

# POLITICAL REFLECTION

MAGAZINE

April • May • June • 2023

ISSN: 2042-888X

Vol. 9 • No. 2

**Hereditary Succession  
Politicians in Japan: It is  
Time to Reconsider**

*by Yukio Sakurai*

**Speculations on Georgia's  
Status in the Light of  
Regional Changes**

*by Gökhan Sırmalı*

**An Overview of the India-  
Kyrgyzstan Relationships:  
Challenges and Opportunities**

*by Chitra Rajora*



**Right-wing Populism  
in Germany and  
The “Reichsbürger”  
Movement**

*by Ozgur Tufekci*

International Think-tank [www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)  
Consultancy  
Research Institute

CESRAN International is a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

**CESRAN International** is a think-tank specialising on international relations in general, and global peace, conflict and development related issues and challenges.

The main business objective/function is that we provide expertise at an international level to a wide range of policy making actors such as national governments and international organisations. CESRAN with its provisions of academic and semi-academic publications, journals and a fully-functioning website has already become a focal point of expertise on strategic research and analysis with regards to global security and peace. The Centre is particularly unique in being able to bring together wide variety of expertise from different countries and academic disciplines.

The main activities that CESRAN undertakes are providing consultancy services and advice to public and private enterprises, organising international conferences and publishing academic material.

Some of CESRAN's current publications are:

- The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development (biannual, peer reviewed)  
[www.therestjournal.com](http://www.therestjournal.com)
- Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (biannual, peer reviewed)
- Political Reflection Magazine (quarterly) [www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com](http://www.politicalreflectionmagazine.com)
- CESRAN Paper Series
- CESRAN Policy Brief
- Turkey Focus Policy Brief

CESRAN International also organises an annual international conference since 2014, called **International Conference on Eurasian Politics and Society (IEPAS)**  
[www.eurasianpoliticsandsociety.org](http://www.eurasianpoliticsandsociety.org)

- **Ranked among the top 150 International think tanks**



*Established in 2010*

**Chairman:** *Dr Ozgur Tufekci*

**Executive Editors:**

*Dr Rahman Dag*

*Dr Emrah Atar*

**South Asian Studies | Editor:** *Dr Sharifullah Dorani*

**American Foreign Policy | Editor:** *Dr Mark Meirowitz*

**Applied Economics | Editor:** *Dr Hakan Uslu*

**Middle Eastern Studies | Editor:** *Dr Rahman Dag*

**Interview Editor:** *Ebru Birinci*

**Assistant Editor:** *Ruhullah Afshar*

**Assistant Editor:** *Oguzhan Cakir*

**Assistant Editor:** *Rukiye Patan*

**Submissions:**

To submit articles or opinion, please email:

**Rahman.dag@cesran.org**

or

**editors@cesran.org**

**Note:**

The ideal **PR** article length is from **1000** to **2000** words.

©2023

By

the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis.

All rights reserved. Political Reflection and its logo are trademarks of the Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis, which bears no responsibility for the editorial content; the views expressed in the articles are those of the authors. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher.

VOL. 9 - NO. 2

# POLITICAL REFLECTION

APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
2023

e-ISSN: 2042-888X

**“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”**

## Contents

World News 05 - 09

*by Ahmed Yesevi Taşçı*

11-16 Right-wing Populism in Germany  
and The “Reichsbürger”  
Movement

*by Ozgur Tufekci*

Hereditary Succession 18-22

Politicians in Japan:  
It is time to reconsider

*by Yukio Sakurai*

24 - 28 Speculations on Georgia's Status  
in the Light of Regional Changes

*by Gökhan Sırmalı*

An Overview of the India- 30 - 36  
Kyrgyzstan Relationships:  
Challenges and Opportunities

*by Chitra Rajora*

# Right-wing Populism in Germany and The “Reichsbürger” Movement

Ozgur Tufekci  
oztufekci@cesran.org

**M**ore than 150 residences were searched by German police on December 7, 2022, and 25 people were detained in connection with an alleged coup attempt by followers of the "Reichsbürger" movement. This one was one of the greatest anti-terrorism investigations in the Federal Republic of Germany's history (Falk, 2022).



*The German Empire, 1871-1918.*

Ozgur Tufekci is Associate Professor of International Relations at Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey. He is also the founder and Director-General of CESRAN International.

## Right-wing Populism

Right-wing populism is a political ideology that combines populist rhetoric and policies with right-wing positions on issues such as nationalism, anti-immigration, law and order, and traditional cultural values. It often involves an "us versus them" mentality, portraying the political and economic elites as enemies of the people and champions of the common man. Right-wing populist leaders often advocate for an authoritarian style of governance and emphasize the need to protect the interests of the nation or a specific group of the population.

