



# **NEWSLETTER**

***Winter 2019***





## **MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD**

In 2020 we will have our 13<sup>th</sup> AETAP conference. This means 13 years of organizing conferences and establishing our organization. Looking back at AETAP's past 13 years, we can say, that we have built a great network. Bringing people together, within the field of Threat Assessment, has given us advantages, especially when help is needed across borders and internationally. This is a great achievement and our membership numbers are growing!

Furthermore, working together with our sister organizations (APATAP, ATAP, CATAP and the recently founded Association AfATAP) means connecting the dots internationally too. In a more and more global world, we feel, collaborating is an absolute necessity and we are grateful for all the team work between the organisations.

The current development in Europe shows that we had several terrorist attacks in 2019. We are living in a time in which populism is rising and strong beliefs are returning. This leaves us with an increased risk of further attacks and also with a change of how views are nowadays communicated. Besides terror attacks we regularly try to remind ourselves that intimate partner violence, which is not a big issue in the media, is statistically a more relevant threat. We, who work in the field of Threat Assessment and Management, are well aware of this. And furthermore all relevant fields of threat assessment and management are important to us.

Hence, it's time for us to organize our next conference in Hungary, Budapest, to create another opportunity for us all to exchange experiences and practices, network and learn from each other. We are currently in the process of arranging an interesting program and are proud to have the president of the Asian Pacific Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (APATAP) – Dr. Loraine Sheridan – as a speaker for our expert day, topic Stalking. Additionally, other great speakers will talk about the newest developments within threat management, for example, Paul Gill has confirmed, he will talk about "Base Rates & Predictors of Radicalisation" and Stephen Hart about "Suicidality in Threat Assessment". Other subjects will involve "Experiences in Stalking Cases", "Essentials for Threat Management in Corporations", "A Workplace Violence Case Study", and more.

The conference will take place from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April and like every year we will have an expert day and the core competencies on 20<sup>th</sup> April. The location will be the Sofitel Hotel Chain Bridge and we will provide you with our registration page very soon.



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For more information please have a look at our homepage (<https://www.aetap.eu/next-conference.html>). As soon as we have more details to share, we will be in touch again. In the meantime, we will continue putting our efforts into next year's conference and we hope to see you all in Budapest next year.

On behalf of the AETAP-Board,

**Andrea Wechlin & Karoline Roshdi**

**AETAP President & Vice President**

**RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

**Update from the GRIEVANCE Project**

GRIEVANCE is a five-year project (2018-2022) funded by the European Research Council, conducted at University College London's Department of Security and Crime Science, and led by Professor Paul Gill. GRIEVANCE seeks to make significant advances in increasing our understanding, and thereby reducing the risk, of various forms of targeted violence. Various strands of research are relevant to AETAP members.

Isabelle Van Der Vegt's research focuses on linguistic aspects of threat assessment, where she uses methods from computational linguistics to understand and predict threats of violence. From conversations with threat assessment professionals, Isabelle has identified linguistic areas frequently used to assess threat in online or written (anonymous) communications. Based on this, Isabelle is currently developing the GRIEVANCE dictionary, a piece of software that can be used to automatically measure concepts in text, such as references to violence, jealousy, or weaponry. In addition to this, Isabelle is working on a project where she attempts to discern characteristics of a threatener, such as age, gender and personality, from a piece of abusive text. In short, the aim is to test the efficacy of automatic linguistic analysis within the context of threat assessment, potentially providing methods that may further advance the field.

Bettina Rottweiler is currently looking at early predictors of radicalisation and violent extremism within the general population for which she has conducted a large-scale representative survey of over 1500 people in Germany. She is currently analysing the relationship between individuals' conspiracy beliefs and their effect on violent extremist attitudes.



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Results show that individuals with a higher conspiracy mentality show more violent extremist attitudes and hence, mis- or disinformation can pose great security challenges. The findings suggest that conspiracy beliefs and radicalisation share underlying cognitive mechanisms.

