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection at Agnes Scott College

Carrie Brown

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At Agnes Scott College – a private, women’s college in Decatur, Georgia – every student must take a 400-level course before she graduates. Eight students – Cecilia Alcala, Leah Bryant, Courtney Creer, Nastassia Cummings, Fatimah Nadimi, Hawa Onabanjo, Crystal Riley, and Deborah Willis – chose to take their 400-level course with Dr. **Carrie Brown**. The course, titled “Research in Developmental Psychology Lab,” is designed to give students hands-on experience in research.

Carrie, a member of ISIPAR, decided to have the students base their semester-long research projects on parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory). Carrie first learned about PARTheory from her graduate school mentor, **Judith Gibbons** (also a member of ISIPAR).



From left to right, seated: Crystal Riley, Courtney Creer, & Nastassia Cummings

From left to right, standing: Hawa Onabanjo, Cecilia Alcala, Leah Bryant, Deborah Willis, Fatimah Nadimi, and Carrie Brown

Working with a partner, the students in Carrie’s course have developed research projects that will test if adults’ perceived maternal and paternal rejection predict constructs that have yet to be examined in the PARTheory literature. Cecilia Alcala and Hawa Onabanjo chose experiences in close relationships, as measured by the “Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory” (Fraley et al., 2000). Courtney Creer and Crystal Riley chose forgiveness, as measured by the “Trait Forgiveness Scale” (Berry et al., 2005). Leah Bryant and Nastassia Cummings chose personal hygiene, as measured by the “Hygiene

Inventory” (Stevenson et al., 2009). Fatimah Nadimi and Deborah Willis chose perfectionism, as measured by the “Almost Perfect Scale – Revised” (Slaney et al., 2001).

The students received IRB approval in March. Currently, they are recruiting participants. Their target sample size is 150. In April, the research partners gave a formal research presentation, and they created a research poster. When the semester concludes in May, the research partners will give Carrie a final manuscript.

As soon as the semester ends, the research partners will start preparing abstracts that will be submitted for review for presentation at the Fourth International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection in Chandigarh, India. Although the students will not be able to attend the Congress, they are excited by the opportunity to present their poster research in absentia.

Students are the future of ISIPAR. The recently formed Student Advisory Committee (SAC) is proof that ISIPAR is committed to fostering students’ participation in the Society. ISIPAR members can join the cause by finding ways to bring issues about interpersonal acceptance and rejection to students and to promote student involvement in the Society. Structuring courses, or even course

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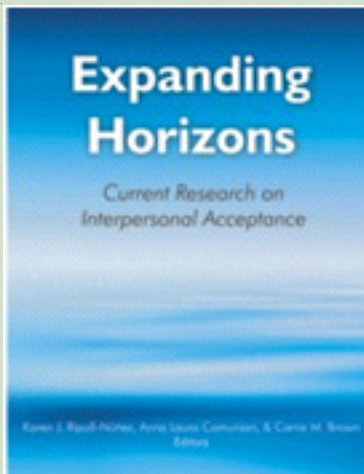
assignments, around PARTheory and other acceptance-rejection topics is a good way for ISIPAR members to give students the opportunity to learn about interpersonal acceptance-rejection. These are just a few examples; there are certainly others. If you have found a way to bring PARTheory and related topics to students, and/or to promote student involvement in the Society, let ISIPAR know. You too may be featured in a future newsletter!

Student Activities

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Rachel Cook, a senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, won a Psi Chi Poster Award at the February 2012 meeting of the Southeastern Psychology Association in New Orleans, LA. The poster, titled "An Indirect Effects Model: Parental Rejection and Fear of Negative Evaluation," reveals that, among female young adults, greater perceptions of parental rejection indirectly lead to greater fear of negative evaluation via higher negative self-adequacy. The second author on the poster, Laura Rundell, recently graduated from Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. In August, she will begin a clinical PhD program at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The third author on the poster, **Carrie Brown** (an ISIPAR member), is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA.

