

Interpersonal Acceptance

International Society For Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection



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Book Review



Greek translation of Rohner's
The Warmth Dimension:
Foundations Of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory

Reviewed by:

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Few psychological approaches to human social behavior have attained the epistemological standards of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) and its successor, Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory). Indeed, IPARTheory includes an impressively parsimonious number of simple, cohesive propositions that can elegantly produce multiple empirically-verifiable hypotheses in a great array of contexts. Such contexts range from personality characteristics, self-esteem, child and adult psychological adjustment to parenting style and child maltreatment, school conduct, academic achievement, occupational activities, religious beliefs, art appreciation, alcohol abuse, and criminal behavior. Moreover, the predictive ability of the theory expands across phenotypically varied acceptance – rejection behaviors in different cultures, as it theorizes at a level reflecting the “deep structure” of the human interaction grammar.

Acceptance or rejection is defined by the child's or adult's subjective perceptions of other's behavior. This subjective definition seeks out the meaning of other's behavior for one's self. Is it a behavior that enhances self or one that degrades it? Data collected worldwide are in consonance with the theory's assumption that acceptance-rejection is a universal interpersonal process that has paramount survival and well-being value for our species. It appears to function as a social cognitive schema that monitors self-other interactions with significant others, and evaluates the resulting affective-cognitive consequences for self. The theory contends that this social-cognitive schema (called mental representations in IPARTheory)—established early in life through parent-child interactions—works internally to guide subsequent interpersonal behavior, inferences about others, and short-term and long-term decision making. Similarly, social-cognitive schemas (mental representations) affect self-perception and the formation and expression of more-or-less stable personality characteristics. Cultural factors, specific social contexts, and the outcome of continuing later-life interactions with significant others moderate to a greater or lesser degree the deterministic nature of the schemas.

Despite theoretical limitations acknowledged by PARTheory and IPARTheory researchers, the body of knowledge that has so far been produced by their research provides us with the rare (in social sciences) satisfaction of seeing theory-driven research lead to valid universal principles about human behavior. In turn, such principles establish solid ground upon which social scientists can build convincing social policy proposals for their communities—for example, about parenting and child rearing. The overall reasoning behind the continuing research program of IPARTheory constitutes what Kurt Lewin (1943) probably would have defined as a “good theory”, that is, something very “practical” and conducive to the betterment of individual well-being, and to the prosperity of human communities.

A good theory needs a good book, and since 1986 there has been a good one: *The warmth dimension: Foundations of parental-acceptance theory* by Rohner, the author of PARTheory and IPARTheory. Of course, there have been scores of theoretical and empirical articles, reviews, and book chapters in English and many other languages subsequent to that book. Most of these publications entertain specific empirical questions reflecting contemporary concerns in an updated scientific language that takes into account recent theoretical and empirical developments. Nevertheless, the long history of PARTheory and IPARTheory, their several facets and applications, their universal impact, and their continuing progress, require a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

At the same time, modern developments and research prospects can be better appreciated by studying the original theoretical conception and its rationale. This is why the Greek edition of *The Warmth Dimension* (Rohner, 2017) is a valuable addition to the Greek scientific literature, and in fact, a unique addition to the literature since there is no prior publication on the theory in Greek.

Research within the IPARTheory framework is already well underway in Greece. This is mainly due to the efforts of Artemis Giotsa, scientific supervisor of the Greek edition of this book, and President of the International Society for Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection. Recently, basic research tools have been translated, validated, and used in this country. Additionally, the theory has become part of academic psychological curricula, and is a popular topic among graduate and doctoral level researchers. Next year (2018), the 7th International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection will be hosted in Athens, Greece. The publication of the Greek edition of the book has been awaited, and responds to an actual need. It is expected to enhance dissemination of the theory and of its most common concepts throughout Greek academia. It is also expected to further encourage research in the IPARTheory framework, and to influence Greek psychologists' perspectives on interpersonal relationships.

It should be noted that the dissemination and utility of a scientific book into a linguistic community different from the original depends a lot on the perceived ease of its "naturalization status". Simply put, the Greek reader should not feel at any point the need for the original work! While maintaining the demanding accuracy, cohesiveness, and relative idiosyncrasy of the original scientific language, Artemis Giotsa along with the translator have provided a text that stands on its own, and is read with ease like a Greek original. At the same time, they have provided us with a wealth of well-thought-out Greek-terminology for the original concepts in English. Undoubtedly, the quality of the translation also reflects the decisiveness of the author (Ronald P. Rohner). Even when presenting complicated ideas and explicating complex arguments, he uses simple, crisp, and straightforward language.

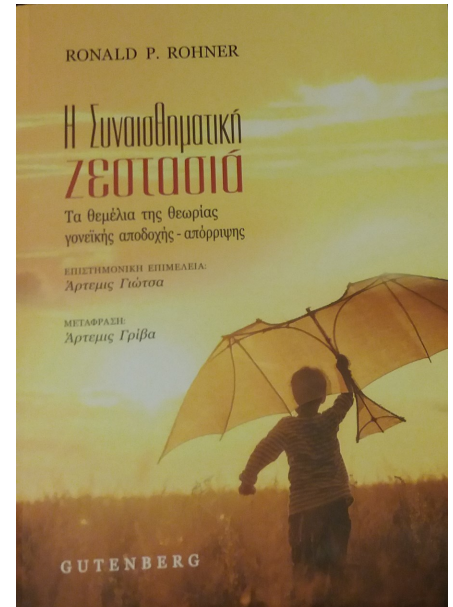
This is an unusual book. It bears the characteristics of an academic work, theory building, assumptions and hypotheses, epistemological-methodological discussions, description of methodologies used, the technicalities of presenting research findings, conflicting as well as consonant arguments in discussing results, interpretation of data, and integration of ideas. Yet it is written in a friendly, simple, and occasionally personal style that avoids as much as possible artificial scientific jargon. When terminology or a high degree of abstraction and argumentative complexity is used, the author painstakingly ensures that it is fully understood in simple terms. The frequent use of examples, often provided with captivating narratives, help to illustrate abstract principles and associations between variables.

The structure of the book follows a simple logic that facilitates understanding of its progressively more complex content. Chapter 1 sets out theoretical assumptions of the theory and defines basic concepts pertaining to interpersonal acceptance-rejection, such as the "warmth dimension" of parenting, and the meaning of "rejection". It further draws attention to the "phenomenological" approach of the theory – indeed a feature that distinguishes IPARTheory from other theories of interpersonal relations. Acceptance and rejection are in the eyes of the beholder; they are not objectively defined behaviors. Chapter 1 also establishes the epistemological orientation of the theory. It is an anthroponomical endeavor seeking principles of universal value, innate to the human species that can be socially regulated.

Chapter 2 focuses on methodologies that allow for cross-cultural research compatible with the anthroponomical orientation of PARTheory. That is, it focuses on methodologies that can yield generalizable results supporting universal principles. Chapter 3 points to the association between PARTheory as a theory of personality and the sociocultural systems that may be implicated in generating, regulating, and maintaining such systems. Data are presented in support of these associations. All three chapters focus on building a long term, theory-driven research program, based on sound epistemological grounds and appropriate methodologies. In that sense, the chapters constitute a valuable lesson for the reader—particularly for graduate or doctoral students, and for young researchers—that goes beyond the specific theory. Chapter 4 links parental acceptance-rejection behavior to personality development and characteristics in children and adults. Essentially, the chapter proposes a personality theory with significant clinical implications and promising research prospects. Chapter 5 presents intra-cultural and cross-cultural findings consistent with the theory, and Chapter 6 looks at relevant phenomena across the life-span (from the cradle to old age). Chapter 7 examines resilience and coping with rejection setting up a research domain that has important implications for understanding individual differences and planning therapeutic interventions.

Chapter 8 contains a vivid account of how parental acceptance-rejection may be associated with life-long choices of career, profession, or interests in art and religiosity. These intuitively surprising accounts may in fact demonstrate the strong predictive potential of the PARTheory and its unpredictable applications. Chapter 9 presents premises and empirical work that indirectly allowed PARTheory to advance to IPARTheory. Chapter 10 discusses future prospects and limitations of the theory. Child abuse and neglect—an issue of continuing concern—and its possible association with parental rejection is discussed in the Appendix.