Zoe Marchment's research focuses upon the spatial aspects of extremist violence. Zoe used risk terrain modelling to identify high risk locations in Northern Ireland. Previous protests and riots, punishment attacks, and areas dense with pubs and bars were identified as risk factors for bombings. Punishment attacks, police stations, and places dense with shops were identified as risk factors for bomb hoaxes. Zoe also used discrete choice analyses to study 150 attacks by 127 members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), living in the city of Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the period 1969–1989. The findings provide further support that terrorists behave similarly to 'traditional' criminals in terms of spatial decision making when selecting targets. The results demonstrate the characteristics of target areas as well as the properties of their likely journey to the target influenced the location of PIRA attacks.

Nadine Salman's research adopts an experimental approach to test the *impact of using a terrorism risk assessment tool on judgments of terrorism risk, and to test whether biases can affect the risk assessment process*. 239 Participants, recruited opportunistically via social media and a student subject pool, conducted an online study. Participants evaluated two vignettes describing known violent extremists (excluding terrorist activity so the outcome was not known). Two versions were created of each vignette (jihadist/far-right). Participants rated each vignette's vulnerability, risk of radicalisation and risk of violence, their confidence in these ratings, and how likely they were to refer the subject for further investigation. *The study indicates that using terrorism risk assessment tools influences assessors' risk judgments and confidence, and that using different tools produces similar judgments. It also suggests that assessors are not influenced by the ideology of the subject.*

Caitlin Clemmow oversaw the first attempt to explicitly measure the prevalence of risk factors and indicators associated with violent extremism in a general population. The 'Base Rate Study' solicited over 2000 responses in a single afternoon. The first analysis is currently under review and the results have multiple implications for different sorts of risk and threat assessment (i.e. actuarial approaches, structured professional judgements etc). Caitlin has also been working on our lone-actor terrorist and mass



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murderer data. In comparing the two types of offenders, the results suggest abandoning these labels and moving towards a general framework for the threat assessment of lone-actor grievance-fuelled violence offenders.

Caitlin has also been busy working on data from the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre. Cluster analyses derived four models of concerning behaviour and how these intersect with differential risk profiles. For more, please visit the project website at <https://www.grievance-erc.com>, follow them on Twitter at @grievance\_erc , or contact [Paul.Gill@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Paul.Gill@ucl.ac.uk) for any questions.

**Paul Gill**

**University College London**

**Decision-making processes in cases of unwanted anonymous communications by experienced threat assessment practitioners**

Research on anonymous threatening communications is limited. At the beginning of 2019 researchers from the University College London, the National Crime Agency of the United Kingdom and Dantes Psychology Services based in The Netherlands came together and developed a plan to gain a better understanding of the decision making and advisory processes of threat assessment practitioners, when looking into anonymous communications.

The aim of the research project is to explore whether the nature of their professional expertise, e.g., investigator, profiler, clinician, etc., impacts upon their approach to the threat assessment process or the advice they provide. Little has been documented about the decision-making processes of these professionals in general, but also more specifically when they are asked to provide professional advice in cases of threatening or unwanted, anonymous communications. In the case of assessing an anonymous threat, questions that arise are 1) what are the steps that these professionals engage in, 2) which indicators in an anonymous written threat signify higher or lower risk, 3) what additional information do these professionals seek in order to come to a decision, recommendation, or profile, and 4) more in general, how do various professionals differ in their approach?

The research group have interviewed multiple professionals who provide threat assessment and/or offender profiling services, thereby also examining the differences



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between these two lines of work. The team is now in the process of data analysis and we hope to publish our findings in 2020.

**Isabelle Van der Vegt, University College London, United Kingdom**

**Pippa Gregory, National Crime Agency, London, United Kingdom**

**Bram Bakker, Dantes Psychology Services, The Netherlands**

**Bram B. Van der Meer, Dantes Psychology Services, The Netherlands**

**PUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**End of the Lone Wolf: The Typology that Should Not have Been (2017)**

This research note argues that the “lone wolf” typology should be fundamentally reconsidered. The authors found that ties to online and offline radical milieus are critical to lone actors' adoption and maintenance of both the motive and capability to commit acts of terrorism. Social ties play a crucial role throughout the process leading from ideological radicalisation to the planning and preparation of terrorist attacks. Many lone-actor extremists maintain plot-relevant social ties that render them vulnerable to detection, and they start “leaking” their intentions months or even years ahead of their attack. Lone actors' frequent inability to recruit or join others for terrorist purposes does not mean that they drop all social interaction or that their social environment plays no part in their offending. Research found that 78% of lone actors were exposed to external sources of encouragement or justification for the use of violence. Furthermore, in just under a third of the cases studied, others had provided concrete assistance with preparing for the attack. As such, the “lone wolf” concept (implicitly) overstates the degree of isolation that most of these individuals actually experience throughout the process.

Cited from: **Schuurman et al.** In: Studies in Conflict & Terrorism:

[https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/124970343/End\\_of\\_the\\_Lone\\_Wolf\\_The\\_Typology\\_that\\_Should\\_Not\\_Have\\_Been.pdf](https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/124970343/End_of_the_Lone_Wolf_The_Typology_that_Should_Not_Have_Been.pdf)

**Intimate Partner Femicide: using Foucauldian Analysis to track an Eight Stage Progression to Homicide (2019)**

The aim of this article is to develop understanding of nonclinical risk assessment by organizing the perpetrator journey to homicide using temporal sequencing and drawing from coercive control discourse. The sequence suggests that motivation is central to understanding risk of homicide. In terms of assessing risk, the temporal sequence has utility in tracking an escalation and understanding the dynamics of increasing and decreasing risk. It is recognised that some intimate partner femicide



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appear to be more spontaneous, especially when there is little temporal distance between a provocation or challenge and the fatal violence. Although this is certainly the case, it is possible that risk of homicide in such relationships follows a similar, if condensed, pattern. The argument proposed is that intimate partner femicide is part of the journey where the motivation to abuse (need for control) is linked to the motivation to kill (loss of control).

Cited from: **Monckton Smith** In: Violence Against Women.

<http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/6896/1/6896%20Monckton-Smith%20%282019%29%20Intimate%20Partner%20Femicide%20Using%20Foucauldian....pdf>

**Reflections on working in public-figure threat management (2019)**

The Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) manages risks posed to public figures by fixated individuals by paying attention to their correspondence and approaches and liaising with mental health and criminal justice agencies responsible for their management. The clinical population is significantly different from that seen in mainstream mental health services, with a preponderance of delusional disorders and paraphrenias<sup>1</sup>. This is an unusual clinical group, and there may be a lack of expertise in dealing with this population. Delusional disorder is often thought to be rare and untreatable. Neither is true. Experiences from the authors reveal that the fragmentation of community services can result in cases falling between competing sets of referral criteria. Moreover, the interfaces between the various fragmented community services provide ample opportunity for patients to be lost or their histories forgotten. Difficulties occur at these interfaces too at similar units around the world.

Cited from: **Wilson et al.** In: Medicine, Science and the Law.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0025802419861168>

**What do closed source data tell us about Lone Actor Terrorist Behavior? A Research Note (2019)**

This article contributes to the growing body of knowledge on lone-actor terrorism with the incorporation of closed-source data. The results suggest that prior to their attack or arrest the vast majority of lone-actor terrorists each demonstrated elements

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<sup>1</sup> Systematic paraphrenia is characterised by the ‘extremely insidious development of a continuously progressive delusion of persecution, to which are added later ideas of exaltation without decay of the personality’.



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concerning (a) their grievance, (b) an escalation in their intent to act, (c) gaining capability – both psychologically and technically and (d) attack planning. In almost 60% of the cases, family and friends were aware of the individual's intent to engage in terrorism-related activities because the offender verbally told them. However, in many cases these individuals did not understand the relevance of the information that they had or what they should do about it. These results provide insight into the threat assessment and management of potential lone actors.

Cited from: **Gill et al.** In: Terrorism and Political Violence.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546553.2019.1668781?forwardService=showFullText&tokenAccess=QTNCGY6NDGTRSMHBGAX&tokenDomain=eprints&target=10.1080%2F09546553.2019.1668781&doi=10.1080%2F09546553.2019.1668781&doi=10.1080%2F09546553.2019.1668781&doi=10.1080%2F09546553.2019.1668781&journalCode=ftpv20>

## INSTRUMENTS, METHODS & TOOLS

### Expert Team Concerning Behaviour at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands counts 26000 students and 4500 employees which is about the size of a large Dutch village. This means that the university is confronted with all sorts of social problems and behaviours of concern, including mental illness, interpersonal violence and threatening behaviour. This university in particular is known by a philosophy characterised by care responsibility for campus users. The importance of a safe and healthy working climate is seen as crucial. In 2018 the Vrije Universiteit opened their 'Expert Team Concerning Behaviour', since then actively working on a still increasing amount of cases and helping improve social safety.