Member Activities Corner



**Karen J. Ripoll-Nunez,
Anna Laura Comunian, &
Carrie M. Brown (Editors)**

Book Information: 265 pages
Publisher: BrownWalker Press
ISBN-10: 1612335713
ISBN-13: 9781612335711
Year: 2012

Paperback: **\$34.95**

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Expanding Horizons: Current Research on Interpersonal Acceptance offers readers an outstanding collection of papers that reflects current trends in research on interpersonal acceptance. Papers in this volume cover a variety of questions and topics with regard to issues of acceptance-rejection by significant figures in parent-child, sibling, peer, and adult intimate relationships. Also, several papers deal with the implications of interpersonal acceptance for the development and educational achievement of children, college students, as well as children with special needs. Lastly, an entire section of the book is devoted to methodological issues in the evaluation of interpersonal acceptance across cultures. The authors draw on the perspectives of different disciplines such as educational psychology, anthropology, sociology, developmental psychology, and family studies.

Research findings discussed in this collection of papers have important implications for professionals working in different contexts to strengthen family relationships, teacher and peer relationships in schools, and couple relationships. As such, the book constitutes a useful reference source for graduate students, academic researchers, clinicians, teachers, special educators, school counselors, and service agencies.

Scholars who contributed to this book come from different parts of the world, including the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Announcements

The *Journal of Behavioural Sciences* to Publish a Special Issue on "Parental Acceptance-Rejection in the Pakistani Context"

Rukhsana Kausar

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Professor Dr. Rukhsana Kausar, Chief Editor, *Journal of Behavioural Sciences* (JBS) - an official publication of the Department of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan - is publishing a special issue of the journal on "Parental Acceptance-Rejection in the Pakistani Context." Associate Editors of the Special Issue include Prof. Dr. Najma Najam (Vice-Chancellor, Karakoram International University Gilgit, Gilgit/Baltistan, Pakistan) and Prof. Dr. Ronald P. Rohner (Professor Emeritus and Director, Ronald and Nancy Rohner Center for the Study of Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Connecticut, USA). The special issue covers research carried out on a range of topics from researchers throughout Pakistan. Articles in the special issue include: Father involvement and socio-emotional adjustment of adolescents; parental acceptance-rejection and social adjustment of children with congenital amputation; parental rejection and perceptions of God among young adults; parental attachment and depression in Pakistani children and adolescents; parental rejection and comorbid disorders in adolescents with somatization disorder; parental acceptance-rejection and paternal authoritarianism among abused children in Pakistan; parental acceptance-rejection, psychological adjustment, and self-concepts of persons with disabilities; and, gender difference in perceived fathers' rejection in childhood and psychological adjustment in adulthood. Research in the special issue is drawn from different provinces (states) of Pakistan, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and Gilgit Baltistan. A future issue of *Interpersonal Acceptance* will contain a review of the special issue.

Article in *Adoption Quarterly*

ISIPAR members **Judith L. Gibbons** (Professor of Psychology and International Studies at Saint Louis University) and **Carrie Brown** (Assistant Professor of Psychology at Agnes Scott College) have an article in press at *Adoption Quarterly*, titled "Modeling Adoption Attitudes: Recalled Maternal Warmth, Affection for Children, and Parenting Motivation." In their study, Gibbons and Brown tested the model that remembered maternal warmth and paternal warmth are associated with more positive attitudes toward adoption, as mediated by affection for children and motivation to parent. The participants of the study were 187 university students who completed an online questionnaire that included the Adult Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire: Father (Short Form) and Mother (Short Form). Controlling for participant gender and adoption experience, the model was supported for maternal warmth, but not for paternal warmth. Specifically, the relationship between recalled maternal warmth and more positive attitudes toward adoption was mediated positively by liking of children and negatively by motivation to parent. The results implicate both childhood experiences and contemporary motives and preferences in adoption attitudes.