Right-wing populism is not a recent development. Since the end of World War II, revisionist ideologies have gained traction and been embraced by neo-Nazi or right-wing extremist parties like the British National Party (BNP), French National Front/Le Front National, and Austrian Freedom Party (FP). While many of the "new" right-wing discourses bear similarities to older, well-known ideologies (Mammone, 2009), it has been argued that right-wing populism differs from those other trends in that it does not convey a coherent ideology instead proposing a mixed-bag of beliefs, stereotypes, attitudes, and related programs which aim to address and mobilize a range of equally contradictory segments of the electorate.

### Right-wing populism in Germany: Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)

In the grand scheme of history, the past century has been extraordinary for Germany and Germans. A magnificent historical moment occurred in November 1989 with the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Additionally, it indicated the start of a procedure. On October 3, 1990, the two German nations were united politically, but a more extensive and profound social and cultural transition had only begun.

Germany would once again have to reckon with its history, answer concerns about its identity, and struggle to define its connections, position, and duty in a changing Europe after the end of the Cold War.

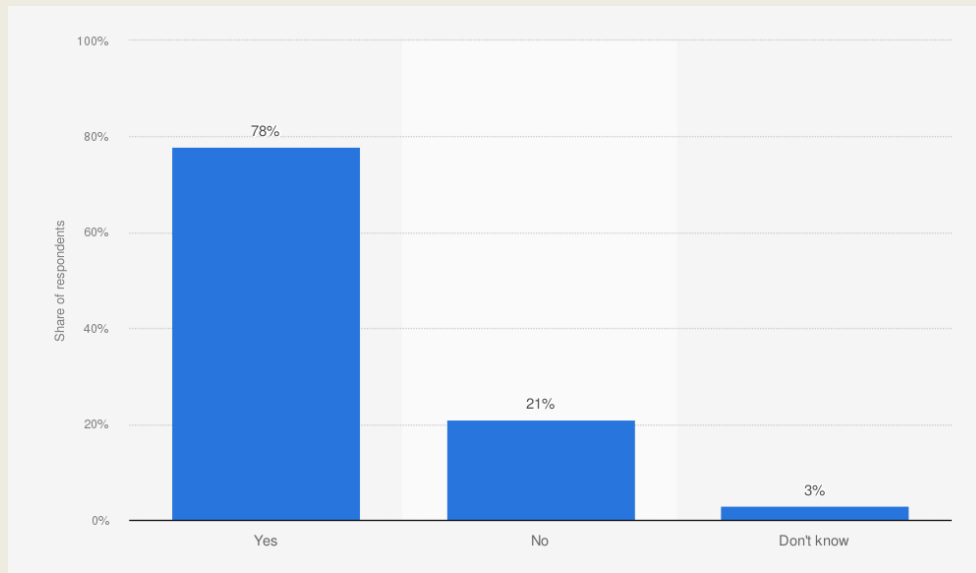
Right-wing populism in Germany has evolved over the years and has had various political movements and parties associated with it. One of the earliest right-wing populist movements in Germany was the Republicans party<sup>1</sup>, formed in 1983. They were anti-immigration and anti-EU, and gained some support in the 1990s, but have since declined in popularity. In recent years,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Republicans (*Die Republikaner*, REP) is a national conservative political party in Germany. The Republicans' founders were dissident members of the Christian Social Union who had protested that party's role in arranging credit for communist East Germany. They were soon joined by members of the former Citizens' Party outside Bavaria. The Republicans' chairman from 1985 to 1994 was Franz Schönhuber, a former volunteer in the Nazi Waffen SS. The party called for lower business taxes, restrictions on foreign residents and an end to immigration, and an emphasis on law and order. In its first national election in June 1989, the party shocked the political establishment, winning more than 7 percent of the votes for delegates to the European Parliament. Its biggest success came in state elections that year in Bavaria, where it won nearly 15 percent of the vote, and in Baden-Württemberg (Encyclopedia Britannica).

the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has emerged as a major player in right-wing populist politics.

