Remaining on the Streets.

Anti-Islamic PEGIDA Mobilization and its Relationship to Far-right Party Politics.

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Introduction[i]

The concept of movement parties (Kitschelt 2006) represents one of the latest attempts to connect the study of social movements and political parties (see Chapter 2). The growing academic attention to the links between movement activism and party politics reflects the empirical importance of this relationship. While the close connection between movements and parties for the political left is well established (e.g. Almeida 2010; Kitschelt 1989), we know little about its relevance for the right, especially for the radical right – which is the strongest challenger of mainstream politics in contemporary Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 2012).[ii]

Academic research on the far right was for a long time restricted to the study of party politics (e.g. Mudde 2007; Rydgren 2007). Recently, scholars have begun investigating the growing relevance of far-right social movements (e.g. Blee and Creasap 2010; Caiani et al. 2012; Berntzen 2018). This specialized literature on far-

right activism has, however, neglected the *relationship* between far-right movement activism *and* far-right party politics (with notable exceptions e.g. Art 2011; Giugni et al. 2005; Hutter 2014; Minkenberg 2003; and Pirro and Castelli 2018).

This chapter adds to the literature that assesses the importance of far-right party politics for far-right social movement activism by analysing PEGIDA, the Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*). PEGIDA rapidly became the largest recent instance of far-right street mobilization in Western Europe. Originating in the eastern German city of Dresden, Saxony, PEGIDA activists started their mobilization effort in October 2014 – almost one year *before* the 'refugee crisis'. At their peak in December 2014 and January 2015, around 20,000 supporters attended PEGIDA's weekly marches through the streets of Dresden. Given their mobilization success, it does not come as a surprise that PEGIDA was quickly studied by German political scientists (for example, Daphi et al. 2015; Decker 2015; Dostal 2015; Geiges et al. 2015; Patzelt and Klose 2015; Vorländer et al. 2016; and in English: Virchow 2016; Vorländer et al. 2018).

While Dresden was, and continues to be, the epicentre of PEGIDA protests, it is not their only location. In many other German cities, and in some other countries – such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom – far-right activists have tried to mobilize under the 'banner' of PEGIDA. Despite representing widely-covered cases of far-right street activism in countries such as Austria and Norway, none of these offshoots managed to mobilize anywhere close to the initial PEGIDA group in Dresden (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016). This chapter also contextualizes PEGIDA involvement in the far-right mobilization in the Saxon city of Chemnitz in late summer 2018. These protest events

made international headlines as some involved participants showed the Nazi salute or violently attacked, in their perception, ‘foreigners’.

The exceptional development of PEGIDA was also shaped by its relationship with far-right party politics, and this was especially so in Dresden. We demonstrate this important relationship in four different ways. First, we show that large-N findings which underline that nationally established radical right parties hamper far-right movement activism have less power to explain cross-national differences in PEGIDA mobilization than often assumed. Second, we discuss the importance of party activists in the early stages of PEGIDA mobilization. Third, we elaborate on how and why PEGIDA never became a ‘movement party’, despite attempts to enter party politics. Fourth, we show that PEGIDA in Dresden and the AfD (Alternative for Germany: *Alternative für Deutschland*) have grown closer together over time up until late summer 2018, and discuss how this came about while PEGIDA was overshadowed by this new radical right party. Overall, taking far-right party politics into account adds to the understanding of important dimensions of PEGIDA, especially its emergence and its dynamics over time.

Apart from making the theoretical point to emphasize the significance of party politics for understanding far-right social movement mobilization, we also discuss how social movement concepts such as political opportunity structures, resources, social networks, and coalition building explain these movement-party relations.

Methodologically, our chapter presents an analysis of the crucial case study of PEGIDA in Dresden, with references to many other attempts of PEGIDA protests in Germany and beyond, which are taken into account as ‘shadow cases’, providing non-formal reference points for a better understanding of our main case (e.g. Gerring

2017: 139; for another PEGIDA study explicitly using shadow cases, see Hafez 2016). We primarily draw on the sizeable scholarly literature on the German case as well as our previous protest event analysis and study of online sources on PEGIDA in Austria, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016). Interviews with leading PEGIDA activists would have certainly shed light on some of the issues discussed in this chapter; for example, on their efforts to enter party politics. However, beyond the general methodological difficulties in studying far-right activism (e.g. Blee 2009), interview access to PEGIDA activists has proved to be particularly difficult (e.g. Daphi et al. 2015: 4).

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, we introduce the case of PEGIDA, describing the history, ideology, activists, supporters, and diffusion of PEGIDA protest. Afterwards, we discuss the above-mentioned key dimensions of the relationship between PEGIDA and far-right party politics. In the conclusion, we discuss our findings in the broader context of contemporary far-right politics.

PEGIDA in Dresden and beyond

Since the summer months of 2015, the intensification of the 'refugee crisis' has shaped German politics. Much as in other European countries of destination for asylum seekers, immigration and integration turned into two of the most salient political issues, shaping how people talk about politics (Weisskircher and Hutter 2019). However, almost a year before the summer of 2015, during the last months of 2014, an anti-Islamic far-right protest group had already entered the German political stage: PEGIDA started to mobilize in the city of Dresden, the capital of Saxony, a region in the east of Germany. What was only the idea of a dozen people or so at the beginning quickly morphed from a Facebook group into a protest wave with two

defining features: first, the number of participants was unprecedented for far-right protest in the Federal Republic. Although estimates vary, at its peak, in December 2014 and January 2015, up to 20,000 individuals attended some of the PEGIDA events. Second, the endurance of PEGIDA activists has been unusual. By the end of 2018, PEGIDA still regularly organized its protest events in Dresden, mobilizing more than 1,000 people on a regular basis. This is substantially lower than the peak, but still significant.

The many speeches at PEGIDA protests and the few PEGIDA 'position papers' shed some light on the ideology of the organizers. PEGIDA groups are primarily opposed to Muslim immigration, although many of their written demands did not explicitly include a rejection of all immigration to Germany. In addition, PEGIDA has also regularly criticised the political establishment as well as mainstream media, giving prominence to the term 'lying press' (*Lügenpresse*). Calls for more direct democracy have been another important part of PEGIDA ideology (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016: 559). An official PEGIDA logo represented a person dropping four symbols into a dustbin: an Antifa movement symbol, icons of the PKK and of ISIS, but also the Swastika (Dostal 2015: 524). At the same time, key figures within PEGIDA posted discriminatory comments on Facebook. In 2016, Lutz Bachmann was fined €9,600 for incitement after calling immigrants 'rubbish' (*Gelumpe*) and 'dirty pack' (*Dreckspack*). Siegfried Däbritz, another key PEGIDA activist, used even worse language against Muslims and Kurdish.

Beyond the inner circle of PEGIDA, collecting information on the participants of PEGIDA protests has proved to be methodologically difficult, as many followers refused to engage with researchers. Therefore, the number of those that responded to survey questions has regularly been rather low (e.g. Daphi et al. 2015; Vorländer

et al. 2016). Those PEGIDA supporters who responded to survey questions were probably the ideologically more ‘moderate’ individuals. According to one survey, 89 percent of respondents would have voted for the AfD at the next German election, while 5 percent preferred the extreme right NPD. Only 6 percent of those who responded had other preferences. At the same time, interestingly, only 33.3 percent of respondents self-identified as ‘right’ and hardly anyone – merely 1.7 percent – self-reported as ‘extreme right’. A plurality of respondents, 48.7 percent, regarded themselves as part of the political ‘centre’ (Daphi et al. 2015).

As large-scale PEGIDA mobilization was a Dresden phenomenon, the context of Saxony is crucial for our understanding. Saxony is a region of the former German Democratic Republic, where many have faced difficulties and disappointments since the *Wende*, related to economic and cultural deprivation in the east (Vorländer et al. 2016: 142). The political culture of Saxony is more conservative than in many other *neue Länder* (Dostal 2015), and it includes a strong sense of regional and local identity (Vorländer et al. 2016: 144f). This is not only reflected in the strong regional CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union*), a particularly conservative branch of the party. Saxony has also been a traditional stronghold of the extreme right NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei*: National Democratic Party). While less than two months before the start of the PEGIDA protests, in August 2014, the extreme right NPD was voted out of the Saxon parliament, it gained 4.9 percent of the vote, and was therefore barely below the required 5 percent threshold needed to gain legislative representation. Simultaneously, the AfD entered the Saxon parliament. With 9.7 percent of the vote, it was less than three percent behind the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*: Social Democratic Party of Germany). The PEGIDA protests also alluded to important elements of local protest culture.

Similar to the Monday demonstrations at the end of the German Democratic Republic, the PEGIDA *Abenspaziergänge* ('evening walks') took place every Monday evening. The slogan '*Wir sind das Volk*' ('We are the people') has also been used both in 1989, and during the PEGIDA protests. In addition, before PEGIDA existed, major far-right protests had already occurred annually – on February 13, the first day of bombing raids of US and British air forces in 1945, destroying the city of Dresden (Vorländer et al. 2016: 144).

All over Germany, many attempts were made to organize local protest under the banner of PEGIDA. However, these groups never managed to mobilize large numbers of supporters. LEGIDA (*Leipziger Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*: Leipzig's Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident), the PEGIDA spin-off in Leipzig, the most populous city in Saxony, belonged to the more successful mobilization attempts outside of Dresden. According to Dostal (2015: 524), 'only in Munich, Suhl, Leipzig and Dippoldiswalde did the number of participants rise above 1000, and these rallies all fizzled out quickly'. The contrast to the 'original' PEGIDA protest in Dresden is stark.

Local and national concerns have been important for PEGIDA protests, but PEGIDA's identity also relates to Europe. It is not the self-ascribed patriotic 'Germans', but the patriotic 'Europeans' that have staged these protest events. Accordingly, far-right activists have mobilized under the banner of PEGIDA outside of Germany (for more on the European dimension of far-right activism such as PEGIDA see Caiani and Weisskircher forthcoming). These efforts were similarly small-scale as the German attempts outside of Saxony, although there were some important differences between weak mobilization in countries such as Austria and Norway, and the failure to mobilize even modest support in countries such as Sweden and

Switzerland. State bans were a significant factor in preventing some activists from marching under the PEGIDA banner, for example, in Switzerland, to a lesser extent in Austria (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016), and also in Belgium (Geiges et al. 2016: 165). Despite low levels of street mobilization, public attention for PEGIDA was considerable outside of Germany too, making the far-right protests also publicly salient there (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

By the end of 2018, PEGIDA mobilization in Dresden was not over yet. While the first wave of PEGIDA faded away over the course of the first half of 2015 as the number of participants declined, at the end of 2015, when the 'refugee crisis' intensified, PEGIDA mobilization attracted more participants again; it experienced a second wave. At its one-year anniversary, on October 19, 2015, up to 20,000 people attended the PEGIDA protest. Although support faded away for a second time soon afterwards, PEGIDA has remained on the streets of Dresden. There, PEGIDA celebrated its fourth anniversary in October 2018 with an attendance of 3,000 to 4,000 supporters. This number was higher than in the year before. As of 2018, weekly Monday protests are still continuing, regularly attracting more than 1,000 participants.

Even outside of Saxony, German far-right activists still try to mobilize under the banner of PEGIDA. For example, PEGIDA Munich has mobilized up to 2018. In 2016 and/or 2017, also some groups outside of Germany still tried to march under the banner of PEGIDA, such as in Denmark, France, and the Netherlands.[iii]

The emergence of PEGIDA and the importance of established radical right parties

Why did PEGIDA only really take off in Dresden, and not in other regions and countries where activists also tried to make use of the PEGIDA label? Various

scholars point to the lack of an established radical right party that would channel far-right attitudes in the German political system, underlining the importance of far-right party politics for the presence or absence of protest (Geiges et al. 2016: 163–164; Hafez 2016; Opratko 2015). As parties such as the NPD, the *Republikaner*, or the DVU were unable to establish themselves in the German political system (Art 2006), individuals with far-right stances needed to look for means beyond electoral politics to articulate their political views.

This reasoning corresponds to the notion of the importance of political opportunity structure in the political process model. Large-N studies show that far-right political parties do have an impact on far-right movement mobilization. Based on a protest event analysis in six Western European countries, Hutter (2014: 138) demonstrates that far-right protest is particularly weak when radical right parties are established political players in the respective political system: 'the *more* salient [radical right parties] are in electoral politics, the *less* often they give rise to protest mobilization'. Hutter (2014: 139) then theorizes that one reason for this pattern might be that strong radical right parties do not have an interest in public showings with extreme right activists. The assumption is that associations with groups such as skinheads, or actions such as violent protests would hurt political parties that try to present themselves as credible opposition or even governing party. Other research provides similar findings. Giugni et al. (2005) indicate that the emergence of strong radical right parties shrinks the political space for extra-parliamentary far-right mobilization. According to them, party politics and movement activism 'are two strategic options available to extreme-right actors to make their claims to the political authorities', but '[i]f one option can be adopted, the other becomes less viable and therefore is less often used' (Giugni et al. 2005: 148). Also, Minkenberg (2003: 165) finds 'a rather

clear pattern of countries with strong radical right-wing parties and a weak movement sector and those with weak radical right-wing parties and a strong movement sector'.

When PEGIDA emerged in October 2014, there was indeed no radical right party in the German Bundestag. In contrast to Germany, in countries such as Austria, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands, where PEGIDA mobilization was modest, radical right parties had already been established players in the national parliaments. In countries such as France and the United Kingdom, where PEGIDA was also unsuccessful, radical right parties had also performed well in European Parliament elections held under proportional voting rules.

Nevertheless, the relevance of the negative relationship between the electoral strength of radical right parties and the mobilization of far-right street protest needs to be qualified for the case of PEGIDA in Dresden. While not being in the German *Bundestag* at the time of the emergence of PEGIDA, the AfD had already entered the European Parliament, becoming the fifth-strongest German party at the EP election in May 2014. In Saxony, the AfD received 10.1 percent of the vote at the EP election, a result which was substantially stronger than its overall support in Germany (7.1 percent). At that point, however, the anti-Islamic, radical right faction was not yet dominant in the AfD, which was led by neoliberal politicians – at least on the national level (Arzheimer 2015). The extreme right NPD benefited from the lack of an electoral threshold at the EP election in Germany – one percent of the overall vote was enough to gain one seat. The NPD also received substantially stronger support in Saxony (3.6 percent) than in the whole of the country. Two months before the first PEGIDA protest, in August 2014, the AfD managed to enter its first regional legislature – the *Landtag* of Saxony. The regional branch of the party was dominated by individuals that were significantly to the right of the then national leadership. At

this election, the NPD missed legislative representation by a mere 0.1 percent. Therefore, pointing only to the absence of an established radical right party in the German parliament during the peak of PEGIDA mobilization would miss that Saxon voters participated in two other elections in 2014, where they could, and did, articulate their support for far-right parties. On the regional level of Saxony, the strength of the AfD and the NPD actually correlates with PEGIDA mobilization success.

Outside Germany, there have also been differences in PEGIDA mobilization across countries. While PEGIDA managed to mobilize some support on the streets in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway, it failed completely to do so in Sweden and Switzerland. In all these countries, however, radical right parties are established players in the national parliament. In Norway and Switzerland, they have even been members of government in 2015, when activists tried to march under the banner of PEGIDA there. The small but significant cross-country differences in PEGIDA mobilization outside of Germany cannot be explained by the presence or absence of the radical right in the respective parliaments. Instead, the agency of the activists, especially their insertion into pre-existing far-right networks, and the response of the state, which banned mobilization efforts in some instances, were important factors in explaining PEGIDA mobilization outside of Germany (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

These patterns point to the limits of explanations focusing on the relationship between the national party arena and the protest arena when explaining street mobilization, especially those with a local stronghold such as PEGIDA. However, this should not be misunderstood as a rejection of the empirical pattern found in the literature. To be sure, the relationship between radical right party success and far-

right mobilization only describes probabilities and does not aim to explain every single case. Also, it still seems like an important part of the puzzle to maintain that PEGIDA took off in a city in one of the few Western European countries without an established radical right party at that point in time.

Still, the qualifications mentioned above point to the importance of other factors in explaining the emergence of PEGIDA protest, and why precisely it took off in Dresden. These are the agency of its activists, and the local context (Dostal 2015). Political opportunities as conceived in the political process model, such as the presence or absence of a radical right party in national parliament, are insufficient, and too structural for a comprehensive explanation. The importance of agency instead of structural variables has been emphasized both in the literature on the radical right (e.g. Art 2011; Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016), in social movement studies (e.g. Jasper 2006), and in party politics (e.g. de Lange and Art 2011; Weisskircher 2017).

Party politics as a resource pool for PEGIDA street mobilization

According to the standard formulation of the political process model, 'indigenous organizational strength' is a crucial factor facilitating the mobilization of social movement activism (McAdam 1982: 43). The concept is defined as 'the resources of the minority community that enable insurgent groups to exploit these opportunities', which includes 'members', the 'established structure of solidarity incentives', the 'communication network', and 'leaders' (McAdam 1982: 45–48). To what extent did pre-existing organizations matter for the street mobilization of PEGIDA in Dresden and beyond? How did political parties and their activists provide a resource pool for PEGIDA mobilization?

In Dresden, from its very beginning, PEGIDA included a small number of (former) party members in its inner circle. Siegfried Däbritz, a key activist of PEGIDA, was previously active for the FDP, Thomas Tallacker was a local politician for the CDU, and Achim Exner was a member of the AfD. Tatjana Festerling, who joined PEGIDA only after a few months, had previously been involved in a local AfD branch. Therefore, some PEGIDA activists had experience of being lower-rank members of political parties. However, many other of PEGIDA's leading organizers, such as Lutz Bachmann, were never involved in party politics. In general, much more relevant than previous involvement in party politics of individual activists were their common friendship networks, related to the local sports and party scene (Vorländer et al. 2016: 10–11).

Still, from the very beginning, PEGIDA and the AfD had an important, but complicated relationship – a combination of competition and cooperation. Some AfD politicians, such as the leader of the party's group in the city council, publicly stated their support for PEGIDA. Others, especially politicians in the west of Germany, and related to the neoliberal wing of the AfD, were more reserved, sometimes even hostile to PEGIDA. While the Saxon AfD party leader Frauke Petry, later national party leader and key figure of the party's turn to the radical right in 2015 (Franzmann 2017), became distant after personally meeting with Bachmann, many of her regional party's members attended PEGIDA events. Crucially, some of them were also important in supporting the organization of PEGIDA in its early weeks, for example by helping to equip the PEGIDA security staff and providing a proper stage with sound system – in the first weeks of PEGIDA mobilization, Bachmann had only talked with a megaphone to his followers (Vorländer et al. 2016: 39–43). After PEGIDA had taken off, some important AfD politicians, such as Alexander Gauland and Björn Höcke,

both from the 'nationalist' wing, made public statements of support for the protests (Gabrow 2016: 174).

In December 2015, the extreme-right NPD called its supporters to attend PEGIDA events. Nevertheless, while the NPD tried to connect to PEGIDA, PEGIDA activists rather tried to keep their distance, as they did not want to be associated with the extreme right party (Vorländer et al. 2016: 43–46). On April 13 2015, PPV party leader Geert Wilders became the most prominent guest speaker at a PEGIDA event, pointing to further connections between PEGIDA and a political party, even one that is based abroad. Nevertheless, while PEGIDA protest in Dresden was related to subcultural milieus that included political parties and party activists, the latter played only a modest part in the story of PEGIDA. A closer association with the AfD occurred mainly later, and did not remain uncontested within the party (see below).

Outside of Dresden, ties to political parties proved to be important to some extent. For example, in Switzerland, key supporters of local attempts to stage PEGIDA protests were involved in minor political parties, especially in the DPS (*Direktdemokratische Partei Schweiz*: Direct Democratic Party of Switzerland) of Ignaz Bearth, a former SVP member, and one of the best-known figures of the Swiss far right. Outside of Switzerland, Bearth also became a guest speaker at several PEGIDA rallies. In Austria, some low-ranked FPÖ members as well as individuals close to the party became highly involved in PEGIDA. Georg Immanuel Nagel, a journalist writing for a weekly edited by a former MEP of the FPÖ, became the first spokesperson of PEGIDA in Vienna. Another low-rank FPÖ member publicly appeared as a key figure behind PEGIDA protests in the western part of the country. Some of the party's politicians, including MPs, attended PEGIDA protest events, and leading FPÖ members made positive remarks about PEGIDA at the beginning of its

mobilization efforts in Germany and Austria (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016: 565-568).

Therefore, political parties provide resources in the early phase of PEGIDA, but only to a limited extent. In Dresden, these 'resources' were party activists themselves, some of what neoliberal jargon has come to call 'human resources', but also material resources, for example, a stage, were provided through them. In Switzerland, PEGIDA could draw on the activists and resources of pre-existing fringe parties, as they and PEGIDA were more or less identical there. In Austria, some FPÖ members or individuals close to the party have had influential roles within PEGIDA. However, apart from political parties, other pre-existing far-right organizations were often important for the emergence of PEGIDA, especially outside of Saxony. These were groups such as the Identitarians, student fraternities, skinheads, football hooligans, or Defence League groups.

All these organizational linkages can be regarded as 'indigenous organizational strength', in the language of the political process model. Without them, much fewer activists outside of Saxony would have attempted to copy the PEGIDA mobilization success in Saxony. Understanding social movements as networks (Diani 1992) also highlights the importance of resources from other organizations, such as other far-right groups and parties. A network approach, going beyond the political process model, highlights organizational overlap as political normalcy in movement activism.

