

PART III: DIASPORIC ACTIVISM

For the women in my research, the practice of travelling reveals itself as vital for the ability to embody diasporic identity. Travel is not only essential to enable the building of transnational kinship networks and for practising cultural skills, it is also crucial for building global Black political communities and Black sisterhoods. This will be the topic of the last two chapters, which comprise Part III of this book.

Part I discussed more local and national aspects of activism. In the cases of Amínata and Lamine Camara, their activism was heavily focused either on Germany or Guinea – only their online activities had a broader reach. In this part, I focus on the global scale of Black activism by following the lives of two Afro-feminist performers who travel around the world to connect with activists and create community. Chapters 9 and 10 explore how such activities and the narratives they promulgate are used to create Black activist selves and communities.

In this final section, we come full circle, returning to the AfroEuropeans conference. I opened the book by describing the performance of life stories at the 2019 Lisbon iteration of this event. In this section, I will introduce two new women, and we will indeed return to the AfroEuropeans conference – but this time to the one that took place in Finland in 2017. It was here that I met the Afro-feminist performer couple Oxana Chi and Layla Zami, with whom I have travelled to several events and conferences in the subsequent years. By tracing Oxana and Layla's lives and work, I aim to reveal the importance of life-story sharing as a community-building tool for Black scholars and activists worldwide – it is fundamental in the making of Black sisterhood. In addition to following the two performers, I also examine the function of life storytelling in the making of the Afro-German movement in the 1980s and how famous Black activists such as Audre Lorde (USA), Ika Hügel-Marshall and May Ayim (both Germany) made use of it in their writings and teachings. The narration of personal life experiences in the form of autobiographical writings, and within this the description of an individual's quest for Black and African roots, has played a key part in the construction of Afro-German political movements since the 1980s. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in 2017/18 and from biographical interviews with Oxana and Layla, this section argues that the act of life storytelling – whether during day-to-day conversations or as speakers and performers at public events – is

a way to construct a sense of self as part of a global community of Afro-feminist activists. The narration of individual life experience becomes a form of political activist expression and a source of empowerment for an Afro diasporic and feminist understanding of self. As diverse life stories circulate in the world (in text, sound, video or in vivo) they create and enable a transnational dialogue. Personal stories become a tool for political agency, a method to transform private into public meaning and a way to build community.