2012 ISIPAR Elections, Pending

ISIPAR's Nominations Committee is pleased to announce its recommended slate of Officers and Regional Representatives. According to the Society's Bylaws, any five members may nominate an additional candidate for any given office, providing that their nomination is submitted to the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee (Ronald P. Rohner, at rohner@uconn.edu) at least thirty days prior to the scheduled date of election on **Monday June 25, 2012**. Candidates for office include the following:

PRESIDENT ELECT

Karen Ripoll-Núñez (kripoll@uniandes.edu.co) is an associate professor in the psychology department at the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia. She received her master's in marriage and family therapy from Syracuse University in 2000 and her doctorate in human development and family studies from the University of Connecticut in 2005. She has done research on different topics related to parent-child, sibling, and adult intimate relationships based on the postulates of PARTheory. She has also conducted research on PARTheory-derived measures for corporal punishment and acceptance-rejection in adult intimate relations. Her research interests focus on parenting, issues of acceptance-rejection in parent-child and couple relationships, and equity issues in adult intimate relationships. During the last two years, she has served as ISIPAR's regional representative for South America. She has also co-edited "Expanding Horizons: Current research on interpersonal acceptance," a book of selected papers from ISIPAR's third international congress.



Regional Representative for the INSULAR PACIFIC & AUSTRALIA

Rapson Gomez (rapson.gomez@utas.edu.au) is a professor of clinical psychology and director of clinical training in the School of Psychology at University of Tasmania. His major research areas cover primarily psychometrics, and clinical child and adolescent psychology, including parenting issue related to control and support, and acceptance and rejection. He has published more than 70 peer reviewed papers, and is a registered clinical and health psychologist in Australia.



Regional Representative for MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

Claudia X. Alvarez Romero (claualv@hotmail.com) is an adjunct professor at the University of Puerto Rico, College of Education. There she is also president of the Editorial Board of the Journal *Cuaderno de Investigación en la Educación*. She has done research regarding perceived intimate partner acceptance, and is currently the Principal Investigator on research dealing with admissions and institutional factors associated with students' exit from higher education institutions in Puerto Rico. She is also Co-Investigator in the project *Pasitos* (a system to evaluate and measure the quality of the educational programs in early childhood).



Regional Representative for NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

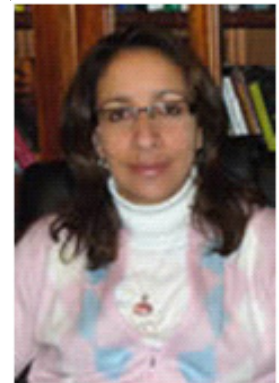


Ricky Finzi-Dottan (rikifnz@biu.013.net.il) is a faculty member in the School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University, and a clinical social worker-supervisor in a Child and Adolescent Clinic. Her professional life combines two mutually stimulating and enriching spheres: Research and clinical work. PARTheory and attachment theory form the cornerstones of her thinking. They inspire the methodological, theoretical, and empirical aspects of her academic activities. Both attachment theory and PARTheory provide her with a special prism for examining her main field of interest and clinical expertise, that is, family relationships: Couples, parenting, parent-child relations, and children at risk in their families. Accordingly, she studies maternal

and paternal parenting and children's psychological adjustment through the lens of these two theories.

Regional Representative for SOUTH AMERICA

Sonia Carrillo (sonia.carrillo@gmail.com) is an Associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the Universidad de los Andes - Bogotá, Colombia. Sonia obtained her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology and Education from the University of Texas at Austin. Her work focuses on social and emotional development across the life span. She is also co-director of a research group on Affective Relations Across the Life Cycle. In their research, this group studies different family relational systems such as parent-child, couples, siblings, and grandparent-grandchild relations. PARTheory is one of the basic conceptual and methodological perspectives in these studies. From this work she has published a book on the role of the father in children's social development. She has also conducted several research projects on family relations in different family structures (nuclear, stepfamilies, diverse families). Last year her research group published a book titled *Family Relations in Diverse Family Structures*.



Regional Representative for SOUTHEAST ASIA



Celia Veronica Augustin (celia@ucsi.edu.my) is a clinical & counseling psychologist as well as an educator currently lecturing at University Sedaya International Malaysia (UCSI). She is interested in issues related to prejudice and discrimination, peace versus war, and cross-cultural issues including interpersonal acceptance and rejection. She is a member of the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology.