

A New Wave? Existing, Emerging and Converging Forms of Extremism

Katja Theodorakis



Introducing a new agenda for inquiry

The proliferation of anti-democratic ideas and violence constitutes a new landmark in the evolving terrorism/extremism landscape. Under the guise of democratic dissent, anti-government protests are becoming a vehicle for increasing polarization and extremist activism as a prolonged 'state of exception' allows for the frustrations and anger of citizens to be steered around the interests of the far-right. This includes the strategic instrumentalization of conspiracy and anti-democracy narratives, made possible by the easy flow of transnational digital networks and amplified by adverse state actors. Particular concerns are that 'ordinary citizens' instigate and commit violent acts in the belief they are acting in the 'defence of democracy'.¹

These evolving dynamics invite us to examine existing theories and practices, raising important questions about root causes, escalation mechanisms, as well as the nature and extent of the threat emanating from them. Due to the similar challenges Germany and Australia are facing as liberal democracies, manifest in increasing linkages between protest movements, they lend themselves to a comparative perspective.

While Germany's historic experience with National Socialism, where domestic politics were radicalized from within, is certainly unique, recent developments make it an illustrative case study for how the COVID-19 crisis has impacted existing extremism dynamics and galvanized anti-democratic forces across the ideological spectrum. Nation-wide anti-lockdown rallies since March 2020 have provided a platform for various forms of anti-government activism to turn into extremism as existing and emerging trends converged: the QAnon ideology found its largest following outside the US in Germany, blending with existing conspiracy myths and esoteric practices, many of them anti-Semitic in nature.²

Tracing the trajectory of an increasing acceptance of extremist ideas and associated rejection of the existing political system can be instructive for other democratic countries facing similar challenges.³ This comes against the backdrop of Australian terrorism researchers long urging for a better understanding of, and, in many cases even the recognition of what pertains to the extremist spectrum - in terms of security challenges as well as harms to democracy.

Waves are a popular conceptual tool in terrorism research, used as lens to capture the nature and evolution of ideas and movements. A classic of the terrorism literature, Rapaport's *'Four Waves of Modern Terrorism'* for example categorizes terror phenomena/groups as pertaining to distinct and successive historical periods, each marked by shared characteristics in terms of their ideology (doctrines/theology), organization/operational mode and strategy/tactics.⁴ Some experts query whether recent developments point to the formation of a new, fifth wave of anti-system, anti-globalist resistance, driven by networked communication technologies; or alternatively, if we are seeing a new iteration of a right-wing extremist wave.

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- ¹ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/threat-of-white-power-race-war-grave-concern-to-asio-says-chief-20210812-p58i9u.html>; Tristan Sturm & Tom Albrecht (2021) 'Constituent Covid-19 apocalypses: contagious conspiracism, 5G, and viral vaccinations', *Anthropology & Medicine*, 28:1, 122-139, DOI: 10.1080/13648470.2020.1833684; <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-denialist-playbook/>
 - ² According to the state Commissioner for Anti-Semitism, Dr Michael Blume, there are various forms of anti-Semitism across the political spectrum; one prominent version is found amongst libertarians, centrists and even leftists, popular also with esoterics and hippies; <https://k-larevue.com/en/michael-blume-there-are-around-20-latent-anti-semities-and-5-active-anti-semities-in-germany/>. See also <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/politics/article/qanon-conspiracy-theory-germany>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/world/europe/qanon-is-thriving-in-germany-the-extreme-right-is-delighted.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>
 - ³ <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/09/19/analysis/shocking-anti-vaccine-protests-plagued-canadas-election-spawned-resurgent-far>
 - ⁴ <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0801/terror/>

Others have suggested that the current threat landscape is better captured by an understanding of co-existing, overlapping phenomena or 'strains' rather than neatly delineated, separate consecutive waves.⁵

For a nuanced understanding of the landscape, a critical engagement with existing and emerging concepts, definitions and theories is needed. This entails a recognition that seemingly new iterations of extremism – manifested in attacks or events many didn't see coming (US Capitol siege), or groups that appear to spring up out of nowhere - may not be so new after all but have been simmering along under the surface.

The 'WAVE' concept hence invites us to focus on the dynamic nature of the landscape before us: fluidity between ideologies, the blurring of boundaries, between traditional left-right markers as well as the so-called mainstream and fringes; movements take precedence over organizational structures, including the transnational networks, local nodes and ideas that propel them.

A forward-looking agenda for inquiry could include questions such as:

What evolving narratives, themes, subcultural expressions can we observe across the spectrum of extremist/terrorist groups?

What is the significance of cross-ideological coalitions and loose alliances in regard to mobilization?

Are ideological fusions manifesting in tangible changes, such as new groups forming out of coalescing anti-establishment currents?

Can we observe a noticeable shift towards a post-organizational paradigm - beyond hitherto known organizational structures/operational modes and established indicators?

Do we need a more differentiated understanding of the relationship between 'online and offline' spaces that draws a connection between online activity and real world harms?

More than tending to theoretical and conceptual considerations, the interrogatory lens of a 'A NEW WAVE?' aims to address policy-related problems and questions. Its premise is that new frameworks for analyzing and understanding the threats to society are needed to improve strategic-policy discourse and decision-making. As ASIO's Deputy General said in his 2021 Annual Threat Assessment, to counter the evolving threat environment, thinking outside the box is needed.⁶

Using Germany as a case study, this Brief hence serves as the introduction to the Analysis Paper Series. It contextualizes the research theme and seeks to provide a broad framework of inquiry for subsequent research endeavours, seminars and publications.

5 See for example <https://www.politika.io/en/notice/fascism-historical-phenomenon-and-political-concept>; or Daniel Koehler, "Violence and Terrorism from the Far-Right: Policy Options to Counter an Elusive Threat" ICCT Policy Brief 27 February 2020;

6 <https://www.asio.gov.au/counter-terrorism.html>

A Perfect Storm? Angry Citizens and the Far-Right meet Qanon

When in August 2020 a group of anti-government protesters pushed through police barriers onto the steps of the historic Reichstag building in Berlin, the seat of the German Parliament, a symbolic threshold was reached. Under the iconic inscription *'to the German People'*, about 300-400 figures could be seen waving the red, black and white flags of the historic German Empire, the 'Second Reich', while chanting 'Resistance' and 'We Are the People'.

The flags are insignia of Germany's revisionist radical right, the so-called *'Reichsbürger'* and *'Selbstverwalter'*: a spectrum of Sovereign Citizen and Identitarian movements that denies the legitimacy and sovereignty of the post-1945 Federal Republic.⁷

They had specifically organized for a historic 'storm of the Reichstag' under the hashtag *#SturmaufBerlin* and broken away from the main 'corona-demo' of about 38.000 protesters: an otherwise eclectic mix of anti-vaxxers, New Age esoterics, Hare Krishna disciples, anti-capitalist and eco-activist youth.

Marching to the Russian and U.S. embassies as an enactment of a historic Peace Treaty, theirs was a deliberate 'propaganda-of the deed' performance: visual dominance of a symbolically charged site was meant to give the appearance of historical inevitability and ideological continuity in a revolt against 'illegitimate, morally corrupt elites'.

The spectacle, a culmination of month-long anti-government mobilizations, caused widespread shock and condemnation amongst citizens, journalists and politicians alike. Predominantly, 'storm of the Reichstag' was used to discuss the unprecedented incident; some cautioned its usage legitimized the far right's narrative, while others argued the incident constituted nothing less than a 'storming' and the historical term was needed as a wake-up call.⁸ Debates ensued about whether the radicalizing potential of the growing protest movement had been underestimated despite warnings by some experts and politicians.

Up until then, the protests were commonly portrayed under the broad umbrella of citizen dissent, due to the rallies' overall 'peace, love and harmony' optics; much was made of the quirkiness of tin foil-hatted protesters, their bizarre agendas and seemingly contradictory alliances. The so-called 'storm' hence called into question treating protest movement as an ideologically disconnected, reactionary coalition of various anti-establishment currents and 'alternative truther' groupings that lacked a common identity and agenda. It was recognized that far-right extremists were attempting to instrumentalize the citizen protests for greater visibility, publicity and long-term strategic gains.⁹

The president of the 'Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz' (BfV) -Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution - Germany's domestic federal security agency, noted at a subsequent threat briefing : "right-wing extremists and Reichsbürger succeeded in occupying a resonant space, creating powerful images and thus exploiting the heterogeneous protest events...we are observing closely whether the right-wing amalgamation takes on an even larger dimension and whether these actors are becoming capable of connecting with each other."¹⁰

7 <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/gewalt-bei-corona-protesten-in-berlin-drei-polizisten-verhindern-sturm-auf-den-reichstag/26140840.html>; <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/bibelsprueche-trommeltanz-und-faschisten-zehntausende-demonstrieren-in-berlin-gegen-die-corona-massnahmen/26140564.html>

8 <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/gesellschaft/medien/querfront-protest-vor-der-volksbuehne-wie-die-ard-verschwörungstheoretikern-auf-den-leim-ging/25755124.htm>; <https://www.dw.com/en/german-reichstag-protests-a-54783070>; <https://www.tagesschau.de/faktenfinder/sturmaufberlin-verfassungsschutz-rechtsextreme-101.html>;

9 <https://www.belltower.news/antisemitism-in-the-digital-age-conspiracy-ideologies-covid-19-and-antisemitism-123559/>

10 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56912882>; https://rp-online.de/panorama/coronavirus/innenministerium-verfassungsschuetzer-haben-querdenker-im-blick_aid-54603341

And indeed, since August 2020, protests have been marked by increasing hostility, aggression and violence, especially amidst tightening restrictions in response to a second, third and now fourth wave of pandemic outbreaks. In 2021, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution then introduced a new category of anti-government extremism and placed the citizen protest movement 'Querdenker' under formal observation for the 'legitimization of anti-democratic activity'.

In September 2021, a 19-year-old working at a petrol station was shot and killed when he questioned why a customer was refusing to wear a mask. A Twitter account linked to the killer, who followed several prominent German far-right politicians and publicists, revealed "a dislike for immigrants, climate activists and the government".¹¹

While initially the agenda of the 'Querdenker' (meaning lateral, contrarian thinkers) was issue-oriented, according to a BfV spokesperson, the movement had developed "an increasing, fundamental hostility towards the state".¹² This constitutes formal recognition of a violence-oriented anti-democracy movement at 'the centre of society', accompanied by an increasing proliferation of anti-Semitic conspiracy myths; these were found to act as radicalization force multipliers and ideological glue for disparate movements across the ideological spectrum.

The emergence of anti-government extremism in Germany occurred against the background of a notable rise in politically motivated violence in the years preceding the pandemic. At the release of its annual security report in July 2020, German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer identified rising far-right extremism as Germany's largest security concern, following a 10% increase in recorded crimes by far-right extremists in 2019. And the President of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution declared far-right extremism and terrorism as "*the biggest danger for democracy*"; he placed factions within the 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD), an elected opposition party in the Bundestag - under official surveillance for constituting "*part of the breeding ground of far-right extremism*" in 2019.¹³

An equally disconcerting report released by the BfV in October 2020 documents the extent of far-right infiltration of the security services, military and law enforcement: in 2019, Germany's military counter-intelligence agency MAD had already revealed it was investigating over 500 cases of suspected right-wing extremism within the Bundeswehr - a 30% increase from the previous year whose figures had been seen as underestimated by analysts.¹⁴

The terrorist campaign by the cell 'National Socialist Underground' (NSU) which remained undetected for over a decade, reflects this; with 10 victims, 43 attempted killings, three bomb attacks and 15 armed robberies between 2000 and 2007, it constitutes a particularly dark point in German post-war history

"It took years for the German authorities to even recognise (or acknowledge) that these violent incidents constituted a campaign of terrorist violence, and the events created one of the most significant crises of German law enforcement and intelligence agencies since the Second World War. Indeed, the NSU and its actions were characterised as "our September 11" by the German Federal Prosecutor General."¹⁵

11 <https://apnews.com/article/europe-arrests-germany-5c853b4e068e1203b890652cc96e8a5c>

12 <https://www.dw.com/en/pandemic-spurred-extremism-says-german-domestic-intelligence/a-57906728>

13 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (German Office for the Protection of the Constitution), 2019 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution (Facts and Trends). Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, July 2020; <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/public-relations/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2019-summary>

14 <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/rechtsextremismus-als-groesste-bedrohung-das-ist-eine-schande-fuer-unser-land/25989488.html>; <https://www.dw.com/en/pandemic-spurred-extremism-says-german-domestic-intelligence/a-57906728>

15 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/10/podcasts/day-x-germany-neo-nazi-franco-a.html>; Daniel Koehler, "Violence and Terrorism from the Far-Right: Policy Options to Counter an Elusive Threat" ICCT Policy Brief 27 February 2020 <https://icct.nl/publication/violence-and-terrorism-from-the-far-right-policy-options-to-counter-an-elusive-threat/>

A focus on individual cases and perpetrators is said to have covered up the extent of the problem, with deeper roots in society and institutions. This is connected to what is considered permissible in public and political discourse.

The ongoing burden of its unique history had led Germany to openly recognise, as the first European nation, the need for a democracy “capable of defending itself against anti-democratic actors who use the democratic process in order to subvert it.”¹⁶ As the post-war German republic came into being post-1949, nationalism and most of its overt cultural expressions were forbidden as an acceptable communitarian identity and form of self-reference. But instead of transcending the past, this approach to Germany’s troubled legacy stifled necessary debates and created a conflicted political context.

Analyses show that the refugee crisis of 2015-6 marked a crucial catalyst for pent-up ethno-nationalist sentiments. The anti-immigration street movement ‘Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident’ (PEGIDA), which emerged from the East German city of Dresden in 2014, propelled the momentum.¹⁷ Its driving ideas flowed into the AfD, thereby giving it procedural democratic legitimacy as a conduit between the state, its institutions and far right views and activism. Progressive politicians would receive death threats, so-called ‘enemy lists’ were circulated regularly in extremist far-right and neo-Nazi networks.¹⁸

After years of accusations of ‘being blind in the right eye’, it finally took a string of far-right terror incidents and discovered plots - the Halle and Hanau attacks as well as the assassination of pro-immigration politician Walter Lübcke by a neo-Nazi - for the German Government to recognize the systemic nature of the threat and address it with more immediate action.

Considering the dangers emanating from the growing social acceptance of discourses that, albeit not explicitly violent, contravene principles of universal human dignity, policy efforts are centred around a comprehensive 89-point program addressing “all forms of hostility towards specific groups”. It was developed following extensive consultations with migrant communities and victims of terrorism, calling for more civic education regarding (racist) discrimination, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.¹⁹

With an allocated budget of more than one billion Euros over 2021-2024, the policy plan builds on a range of preceding smaller initiatives. Alongside ‘hard’ security upgrades and reforms (such as dedicated far-right capabilities/units within the Joint Counterterrorism Centre), of particular note are initiatives aimed at ‘society at large’; The biggest one, ‘Live Democracy!’ is supported by a 150.5 million Euro budget in 2021 and based on “strategies to encourage the public to value a diverse and equitable society.” Some political groupings, also within Parliament had even called for a specific ministry for societal cohesion, anti-discrimination, integration and migration.²⁰ Moreover, after much political debate, a probe into the proliferation of extremist elements, their supporting ideas and tolerance thereof, has also been actioned across governmental and civil society institutions.

While the burden of Germany’s historical legacy certainly added a special urgency, such a response at the systemic level shouldn’t be dismissed as relevant only to German context; it is instructive to consider what measures and competencies result from putting a more holistic understanding of the root causes of different forms of extremism into practice alongside hard counterterrorism measures.

16 De Morree, P. (2016). “The German ‘Wehrhafte Demokratie’”. In Rights and Wrongs under the ECHR: The prohibition of abuse of rights in Article 17 of the European Convention on Human Rights (pp. 185-224).

17 <https://www.counterextremism.com/content/european-ethno-nationalist-and-white-supremacy-groups>

18 <https://www.dw.com/en/german-politicians-call-for-urgent-action-after-dramatic-spike-in-death-threats/a-51100807>

19 <https://www.lawfareblog.com/fighting-domestic-extremism-lessons-germany>

20 <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2020-10/integrationsgipfel-antirassismus-agenda-rechtsextremismus>

A remark by the Premier of the Eastern German state of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer, at the unveiling of a memorial to the victims of the National Socialist Underground (NSU) cell, is noteworthy:

“We’ve experienced in the last years and months how thoughts become words, and words become actions”²¹

What determines a turn to violence does not only come down to individual trajectories, in interaction with structural variables, but a much wider enabling environment. The latter also includes what is normalized in societal and political-institutional discourse and hence made permissible.

Conclusion: Waves across the fringes and the middle

Accepting the premise of fluidity as a new hallmark, this Brief set out to demonstrate the utility of fresh lenses as the COVID-19 crisis became a catalyst or accelerant for illiberal narratives and identities.

An examination of Germany’s experience with the pandemic shows that extremist ideas and the willingness to act on them are not restricted to the so-called fringes of society anymore.²² As the pandemic is forcing democratic societies to re-negotiate the relationship between individual freedoms and social responsibilities, the boundaries of the new extremism are more fluid too.

Anti-government discourse and narratives intended to undermine Western democracies are not easily recognized. This makes it even more difficult to determine the risk posed to society as thresholds are subjective when it comes to non-criminal indicators, let alone what constitute contraventions of a social media platform’s terms of service.

The ‘New Right’ and its ‘metapolitical’ strategy play an important, but often underestimated role in this regard. Encompassing a spectrum of informally aligned, loose networks of individuals, groups, and organisations, what unites them are common anti-democratic, militant visions. Pursued through a range of (outwardly non-violent) strategies, their political project is nevertheless a misanthropic, fascist one.²³ The language driving extremism is often coded and mobilization is occurring through subcultural settings without any detectable illegal activities, even with legislation such as Germany’s that criminalizes hate speech and Holocaust denial.²⁴

A state prosecutor who led Germany’s first police unit for digital hate crime noted in light of recent developments:

“We regularly see antisemitic postings and animations with gas chambers, cut-off heads of politicians being put into ovens. We see classic Nazi propaganda. But we also see conspiracy theories that have a pseudo-scientific veneer and, in this way, deny the Holocaust... It’s getting even bigger. I think we’re going to see serious problems ... It will not stop with words.”²⁵

Manifestations of these dynamics can also be observed at Australian ‘freedom rallies’ and in accompanying telegram groups with tens of thousands of ‘concerned citizens’: they’re filled with increasingly extremist conspiracy myths, anti-democratic, exclusionary narratives, as well as a marked by intolerance of difference of opinion and a rigid adherence to only ‘their revealed truth’.

The German experience hence confirms that recalibrating analytical capabilities, threat metrics,

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²¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-angela-merkel-vows-to-fight-right-wing-extremist-terrorism/a-51109046>

²² <https://www.fr.de/frankfurt/frankfurt-die-demokratie-gegen-radikalisierung-verteidigen-91125610.html>

²³ Katy Brown, Aurelien Mondon & Aaron Winter (2021) The far right, the mainstream and mainstreaming: towards a heuristic framework, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, DOI: 10.1080/13569317.2021.1949829

²⁴ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/germanys-laws-antisemitic-hate-speech-nazi-propaganda-holocaust-denial/>

²⁵ <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2021/jun/28/frontline-germanys-neo-nazis-far-right/>

increased detection capabilities as well as strengthening the mechanisms for content moderation/removal is one thing. But it's not enough.

When it comes to understanding how previously taboo, unimaginable ideas gain momentum, there is yet another take on 'waves': in 1967, a high school student in Palo Alto, California asked in class how the Nazis could have been so appealing to the general population that there was no popular resistance against the Holocaust. The question inspired his teacher to bring to life a simulated movement, to demonstrate the seductive appeal and universal sociological dynamics underpinning fascist movements.

Titled *'The Third Wave'*, the experiment showed how relatively easy it is to create a cohesive following by instilling sentiments of power, belonging and identity: based on reverence of authority, exclusion and collective effervescence.²⁶ Even though appalled and bewildered when they first learned about Third Reich fascist principles in an abstract lesson, students got easily swept up by the intoxicating momentum of an exclusionary movement that would've ultimately resulted in the normalization of repression and violence. This way, *'The Third Wave'* illustrates the deceptive allure of a 'righteous' zeal, reflecting the findings of the Milgram experiment: people tend to obey orders that contravene prevailing ethical norms if the source of the authority is regarded as legitimate and morally right.

