Part I: Diasporic Generations

Throughout history, there have been various waves of African and Afrodiasporic mobilities towards Germany, ranging from colonial mobilities from 1880 to 1919, to diverse student mobilities since the 1950s, as well as African Americans who came to Germany as students, teachers and soldiers. At various points, organisations were founded and networks created. Some people only stayed for a little while before going back or moving on to another country; others stayed, founded families and have now been at home in Germany for many generations.

This part of the thesis is about the different generations of Afrodiasporic people who came to live in Germany. First, I will give a macrohistorical view of the history of African migration and diaspora organisation in Germany from 1880, the beginning of German colonialism, until the 1980s and the development of new Afro-German organisations (Chapter 2). In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, I employ a microhistorical and ethnographic perspective to consider life for Afrodescendant people in Germany today. This ethnographic part will look more deeply into everyday experiences and performances of Afrodiasporic identity by focusing on the lives of Aminata Camara, her father Lamine Camara, Maya B. and Lafia T. who belong to the same age group as Aminata and also grew up in Frankfurt as Germans of African descent. I will also consider how class and race matter for different generations who grew up in different historical and geographical contexts. The scale that I take into consideration to study diasporic identities in this part is the national and local level.

By comparing the life stories of Aminata, Maya and Lafia, it becomes clearer what similarities and differences there can be within a same generation growing up in the same city. For Aminata and Maya, growing up with the cultural heritage of German mothers and West African fathers was normal. Lafia shows us a different view on diasporic identity. For a long time as a young girl and a teenager, her wish was to not deal or not have to deal with her Senegalese origins and her father, nor with Blackness. Dealing with political Blackness and with her own origins was something that occurred later for Lafia then for Aminata or Maya, for different reasons. Aminata, for instance, became active in Black political networks as an adult, whereas the other two did not become politically active but chose different strategies to confront racialisation. The comparison of individual life stories also demonstrates how people from different generations of same family understand and practise diasporic belonging and how this understanding and practice is interrelated

with place, age and gender. What was the political atmosphere like when Lamine Camara came to Germany, and how did that influence his own trajectory and diasporic involvement? What was it like to grow up in Guinea in the 1960s? And what were the times like when Aminata became politicised? In terms of family migration history, the people I study are first and second generation,[1] but to what bigger historical generational cohorts do they belong? The political diasporic practices of father and daughter are linked to experiences of Germany and Guinea at specific historical moments and shaped by socialisation processes in different countries. The comparison between father and daughter also reveals how a relation to a country of 'origin' can change for the second generation. Whereas Aminata's father, Lamine Camara, says of himself that he is Guinean with a German passport, for his daughter things are different. She feels rooted in Germany and Frankfurt, where she has always lived and where she was socialised – but she is also Guinean and African, and feels particularly connected to other young Afrodescendant people who grew up in Frankfurt or cities elsewhere in Europe.

Generation is important both in terms of intrafamily relations and as historically grounded experiences of a cohort of people from the same age group. It does not only matter genealogically (i.e. the contrasts between children and parents) (Nash 1978) but also with regard to the shared historical circumstances and lived experience of people of more or less the same age group (Mannheim 1928, Sayad 1979, Bourdieu 1988, Eisenstadt 1971, Eckstein 2006, Purhonen 2016). When can we speak of a generation? There are two ways of using the concept analytically, and their meanings are interconnected: First, it can be applied in a genealogical sense, in reference to different positions in a system of kinship, such as relations between parents and children. The second sense is that of social and cultural generations and pertains to the collective identity of a group of people who, through shared experiences, create an 'us' (Purhonen 2016). It is also because each social generation lives through different times and events that differences between genealogical generations emerge. It is not age in itself which marks a generation but the different events that accompanied a cohort's coming of age. The sociologist Karl Mannheim wrote about the importance of social generations for sociological analysis in 1928. He explained that a generation was always extremely heterogeneous in terms of nationality, social status/class, gender and so on, but nonetheless under certain conditions, where there had been significant social change that had influenced the living conditions in such a degree that a real distinction was established between older and younger people, it becomes possible to speak of a generation.

