Assessing Implicit Theories Using Indirect Measures:
Feasibility, Predictability and Incremental Validity of the RRT and the IRAP

M.G.C. Noteborn, MSc
Tilburg University

Objectives: To (1) introduce the Relational Response Task (RRT) into the forensic field, to present (2) the feasibility of the use of several latency based indirect measures to asses Implicit Theories of sexual offending, and (3) the predictive and incremental validity of these indirect measures using peer reports of aggression and self-reports of sexual aggressive behavior.

The assessment of Implicit Theories (ITs) of sex offenders has received much attention in previous research. However, the direct assessment of ITs is hampered by the risk of social desirable responding and difficulties with the introspective accessibility of ITs. Therefore, researchers have developed latency based indirect measures in which offenders should respond faster and make fewer errors if the presented stimuli correspond with their beliefs. Some indirect measures assess strengths of cognitive associations by comparing reaction times after offering associative stimuli to different pairings of concepts (i.e., Implicit Association Task; Greenwald et al., 1998). However, the simple nature of the categories and stimuli (e.g., one or two words) leaves the underlying nature of the combined associations open to multiple interpretations. Therefore, new measures have been developed requiring participants to respond in accordance with specific beliefs (i.e., Relational Response Task (RRT; de Houwer et al., 2015); Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP; Barnes-Holmes et al., 2006)). These measures leave less room for ambiguity of the measured construct by directly tapping into the belief.

The aim of the current study is to investigate the feasibility of the RRT and IRAP in measuring ITs by examining the error rates and response latencies, as both measures are relatively new in the (forensic) field and require certain levels of cognitive ability. Furthermore, we investigate to what extent the IRAP and RRT are capable of measuring ITs in terms of predictive (i.e., reports of aggressive and sexual behavior) and incremental validity over and above direct measures. All measures will be administered on a behavioral (i.e., aggression) as well as on a cognitive level (IT). Indirect measures of aggression (e.g., "I punch") require less introspective ability and are cognitively less complex. To indirectly assess ITs, we opted for the IT Entitlement, the sexual aspect towards women (e.g., "*I deserve to have sex whenever I need it*", "*Women should obey a man's sexual needs*"), as the current literature calls for a focus on ITs regarding the self (Beech et al., 2015). Furthermore, by comparing the indirect measures of sexual entitlement with aggression, it can be examined whether error rates and response latencies are due to the complexity of the indirect measures, or because of the measured construct. Results of the indirect measures, several self-report questionnaires and peer reports of aggression (*N* = 120) will be presented and discussed.

Mirthe G. C. Noteborn, M.Sc. is a Ph.D student at the Department of Developmental Psychology of Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands. She received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands, in 2009. In 2010, she received a Master's degree in Psychology and Law (cum laude). In 2012, she received her second Master's degree in Forensic Psychology (cum laude), also from Maastricht University. Mirthe's doctoral project involves the measurement of Implicit Theories in sexual delinquents using direct and indirect methods.