'The Wave' was popularized as a young adult novel in 1981, which formed part of the classroom curriculum in more than 32 countries, including in Israel and Germany. It was also adapted for the screen multiple times: a 2008 version is set in modern-day German and framed for contemporary relevance: "How could we be led astray today? How could fascism work? Would it be possible today? Could that kind of thing happen again, here and now, at a normal German school?"²⁷

A more recent adaption, in the form of the Netflix miniseries *'We Are the Wave'* fictionalized the experiment in another topical context, bringing its lesson closer to the heart of liberalism: an initially idealistic quest to save the environment turns into an ideologically extreme movement. "In their left-wing quest to save the environment, eschew discrimination, and mitigate capitalism, they become their own enemy as they resort to equal or more violent acts of destruction."²⁸

As the original creator of the experiment stated: "*I think you look to the political scene today — internationally, not just in the United States — and you see extremism, a simple answer offered by a religion or candidate to solve our problems...yes, we would all have made good Germans.*"²⁹

Fundamental to these dynamics is an understanding that extremism's appeal may be less culturally particular, more universal than we think:

*"far from alien...the Nazi regime encountered a reservoir of support – in Germany and beyond, not only among fascists but also within mainstream society. It was in this lethal conjuncture of empowering radical precedent and widespread suppressed desire that the most devastating dynamics of a 'wave' seem to lie."*³⁰

The question mark behind a 'A NEW WAVE?' is hence intended as a reminder of the need for critical engagement and analytical clarity, ensuring our mental models, coupled with political will, are fit for the task at hand.

26 See 'Lesson Plan', a documentary featuring interviews with the teacher Ron Jones and students of the original 'Third Wave' <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1740801/>; or <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2017/03/17/the-wave-that-changed-history>

27 <https://home.uni-leipzig.de/lit4school/en/the-wave/#explore>

28 <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/a30152438/we-are-the-wave-netflix-true-story-experiment-nazi-germany/>

29 <https://verdemagazine.com/the-third-wave-at-50>

30 <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/comment/reverse-waves-how-radical-ideas-spread-and-take-hold/>

About the Author

Katja Theodorakis is the Head of ASPI's Counterterrorism program.

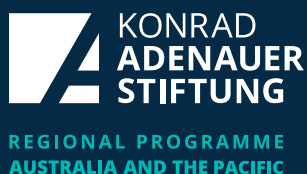
Before joining ASPI, she was Senior Program Coordinator for Research and Analysis (Foreign/ Security Policy) at the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation's Australia Office where she coordinated a portfolio spanning the fields of terrorism/extremism, European defence/security matters, cybersecurity and the wider strategic relations in the Indo-Pacific. This entailed engagement and strategic outreach to the national security community, with the aim of enhancing cooperation between Australia and Germany/Europe.

Katja publishes and presents at seminars, conferences and masterclasses (for representatives from DoD, security agencies, DFAT) and has appeared on national TV and radio for commentary. She has engaged in academic teaching, such as most recently as a seasonal lecturer for a course on 'Terrorism and Propaganda in Cyberspace' at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security at Charles Sturt University. At the Australian National University, Katja has taught and tutored on Middle East politics, Islam and International Terrorism at the postgraduate and undergraduate level.

She is also a member of the Future Operations Research Group and co-founder of the associated Women In Future Operations platform at the UNSW at ADFA. Here, her focus is on insurgent/extremist propaganda and their strategic use in information operations. A key premise underpinning Katja's research is the need to look beyond technocratic approaches to propaganda campaigns in order to capture the full breadth of extremism, including cognitive and affective factors.

Katja has lived in the Middle East, where she was engaged in educational projects and NGO work in Syria during the early years of Bashar al-Assad's presidency. She holds a First-Class Honours degree in International Development from the Australian National University, was recipient of several scholarships including an Australian Government Research Training PhD Scholarship, and has been awarded the 2016 ANU Media and Outreach Award as Emerging Media Talent for her commendable media output and performance as a young researcher.





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