Greek society—since the first cross-cultural studies by Harry Triandis (1972) described its sociocultural orientation—has been gradually moving from a collectivist orientation toward the individualist end of the spectrum. Family relations have shifted accordingly from the more extended family model to the more nuclear one, although at a much slower pace. In addition, the continuing economic crisis seems to be having consequences on adult intimate relationships, family cohesion, and possibly on parent-child relationships. This transitional sociocultural condition, along with the possible catalyzing effect of the stressful economic situation on relationship functioning, calls for theory-driven research on issues of acceptance- rejection in interpersonal settings. The Greek edition of the *Warmth Dimension* has arrived in good time, and has an important role to play.



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INTERPERSONAL ACCEPTANCE

Brief Histories

Seminal theoretical and applied perspectives on interpersonal acceptance-rejection

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Origin and History of My Interest in Parental Alienation

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Although I had never met a psychologist, social worker, or any other kind of mental health professional, I decided early in college that I wanted to be a psychiatrist. I read a few books that were somewhat inspirational, such as *Arrowsmith* (a novel by Sinclair Lewis about an altruistic but conflicted doctor) and a biography of Dr. C. F. Menninger, the founder of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas. During the 1960s, the field of psychiatry consisted of a mélange of competing and complementary theories, belief systems, and clinical practices. The prevailing—but declining—theoretical framework was psychoanalysis. Most of the faculty when I attended medical school and when I had training in psychiatry were traditional psychoanalysts. However, my fellow students and I were excited about the discovery of psychotropic medications. At about the same time, the community mental health movement was promoted by the Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act, which was signed by John F. Kennedy in 1963 and amended by Lyndon Johnson in 1965. During my training, those were the central themes of psychiatry: Psychoanalysis, psychotropic medication, and community mental health centers.



After completing training in adult and child psychiatry, I gradually became more interested in forensic psychiatry, which had the features of a good murder mystery: What motivates serial killers? Why are some teenagers delinquent while their siblings are model students? Why do some sexual offenders have a compulsion to molest children? What would prompt a 7-year-old to kill his little brother? I also became more interested in why children sometimes make false allegations and express strong but illogical opinions: “My teacher flew an airplane to Mexico and killed children.” “Daddy killed a stranger and buried him on the farm.” “I hate Daddy because he made us eat broccoli.” “I never want to see Mommy again because she’s a whore.”

Sometimes children make false statements that may result in arrest, conviction, and prison terms for innocent individuals. Children may also make false statements about a parent, which could lead the court to remove the parent from a child's life for many years or perhaps forever. When I say "false," I do not necessarily mean purposeful lying by the child. It is possible that the child is saying something mistaken, although sincerely believed. When influenced by an adult, a child may repeatedly make false statements, then adopt false beliefs about something that never happened, and then create in his or her mind false memories of nonevents.

One of the scenarios in which children make false statements, adopt false beliefs, and create false memories is *parental alienation*. Parental alienation occurs most often in the context of a high-conflict divorce, in which one parent indoctrinates the child to fear or hate the other parent without a good reason. Parental alienation is a mental condition that is regularly encountered by child psychiatrists and psychologists, although they do not always recognize the diagnosis. In parental alienation, children adamantly refuse to see or have anything to do with their mother (or father), even though the mother (or father) has always been a loving, attentive, and appropriate parent. I have become concerned about the lack of good information—and the proliferation of misinformation—that legal and mental health professionals face when they deal with cases of parental alienation.

My colleagues and I in the Parental Alienation Study Group (PASG) have tried to educate practitioners about the causes, manifestations, prevention, and treatment of parental alienation. In order to implement this goal, I founded PASG in 2011, and I became its first president because I thought it was important for clinicians and researchers with an interest in parental alienation to learn about each other, to stay in touch, and to work on projects together. Since that time we have grown to 340 members from 42 countries. It is fascinating that the same cluster of behaviors that constitute parental alienation have been identified in such far-flung locales as Argentina, the Slovak Republic, and Australia. To further the goal of educating professionals about parental alienation, Demosthenes Lorandos, Richard Sauber, and I edited a comprehensive volume on *Parental Alienation: The Handbook for Mental Health and Legal Professionals* (Lorandos, Bernet, & Sauber, 2013). We also established a large online bibliography regarding parental alienation with more than 1,000 entries (www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/pasg).