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1   I use the term 'second generation' only in reference to the genealogical position. I.e. the second generation are the children of members of the first generation. Only the first generation migrated and not the second, which is why I oppose the term second generation 'migrant', as it contributes to racialised othering.

My participants' parents' coming of age can be viewed against the backdrop of the 1968 student revolution, a period of uprisings against authoritarian regimes and, particularly in Germany, an uprising against the institutional and often familial silence regarding the Nazi crimes of the Second World War. In terms of the African diaspora in Germany, the parents of my participants were the generation which lived through the decolonisation period and grew up in early postcolonial countries. Many people from African countries came to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s on student scholarships provided by both East and West Germany (see Chapter 2).

In the case of the young adults that I work with, we usually speak of 'Generation Y' or 'millennials', people who were children or teenagers at the turn of the millennium in 2000. The millennial generation is marked by massive changes in technology with new modes of communication and mobility. Politically, this generation lived through the end of the Cold War and the unification of Germany in the 1990s as well as by 9/11 and the following 'War on Terror' pronounced by the USA and its allies. But this is concerns the meso and macro levels. How can a generation be defined at the micro level, or how do these and other events or other things matter for people born around the same time in a same place? Answering that question helps us understand how a particular Afrodiasporic identity is created for young Afrodescendant women in Germany today and how class, gender and race are constructed through shared lived experience. On a micro level, it is other more mundane things that account for the feeling of being part of a particular generation. The fact of growing up in the same city, frequenting the same spots in the city, parks, clubs, having gone to the same school, sharing the same tastes in music – in general having shared memories of childhood and teenage years – can be very important in terms of feeling part of a generation. Socially, for the cases that I will present here, the aspect of feeling connected through a shared club culture as teenagers and young adults still creates a certain nostalgia and a sense of community today: At a playground in Frankfurt with her son in autumn 2017, Aminata spoke to another mother and told me afterwards that she seemed familiar. It turned out she also hung out at the same clubs in the past. These club spaces are now becoming symbols of an idealised past, places that capture the feeling of being part of the same generation.

Chapter 2 'The History of African diaspora in Germany' provides a historical overview of African migration and diaspora organisation in Germany. It shows the beginnings of African diaspora organisations in Germany after 1880, when people from then German colonies such as Cameroon or Togo came as colonial subjects. Following the disruption of the two World Wars, which caused the dissolution of the first diaspora organisations, new waves of African students and guest workers starting in the 1960s led to the emergence of new diaspora organisations, which were significantly influenced by the political events of the times.

Chapter 3, 'Growing up in Frankfurt', examines the importance of shared experience at a specific time and place in the creation of generation. Through Aminata's

and Maya's lives, we come to understand how they dealt with their African descent in the context of their families and how important American culture in Frankfurt (imported together with the US military) was for Afrodescendant women, in particular. Lafia's story gives us another angle. She grew up with less contact to her father and Senegalese cultural practice was not part of her everyday life.

Chapter 4, 'Family affairs – An intergenerational approach to diaspora', then takes intrafamily dynamics as its centre point as it allows us to compare how diasporic identity shifts through time and place. This chapter focuses on Aminata's politicisation process and introduces her father, Lamine Camara, describing how he came to Germany in the 1970s and became involved in Guinean politics from the diaspora. I argue that, despite all the differences between the trajectories and political practices of father and daughter, both practise a *centred* as well as a *decentred* vision of diaspora.

Chapter 5, 'Racism and its intersection with class and gender', considers how Aminata and her father perceive and live with racism and being racialised, and how reflections on their middle-class position affect their experiences in this area. It contrasts how Aminata's experiences of racialisation motivate her political activism in Germany with the different factors that drive her father's political activity and how he distances himself from being a racialised subject in Germany.