Attempts to form a party

As stated, PEGIDA never turned into a 'movement party'. What comes closest are the efforts by PEGIDA activists in Saxony to enter party politics. Tatjana Festerling ran for mayor of Dresden, and Lutz Bachmann announced the formation of his own

political party. However, their efforts were unsuccessful – an outcome that underlines the difficulty of establishing themselves in party politics, given that the political space on the far right was already covered by the AfD. The party had already entered the *Landtag* in Saxony and quickly built structures in the rest of the country. It did not seem to be their lack of will that prevented Festerling and Bachmann from getting involved into party politics. Rather, their room to manoeuvre in party politics was very limited.

Tatjana Festerling had been one of the key PEGIDA activists in Dresden after she intensified her engagement in the winter months of 2014 and 2015. She did not come to PEGIDA without political experience, as she previously had been involved in a local branch of the AfD. In June 2015, at a time when the first wave of PEGIDA protest had already faded away, Festerling ran for mayor of Dresden. She managed to gain 9.6 percent of the vote, and became the fourth strongest candidate. What was particularly interesting was that her result was substantially better than that of her AfD competitor Stefan Vogel (4.8 percent) – back then, '[t]he relationship between the two organisations was close to a complete breakdown' (Grabow 2016: 174). While Festerling did not compete in the second run, she publicly stated her support for the incumbent mayor Dirk Hilbert, close to the liberal FDP, in order to prevent his left-wing competitor from winning. In the second round, Hilbert was re-elected. After the mayoral race, Festerling continued to take part in far-right activism, also outside of Germany. Amongst others, she set up the 'Fortress Europa' initiative alongside other anti-Islamic organizations (Berntzen 2018) and traveled to Bulgaria in order to 'defend' the European Union's external border with Turkey, together with local Bulgarian far-right paramilitaries (Rone and Weisskircher 2016).

While Festerling's result in the mayor election was solid, it did not leave her or PEGIDA with any institutionalized voice in local politics: The election for the local legislature of Dresden had already taken place in May 2014, almost half a year before the emergence of PEGIDA. The next election was due only in 2019. Timing prevented PEGIDA from gaining representation in the Dresden legislature.

Going beyond merely an individual candidacy, in July 2016 Lutz Bachman reported the formation of his own political party. He announced its name as *Freiheitliche Direktdemokratische Volkspartei* (FDDV: 'Liberal Direct-Democratic People's Party). According to Bachmann, he himself would abstain from holding an official position within the party. The party's stated scope was modest – it wanted to participate in a limited number of electoral districts at the national election 2017. No German-wide candidature was planned and competition with the AfD was not an aim. However, Bachmann's announcement turned out to be an empty one. The responsible administrative bodies in the German political system, the *Bundeswahlleiter*, never received the documents which are required to officially register the party.[iv] Correspondingly, the FDDV did not actually contest the German federal election of 2017.

While the candidacy of Festerling for mayor of Dresden and the public announcements of Bachmann point to the political will of some leading PEGIDA figures to enter the arena of party politics, their efforts did not prove to be successful. In other countries, PEGIDA was not relevant enough in the first place to make any credible claim of forming a party – even more so in contexts where there were established radical right parties. Nevertheless, in Austria, a PEGIDA party was registered in March 2015. While the motivations are not completely known, observers assume that it was done to secure the right to use the PEGIDA label.[v]

Despite the degree to which their claims resonate with popular attitudes, anti-Islamic initiatives such as PEGIDA are also perceived as being broadly illegitimate by many (Berntzen, Bjånesøy, and Ivarsflaten 2017). They have consequently been met with large-scale counter-mobilization, as well as police and state interventions (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016). Besides hampering accumulation of necessary financial resources and patronage (Edwards and McCarthy 2008: 135), this kind of state and non-state response hinders the recruitment of skilled personnel necessary for forming an electorally successful party (Art 2011). In sum, whilst there were efforts to enter into party politics, opportunities were limited.

Coalition building and remaining on the streets

As previously discussed, while radical right presence in party politics may reduce the potential scale and duration of far-right street mobilization and limit activists' ability to enter into party politics themselves, radical right parties can also be a beneficial resource. Earlier, we showed to what extend people with a background in party politics were important in the initial PEGIDA mobilization in various places. Political process scholars have emphasized the importance of coalition building in order to sustain movements (e.g. Tarrow 2005), and radical right parties can serve as natural coalition partners due to their ideological proximity. Such coalitions may be understood as ‘collaborative, means-oriented arrangements that permit distinct organizational entities to pool resources in order to effect change’ (Levi and Murphy 2006: 654).