At about the same time—through three fortunate events—my interest in forensic child psychiatry was influenced by Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory). More specifically, I presented a paper on "Causing Parental Alienation is a Form of Child Abuse" at the 2013 International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection in Chandigarh, India. At the time, I knew very little about IPARTheory. In fact, the primary reason my wife and I attended the conference was that we had relatives in Chandigarh. My son had recently married a woman from Chandigarh, and we wanted to visit her home and her family in that city, the capital of the state of Punjab, India. As I listened to the presentations at the Congress, however, it dawned on me that some features of IPARTheory might help us understand the psychopathology that occurs in parental alienation. Of course, at the Congress I also met Dr. Ronald Rohner, Nancy Rohner, and their colleagues.

After the Congress, I prepared a chapter for the book, *New Paths for Acceptance: Opening Awareness in Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection* (Machado & Machado, 2015). The chapter, "Parental Alienation, Child Psychological Abuse, and Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory," explained how the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner, 2005) might be used to identify and even quantify the diagnosis of parental alienation. One of the most important features of parental alienation is the child's lack of ambivalence, which means the child is unable to merge positive and negative aspects of each parent into a whole person. Instead of holding ambivalent feelings toward their parents, the child who experiences parental alienation typically engages in the psychological process of *splitting*, that is, they view one parent as totally good and the other parent as totally evil. Since the PARQ measures children's perceptions of their parents, it seemed likely that the measure would demonstrate the child's use of splitting in cases of parental alienation. That idea was presented in the chapter as a purely hypothetical notion for some future research project.

The second important event was becoming acquainted with Dr. Nilgun Ongider, a psychologist in Turkey who had previously used the PARQ to study children of divorced parents. I wanted to cite Dr. Ongider's article in my chapter for *New Paths for Acceptance*, but it was written in Turkish. I contacted her to learn more about her research, and we started communicating through email. Ultimately, she was able to join me for two years as a visiting scholar at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

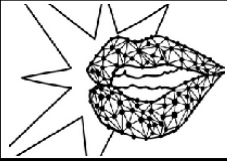
There we completed a research project in which we administered the PARQ to four groups of children: Children from intact families; children of divorced parents who regularly saw both parents; children of divorced parents who lived with one parent and rarely or never saw the other parent; and children who experienced a severe degree of parental alienation.

The third coincidental event involved a conversation I had with Dr. Kathleen Reay, a psychologist who conducted a treatment program for severely alienated children in British Columbia, Canada. I saw Dr. Reay at a conference in California, and I told her about the research that Dr. Ongider and I were working on. It turned out that Dr. Reay had been evaluating and treating severely alienated children for several years, and she had already administered the PARQ to clients in her program, which was called the Family Reflections Reunification Program. Thus, Dr. Reay was able to provide the data for one of our four groups of research participants. Also, Dr. Ronald Rohner helped us immensely by making suggestions regarding the design of the research project, advising us regarding the administration of the Mother and Father versions of the PARQ, analyzing the data, and editing a manuscript for publication.

As a team, we were extremely fortunate to be able to merge my knowledge of parental alienation, Dr. Ongider's enthusiasm for this project, Dr. Reay's experiences in a treatment program, and Dr. Rohner's expertise in the use of the PARQ. In the end, we found that the PARQ clearly demonstrated the mental mechanism of splitting, which was consistently manifested in the sample by the alienated children. The result was a paper, "An Objective Measure of Splitting in Parental Alienation: The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire" (Bernet, Gregory, Reay, & Rohner, 2017). (Dr. Ongider has since married, and is now Dr. Gregory.) We look forward to the publication of our paper in a few months. We hope this collaboration will open up communication between researchers on parental alienation and the community of IPARTheory scholars. It seems likely that both groups will benefit from this partnership: practitioners who deal with parental alienation can use the PARQ in diagnosing and treating youngsters with this mental condition; researchers who study IPARTheory will be able to refine their work by testing children and adolescents with different degrees of parental alienation. More than one writer has commented on the occurrence of serendipity in scientific research. Our experience is one more example of that useful phenomenon.