### Do you see the AfD as a threat for democracy in Germany?



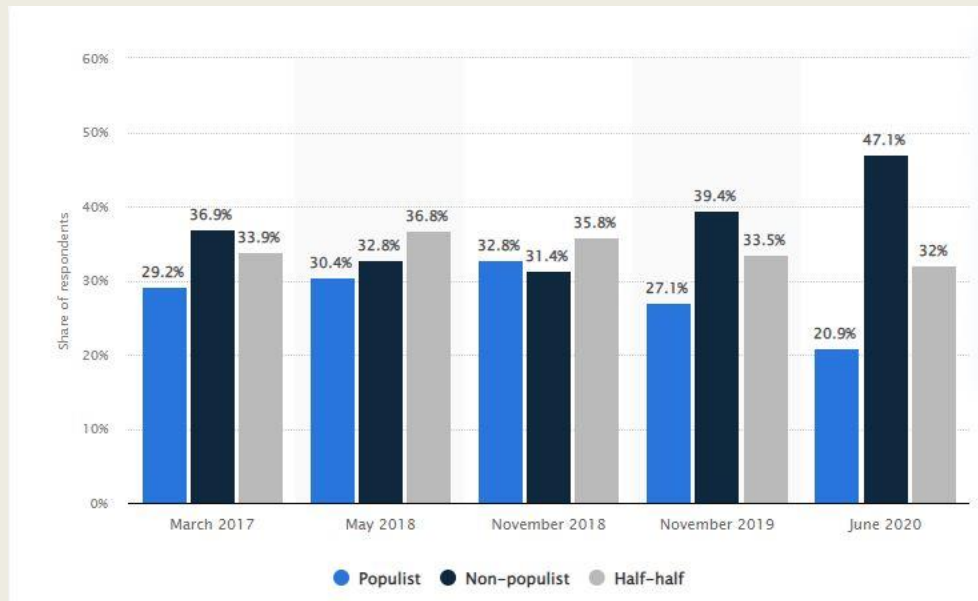
Source: Statista, 2022

In 2013, the populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) was founded as a party with a focus on economic and fiscal sovereignty problems in Germany. Before 2015, there didn't appear to be much interest in the topic of immigrants in Germany. Yet, the tone shifted along with the refugee crisis of late summer 2015 which provided the impetus for a veritable resurrection of the demonstrations, and most Germans supported capping the number of refugees.

The AfD won 92 seats in the Bundestag and 12.6 percent of the vote in the elections held in September 2017 to become a member of the national legislature. AfD's nationwide vote percentage decreased in the 2021 federal election to 10.3 percent from 12.6 percent in 2017, but the party still won the most seats in the states of Saxony and Thuringia and performed well in eastern Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2021).

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party is typically regarded by the mainstream media and political scholars as a right-wing populist party in Germany. Many experts have labelled the AfD as a populist because of its emphasis on anti-immigration, Euroscepticism, and resistance to liberal democratic institutions, as well as its rhetoric about maintaining German identity. Similar to the rise of right-wing populist parties, Germany has experienced the rise of radical movements, as well. The reichsbürger movement is one of them.

## Share of Eligible Voters With Populist Attitudes in Germany in 2020



Source: Statista, 2020

### The Reichsbürger movement

The "citizens of the empire" (or "reichsbürger") movement originated in Germany and shares ideas with the "sovereign citizens" movements<sup>2</sup> in the US, Canada, and the UK. The Federal Republic of Germany is not a sovereign state, and as a result, the laws and regulations it enforces are not enforceable, according to the Reichsbürger movement, which covers a variety of ideologies.

The Federal Republic of Germany, commonly referred to as the "BRD GmbH" (Federal Republic of Germany - Limited Liability Company), is believed by many members of the Reichsbürger movement to be a company (Kleikamp, 2015). Similar assertions are common among groups of sovereign citizens in the US who feel their nation has turned into a company, however they dispute as to whether this occurred in the 1800s or after the US abandoned the gold standard.

There is no agreement among Reichsbürgers on Germany's final lawful form of governance, much like among their American counterparts. The Third Reich, according to certain members of the Reichsbürger movement, is still there but occupied. Some claim that the German Empire of 1871 is still in effect.

<sup>2</sup> The Sovereign Citizens movement comprises a highly heterogenous anti-government ideology that originated in the United States spreading to other Commonwealth countries. Adherents are united in their belief that governments illegitimately rules over them. They live under the assumption that by declaring themselves sovereign, they are not obliged to abide with government legislation (ISD Global, 2021).



Right-wing extremist and antisemitic organizations in Germany find the Reichsbürger movement to be the perfect ally because of their historical revisionism. However, not all supporters of the Reichsbürger movement are right-wing extremists; just around 5% of the Reichsbürger, according to the German domestic intelligence agencies (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz), fall into this category.