One of the cases that actually lead the university to find a more structural solution for threatening behaviour, was a complex incident that took place in 2016. Multiple students were victimised by an online stalker, and the idea was that this person was strongly related to a so called 'loverboy' network. It was important that several university services would cooperate and share crucial information in order to manage this incident and prevent further victimisation: the university security service, IT, student psychologists, the faculty where the victims were studying, etc. It became clear that all these different departments held significant amounts of important information regarding this case, but for multiple reasons did not share this information. Furthermore, it also became clear that both students and staff did not know where to report their concerns and fear or bring relevant information. A central point where these people could go to and speak to a specialist who would in fact operationally work on the



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case, solve concrete problems and manage threats and fear, did not exist. Along with other reported incidents, this case formed the starting point for the creation of an 'expert team concerning behaviour'.

From the beginning on the idea was to develop a reporting point and organise it in such a way that all campus users can easily and quickly approach the service point and actually personally talk to a trained assessor and advisor. An awareness campaign was activated, and in fact is implemented as an ongoing process. Relatively quick it became clear that the service definitely fulfilled a need: a large increase of concerning behaviour reports was observed.

Being able to deal with this increase in reports of concerning behaviour, the expert team had to be a group of employees with interest in safety issues, and who could play a significant role in the risk assessment and -management process. The 'expert team concerning behaviour' now consists of 15 university employees from different departments: head of security, student psychologists, student advisors, the media spokesperson, head of human resources, head of student administration, the privacy officer, head of the international office, confidants and the ombudsman, and is chaired by the Chief Security Officer. The team was trained and became familiar with threat assessment. Every team member fulfils a unique role in the expert team. This multiple disciplinary approach seems to work not only for managing cases of concern but also is an important tool to break down the silo's and stimulate information sharing with the expert team. The team's enthusiasm to fight unwanted behaviour in higher education also contributed to a solid external network such as with the community police and mental health services.

Looking back at the cases the team has dealt with since its creation, it can be concluded that most cases can be solved, or at least victim fear, nuisance and concerns for future escalation could be reduced to more acceptable levels.

The incident that lead to setting up the Expert Team at the end was not a loverboy network at all. Once identified, we learned that the offender was a lonely, socially isolated student, attempting some form of intimate contact by creating fake accounts via online platforms. All students, including the offender in this case are still studying at the university and currently in the final year of their program.

**Rosanne Van Kampen, member of the Vrije Universiteit threat management team**  
**Bram B. Van der Meer, Dantes Psychology Services**



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS & EDUCATION

### AFATAP

#### The Establishment of the African Association of Threat Assessment Professionals



South Africa has a high violent crime rate both in the community and in diverse workplace sectors. Despite this, the concept of modern threat assessment is largely non-existent in South Africa. It was only around 2012, when Dr. Stephen Hart came to train a group of detectives and psychologists from the South African Police Service (SAPS), that modern-day threat assessment arrived on our shores, later people such as Bram van der Meer, and Russ Palarea, came out to further train members of the SAPS. From there, myself and later others, started to go to threat assessment professional conferences starting with AETAP, then CATAP, and later ATAP conferences to learn more. Increasingly more South Africans are attending these, especially AETAP, conferences on a regular basis. Some of those trained people, such as myself, have since left the SAPS, and started to provide these services in the corporate sector, where they are increasingly seeing the value that threat assessment provides in preventing violence and managing risk.