PEGIDA benefited from some resources of individual AfD members at its start (see above), but its relationship with the party was far from easy. At the beginning of the PEGIDA protests, when the neoliberal wing was still in charge of the AfD at the

national level, many of its representatives criticized PEGIDA. Also, Frauke Petry, then leader of the Saxon AfD, after some initial attempts of outreach to Bachmann, has repeatedly denounced the idea of cooperating with PEGIDA, and refused to speak at PEGIDA demonstrations, despite invitations by Lutz Bachmann. When Bachmann faced widespread criticism after particularly discriminatory remarks, and a selfie posing as Adolf Hitler, Petry demanded his resignation. Similarly, Bachmann sharply criticized the AfD, accusing leading party figures of careerism, for example (Grabow 2016: 174). At the same time, several major and minor AfD politicians praised PEGIDA at some point or another, and also participated in PEGIDA events. Still, driven by Petry, in May 2016 the national executive of the AfD spoke out against its members appearing at PEGIDA events – a decision that remained contested within the party. At that time, the relationship between PEGIDA and parts of the AfD became openly closer, reflected in the presence of guest speakers at each other's events (Grabow 2016: 178f): Prominently, PEGIDA activist Däbritz had given a speech at an AfD rally in Erfurt, the capital of the eastern German region of Thuringia, on the border to Saxony. The leader of the AfD group in the regional legislature of Thuringia is Björn Höcke, a politician at the right-wing end of the political spectrum, even within the AfD.

Especially from May 2017 onwards, PEGIDA and the AfD cooperated more and more. On May 8, both political players staged a demonstration at the *Neumarkt* next to the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, with two different stages, and formally at different times. Various forms of cooperation have continued throughout the year 2017. For example, on July 17 PEGIDA cancelled its regular Monday *Abendspaziergang*, and told its members to join a demonstration of the AfD in front of a hall where Germany's Minister of Justice Heiko Maas gave a speech on hate speech and the internet.

When Petry left the party after the federal election of 2017, some AfD members, mainly from the west of Germany, continued to rejected cooperation with PEGIDA. Nevertheless, in March 2018 the party's leadership explicitly asserted that its members could indeed appear at PEGIDA events in Dresden. Only two months later, a high-profile public rapprochement took place: Björn Höcke, AfD party leader in Thuringia, gave a speech at a PEGIDA demonstration in Dresden, with the AfD regional party leaders of Brandenburg and Saxony present.

In late summer of 2018, PEGIDA and AfD cooperated in a most controversial setting: They staged a common demonstration during the far-right mobilization in Chemnitz. Triggering these events was the killing of a German-Cuban man on August 26, the suspects coming from Syria and Iraq. Multiple demonstrations followed – far-right players, including activists from groups in Chemnitz, Saxony, and elsewhere, used the killing to target liberal immigration policies. What made international headlines was that several far-right activists showed the Nazi salute or violently attacked individuals that were regarded as 'foreign' by the violators. Moreover, the arrest warrant against one of the suspects was leaked and then published, among others by PEGIDA founder Bachmann. Ultimately, three regional organizations of the AfD, again the ones from Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia, announced a joint 'silent protest' with PEGIDA: On September 1, some high-profile AfD members and Bachmann marched together on the streets of Chemnitz. While some AfD politicians have continued to speak out against cooperation with PEGIDA, and in particular with Bachmann, their influence over the course of events seems limited.

Not surprisingly, this rapprochement and coalition-building has developed after PEGIDA's failed attempts at entering into local party politics, which have reduced the potential threat and competition between the two players. By remaining on the

streets, PEGIDA can potentially enter into a more symbiotic relationship with the AfD. In turn, the strengthening of the bond between PEGIDA and AfD reduces the chances of PEGIDA activists making new attempts at forming a ‘movement party’, as activist perceptions of political parties not being efficient allies is precisely one of the reasons why they themselves want to form their own parties in the first place (Kitschelt 1989). However, the future relationship between PEGIDA and AfD will depend on the interest of the latter in investing energy in cooperation with what is now a small, but persistent, local protest group. Some AfD members certainly have such an interest, while others have remained sceptical. In 2019, the AfD aims to play a key role as challenger of the CDU at the regional election in Saxony. The vote will be a testing ground for the potential of future cooperation. It will also be of importance whether Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution starts observations on the AfD - a scenario that has been part of Germany's political debate since the Chemnitz protests. Should such an observation occur, key AfD figures might prefer to keep distance from radical street demonstrators.