This number, however it may appear small, illustrates the enormous variety of philosophies and views present in the scene. Reichsbürger beliefs are less of an all-encompassing worldview than they are a piece of a growing patchwork of conspiracy-theory-based ideologies, which expanded more quickly as anti-lockdown groups gained popularity. The intelligence services believed that 19,000 persons in Germany were affiliated with the Reichsbürger movement in 2019. The amount had increased to 23,000 by 2022 (Tanno and Schmidt, 2023).

### **Coup Attempt and What to Expect Now?**

To achieve its main aim, the members of the Reichsbürger movement attempted a coup on December 7, 2022. As a result, more than 150 residences were searched by German police and 25 people were detained in connection with an alleged coup attempt by followers of the "Reichsbürger" movement. A German noble dynasty Prince, an active-duty judge who is also a former AfD politician, an active-duty soldier, and former members of the German army are among the members of the group who were detained on allegations of organizing an armed coup attempt with an operation. With the exception of one person, who is a Russian citizen, all the inmates are citizens of Germany. They were charged with forming a terrorist organization that planned to carry out an armed coup against the constitutional order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

They were led by a businessman Heinrich XIII, Prince Reuss, and the conspirators—including soldiers, police officers, and a judge—aimed to forcibly replace the incumbent government with a new political system. These individuals share the ideological foundation of the so-called *Reichsbürger* ("citizens of the Reich") ideology (Juling, 2023).

It is evident that during the previous years, the Reichsbürger movement's way of thinkings and conspiracy theories have transitioned from an under-the-radar movement to a tangible and significant terrorist danger in the eyes of German institutions. For now, it seems that the Reichsbürger movement lost its abilities and influence. Yet, considering the right-wing populism influence in Germany, it would not naïve to expect new fring groups to erupt in the coming days/years.

### **References**

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "The Republicans". Encyclopedia Britannica, 20 Mar. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Republicans>. Accessed on 19 April 2023.

Deutsche Welle, (2021), "Germany's far-right populist AfD: No gains, small losses", Accessed on 19 April 2023.

- Falk, T. O., (2022), “Why Germany Is Struggling to Address the Reichsbürger Threat”, <https://foreignpolicy.com/author/thomas-o-falk/>. Accessed on 19 April 2023.
- ISD Global, (2021), “Sovereign Citizens”, <https://www.isdglobal.org/explainers/sovereign-citizens/>. Accessed on 19 April 2023.
- Juling, D. (2023), “Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?”, <https://www.illiberalism.org/reichsburger-an-old-german-ideology-in-new-clothing/>, Accessed on 19 April 2023.
- Kleikamp, A. (2015), “Hilfe, existiert das Deutsche Reich etwa noch?”, <https://www.welt.de/geschichte/article143672017/Hilfe-existiert-das-Deutsche-Reich-etwa-noch.html>, Accessed on 19 April 2023.
- Mammone, A. (2009), “*The Eternal Return?* Faux Populism and Contemporarization of Neo-Fascism across Britain, France and Italy”, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 17:2, 171-192, DOI: 10.1080/14782800903108635
- Tanno, S and Schmidt, N. (2023), “The far out, far-right plot that Germany is still trying to unravel”, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/03/25/europe/germany-reichsbuerger-movement-explainer-intl/index.html>, Accessed on 19 April 2023.

the  
rest  
Journal of Politics and Development

ISSN 2632-4911

## Call for Papers

*The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development* endeavours to become the foremost international forum for academics, researchers and policymakers to share their knowledge and experience in the discipline of international relations and its subfields: international security, international political economy, international organisations, foreign policy analysis, political history, etc.

*The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development* is an open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published at its own website <https://therestjournal.com/The Rest: Journal of Politics and Development> welcomes submissions of **articles** from related persons involved in the scope of the journal as well as **summary reports of conferences and lecture series** held in social sciences.

Prospective authors should submit 4.000-9.000 words articles for consideration in Microsoft Word-compatible format. For more complete descriptions and submission instructions, please access the Author Guidelines and Style Guidelines pages at the website <https://therestjournal.com/> Contributors are urged to read the author guidelines and style guidelines carefully before submitting articles. Articles submissions should be sent through the "MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION" page at the website.

*Editors-in-Chief:*

**Dr. Ozgur TUFEKCI**

**Dr. Rahman DAG**

# *Leadership*

***Honorary President***  
Ken Booth



***Director-General***  
Ozgur Tufekci



***Deputy Director-General***  
Rahman Dag



**cesran** international   
CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS - CESRAN

think-tank ■ consultancy ■ research-institute

[www.cesran.org](http://www.cesran.org)

**PR**