Over the years when attending AETAP conferences, we have been encouragingly and repeatedly been asked the question of when we will be starting an association on the African continent. Due to the increasing number local professionals trained in this field and with the support of several corporations who have provided generous sponsorship, we finally reached that point this year. We launched the African Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (AfATAP) on 30 July 2019 at a founders meeting to approve the mandate, and to establish a board. A president (myself, L&S Threat Management) and two vice-presidents (Jocelyn Swartz, Absa Bank; William Meela, Old Mutual), were appointed, along with 4 other board members (Rory Steyn, NSA-Global; Bronwynn Stollarz, L&S Threat Management; Andrew Kelly, Coca Cola; and Michael Pienaar, Absa Bank).



On 27 September 2019, 68 professionals attended our first open meeting on active shooters. Our next open meeting is scheduled for 22 November 2019 and will focus on Insider Threats. We plan to hold our first conference in October 2020 in Johannesburg and already have significant corporate sponsorship to allow us to do so. We are in the early phases of setting the Association; we have set up a Facebook page, are developing our website, and hope to open up member registration in the coming months. We are grateful for all the insights offered by ATAP, CATAP, AETAP and APATAP about the challenges of starting an association, especially in this early phase of development. Our overall goals are consistent with the other associations: to develop and promote the field of threat assessment, to expand and diversify our membership, and to hold a great annual conference, but on the continent of Africa. With Africa being the second largest continent, with 54 UN-recognized countries from Egypt to South Africa, and an estimated population of 1,216 billion, the task that lies ahead is gargantuan, to ensure our membership and board reflects the diversity of countries, cultural groups, and gender.

**Gerard Labuschagne**

**AFATAP President**

**L&S Threat Management**



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**ATAP (August 2019, Anaheim)**

August 2019 was time again for the biggest event within our industry: 29th annual ATAP conference in Anaheim, California. Full house with 1200 participants and surely plenty of people who had to be left out due to space restrictions. Typical for ATAP, many case presentations and still lots of law enforcement professionals in the audience. ATAP organization (The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals and the Los Angeles Police Department Threat Management Unit) manages every year to outperform the previous year. Logistics from registration to keeping a tight schedule throughout the conference. The event is so big, that it is impossible to meet all participants, but with long breaks and lunches and hospitality suite talks in the evening will provide you with plenty of opportunities to meet at least plenty of professionals attending the event.

The main keynote was about The Pre-Attack Behaviors of the Las Vegas Shooter: Key Findings from the FBI BAU's Expert Panel. Otherwise the program was well balanced with topics related to case management, psychology, anonymous threats, stalking, case studies, legal issues, terrorism and plenty other interesting topics. ATAP also provides "Core competencies" lectures throughout the conference, so if you are new to the area, you will certainly have a better understanding of the basic concepts at the end of the week.

As mentioned before, if you have the possibility to attend, ATAP is well worth the investment and as an AETAP member, you get the membership rates to register.

**Totti Karpela**

**CATAP (November 2019, Niagara on the Lake)**

In November our Canadian colleagues held their annual conference in beautiful Niagara on the Lake. As expected CATAP invited a wide selection of great speakers. Fear management was one of the innovative topics receiving professional attention, and what also stood out were the training days with FBI special agent Molly Amman. From both a theoretical and a case-study approach she offered participants insight in the phenomenon of anonymous threats. The CATAP board provided wonderful networking opportunities to meet both established and new colleagues in the field.

**Bram van der Meer**

**APATAP (February 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 2020, Melbourne)**

Registration for the annual conference of the Asia Pacific Association of Threat Assessment Professionals is still open. Please have a look at their very interesting program: <https://www.conferences.com.au/2020apatap/program/>



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**Grudges & Grievances conference (September 18th -20th 2019, Cambridge)**

The North London Forensic Service organised their 8th non-profit academic conference on “Grudges and Grievances” at a beautiful college in Cambridge. Mainly psychiatrists and psychologists attended, but the perspective was a bit broader with the presence of people from law enforcement, the security sector and the criminological field too. The conference started off with two masterclasses about delusional disorder and a SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment)-training. The recognition of delusional disorders among (non-intimate) stalkers and need to treat these people has been clearly highlighted. Short presentations from different perspectives (both perpetrator and victim) about a variety of topics were given. It varied from grievances against the parliament, to resentful stalkers, to terrorism and the management of stalking. In sum: good recent input for TAM-professionals in the field of non-intimate stalkers and persons with a grievance who pose a threat.

**Lieke Bootsma**