Conclusion

This chapter has underlined the importance of taking far-right party politics into account when analysing far-right social movement mobilization. Even though PEGIDA is not a ‘movement party’, analysing their activism through this lens adds to the understanding of the emergence and development of PEGIDA, the most important far-right mobilization effort in recent Western European politics. More precisely, we analysed four different dimensions of PEGIDA: first, we showed how large-N findings which indicate that established far-right parties hamper the mobilization of far-right street protest provides some, but limited, explanatory power for explaining cross-national differences in and the local emergence of PEGIDA

mobilization. Second, we discussed the relevance of party activists in the early stages of PEGIDA mobilization. Third, we pointed to the failed efforts of PEGIDA activists to enter the arena of party politics. Fourth, we showed that PEGIDA and parts of the AfD have started to openly cooperate as they organize common protest events, among others. So far, this cooperation peaked in a particular controversial setting, when both staged common protest during the far-right mobilization of Chemnitz in late summer 2018.

In addition, we also demonstrated that social movement concepts shed light on the relationship between PEGIDA and party politics – such as political opportunity structures, resources, social networks, and coalition building.

Counterfactually, for the case of Germany, it would be tempting to think about the possible trajectory of PEGIDA if the AfD had not been already on the political stage, ready to develop into a electorally succcessful radical right party. How would PEGIDA mobilization and its diffusion have been different? Where would PEGIDA have been now? Alternatively, what if the AfD had managed to enter the Bundestag already in 2013, when the party barely missed the five percent threshold. How would this have affected the trajectory of PEGIDA, which emerged only a year later? While it is impossible to find satisfying answers to these questions, posing them points to the element of contingency in politics, including far-right politics, and how the room for manoeuvre of one player, such as a far-right social movement organization, is related to the trajectory of another player, such as a radical right political party.

In Germany, as well as in other Western European countries, far-right social movement activism seems to be at its strongest point in recent decades. Still, left-wing protest activity is much more widespread (Hutter 2014). In addition, far-right

street activism pales in comparison to the strength of many radical right parties. Nevertheless, not only the electoral support of these parties, but also public surveys on specific issues might indicate potential for a further growth of far-right movement activism. A survey by the London-based think tank Chatham House (Goodwin et al. 2017) conducted in December 2016 and January 2017 found strong support for the statement that '[a]ll further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped', a call more radical than the Islamophobic 'Muslim Ban' of the Trump administration. A majority of respondents in eight of the ten countries studied approved of the demand. Poland was leading the list, with 71 percent of support for the statement. The survey included only four countries where PEGIDA mobilized: in Austria, 65 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement, while the numbers in Belgium (64 percent) and France (61 percent) were similar. Also in Germany, both the motherland of *Willkommenskultur* and of PEGIDA, 53 percent of respondents agreed with the above-mentioned statement. Therefore, a lack of support for anti-immigration demands hardly explains why far-right street activism is much more infrequent than left-wing activism.

This demonstrates that individuals' attitudes on political issues are not everything. Survey data shows that the propensity of individuals to attend demonstrations is significantly influenced by his or her position on the left–right political spectrum. Far-right individuals, and even more so centre-right ones, only rarely attend demonstrations, in comparison to left-wing individuals (Torcal et al. 2016). It remains to be seen whether PEGIDA and other contemporary far-right protests are a harbinger for a change of this pattern in political behaviour. As in the last decades 'unconventional strategies' have become widely accepted by the political mainstream (e.g. Meyer and Tarrow 1998; van Aelst and Walgrave 2001), it seems at least

possible that street activism becomes more frequent on the right side of the political spectrum too. If so, not only the relationship between far-right movement and party activism, but also the far-right challenge to liberalism (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013) would become even more complex than it already is today.

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i

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ii

With the major exception of some Eurozone debtor states in Southern Europe.

iii In Denmark the PEGIDA off-shoot quickly changed their name to For Freedom (*For Frihed*).

iv We thank Juin-Chi Lin for information on this matter.

v We thank Anita Nissen for information on this matter.