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TEDx UConn

The Rohner Center



They Love Me, They Love Me Not— And Why It Matters

Ronald P. Rohner was a speaker at the TEDx UConn series on April 9, 2017 as a catalyst for change along with four other faculty members at UConn. He summarized his six decades of research in this talk. You can view a live stream of his presentation at the following link:

<https://livestream.com/accounts/50006/events/7110990>

The talk starts at 3:00:50 and ends at 3:20:50.



Announcement



Division 52 / Psi Chi International Conference Travel Grant



Description

APA Division 52, International Psychology and Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, collaborate to offer the Division 52/Psi Chi International APA Convention Travel Grant. The grant provides Psi Chi students who live outside the US and are interested in international psychology with funds to support travel costs to attend and present research at the APA annual convention.

Eligibility

Applicants must be a current undergraduate psychology major or minor, or a student in a graduate psychology program outside the U.S., or a recent graduate (completed an undergraduate bachelor degree with a psychology major or minor between November 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017).

At the time of submission, applicants must be currently:

- Living, working, and/or studying outside the U.S. (at least through August 2017).
- A member of Psi Chi and able to provide their member ID.
- A member of D52 (students may join at any time).
- Able to cover any travel expenses beyond the \$1,500 provided by the grant.
- Able to attend and talk for 5-10 minutes about personal interests in international psychology or international psychology research at the D52 Hospitality Suite Program at the APA convention.
- Able to attend at least one additional D52 and one additional Psi Chi session.
- Able to provide proof of acceptance to of a research presentation at the 2017 APA convention in Washington, DC. Research may be in any format such as a poster or talk, and within any division or affiliated group program at the 2017 APA Convention.

Recipients may not receive more than one D52 travel grant, and may not receive more than one Psi Chi travel grant for APA attendance.

Application Process

Applications must include:

- A Personal Statement (maximum 275 words, double-spaced) about your interest in international psychology, how your participation at the APA Convention will strengthen your professional interest in the field of international psychology, meaningful experiences in psychology courses or volunteer experiences related to international psychology, Psi Chi involvement, Division 52 involvement, if any.
- A cover sheet
- Two faculty mentor recommendation letters

Deadline

Email all application materials to the Building Bridges-Psi Chi Committee Chair Dr. Mercedes A. McCormick at mmccormick2@pace.edu before midnight (Eastern Standard Time) June 30, 2017.

The grant recipient will be notified no later than July 10, 2017. The Building Bridges with Psi Chi Committee, including Dr. McCormick and Psi Chi Executive Director Dr. Martha S. Zlovovich, will review all materials.

For further details visit: <https://div52.org/index.php>

Announcement

**7th
(ICIAR)**



May, 2018

7th International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection (ICIAR)

**Join us in:
May, 2018
Athens-Greece**



Specific dates of the May, 2018 International meeting will be announced at a later time.

Program Chair & ISIPAR President:

Artemis Giotsa, PhD

agiotsa@gmail.com



IPARTheory has **25 measures** translated into **53 languages** and dialects for assessing interpersonal acceptance-rejection.

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1	BFARQ = Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
2	ECBFARQ = Early Childhood Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
3	ECPARQ = Early Childhood Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
4	ESAR/CQ = Elder Sibling Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
5	GARQ= Grandparent Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
6	GIS = Gender Inequality Scale
7	IARQ = Intimate Adult Relationship Questionnaire
8	ILARQ = In-Law Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
9	ILAR/CQ = In-Law Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
10	IPAQ = Intimate Partner Attachment Questionnaire
11	IPAR/CQ = Intimate Partner Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
12	IPARLS = Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Loneliness Scale
13	IRAQ = Intimate Relationship Anxiety Questionnaire
14	MARQ/C = Manager Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
15	PAQ = Personality Assessment Questionnaire
16	PARQ = Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
17	PARQ/Control = Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
18	PECC = Parent's Evaluation of Child's Conduct
19	PCS = Parental Control Scale
20	PPQ = Physical Punishment Questionnaire
21	SARQ = Supervisor Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire
22	SUQ = Substance Use Questionnaire
23	TAR/CQ = Teacher Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire
24	TESC = Teacher's Evaluation of Student Conduct
25	3PQ = Parental Power and Prestige Questionnaire