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# Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World

Socialist Mobilities between Angola,  
Mozambique, and East Germany

Marcia C. Schenck



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Marcia C. Schenck  
University of Potsdam  
Potsdam, Germany



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*To my parents, and to the Angolan and Mozambican workers who are the  
protagonists of this transnational history*

## FOREWORD

*Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World: Socialist Mobilities between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany* tells the story of young men and women from southern Africa, their time sojourning in Central Europe, and their return back home. With its research anchored deeply in two continents, it explains the varied interests that brought Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany together and the many motivations—political, emotional, economic—that led both Africans and Germans to connect to one another. In this, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* sits at the crossroads of African history, European history, and Cold War history.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I spent a few years living between Mozambique and the post-Soviet states of Ukraine and Russia. At one point, I found myself in a dormitory at Patrice Lumumba University, in Moscow, speaking with students from Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Zambia. Our conversation ranged broadly over their experiences in Russia during the early 2000s. Some also spoke of a recent event that weighed heavily on them—a fire that had swept through a neighboring dormitory, killing a number of foreign students. Some among those gathered hinted that the fire had been the work of xenophobic arsonists. In the context of that conversation, it was clear to me that such hints reflected the insecurity—at times tinged with racial hostility—they experienced as racialized foreigners. Their musings did not say so much about the fire itself yet spoke volumes about the aspirations that had taken them to Moscow and the arc of their experience. Their accounts told a certain amount about their lives in Russia, but they explained so much more about how I might understand

the history that had brought them there: the path followed by generations of Africans who had preceded them, and their hopes to follow in their footsteps. As Marcia C. Schenck notes, oral testimony of this sort is simultaneously about past, present, and future.

Here, Marcia Schenck offers a deep, searching reflection on the history that brought thousands of young Angolans and Mozambicans to East Germany during the Cold War's last decade. Broadly described as labor migrants—they traveled behind the Berlin Wall on four-year contracts—they did much more than simply work, and for some, migration gave way to long-term residency. The story she tells covers their lives as friends, workers, lovers, parents, party members, and much more, as they moved from the factory floor to the dance floor and from pubs to government offices. We learn about how these young people managed homesickness and culture shock (especially unfamiliar food and cold winters); how they seized opportunities for personal growth and navigated new relationships (finding and, at times, losing love); and how they confronted inevitable obstacles (such as discovering that their hard-won skills or knowledge was obsolete before its time).

Schenck brings impressive capacities to this endeavor. While others may share her broad reading of scholarship and capacious thinking, she brings an unmatched intellectual boldness, in her choice to tell this story largely through personal narratives she collected from the workers themselves. To be sure, she also consulted much surrounding written documentation, but she allows their self-narration to form the frame for the history. It is an audacious yet rewarding approach, for Schenck conducted more than 250 interviews with returned workers, an undertaking unparalleled by any historian I know working on such topics. In Mozambique alone, she traveled from one end of the country to the other, relying on tremendous creative reserves and physical stamina to carry her on a journey that covered over 2500 kilometers—one way.

This book brings a number of rewards for its readers, beyond appealing stories and fascinating visions of a bygone era. First, in relying on the self-narration of these once-young Africans' life experiences, Schenck does something new and rare: she elevates their subjectivity to a global scale. Their narratives embrace the long distances—geographic, cultural, and otherwise—between southern Africa and Central Europe, otherwise almost impossible to grasp in the mind's eye. It is their personal, subjective



experiences and their individual understandings of large-scale forces that shape the storyline. In so doing, Schenck renders what might otherwise be airless topics (such as state-to-state socialist cooperation) in human terms, showing how apparatchiks' aspirations to Marxist dialectics could bring together young Africans and Germans in the closest possible, and unexpected, intimacies. She relies on their self-understandings and assessments as the yardstick by which to take the measure of socialist solidarities between East Germany and Angola, or of the outcomes produced by state-sponsored labor migration regimes.

A second, related reward is how *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* seeks to understand the perspective of the returned workers themselves, using their perspective as the lens to examine the labor migration program overall. At the time, in the late 1970s, they were meant to be the "object" of improvement, targeted as such by their governments and by East Germany. The idea was that they would head off as unskilled, politically naïve youth and return home as skilled industrial workers endowed with a political consciousness of class—no longer objects of change, but rather revolutionary subjects able to remake their own societies. *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* is a mirror to this dyad: the former workers are both the object of focus and the subjects who tell the story.

Finally, readers will benefit from Schenck's refusal to indulge in retrospective assessments of success or failure that sometimes creep into reflections on the Cold war. After all, in writing of something so caught up in Cold War politics, such a "winner" vs. "loser" framing offers little of interest or utility. It is true that the expectations and aspirations that carried many Angolans and Mozambicans to Germany went largely unfulfilled. This was due in part to forces of global reach, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany, and also of local scale, such as the inadequacy of specific skills training. In refusing the simple math of a success or failure balance-sheet framing, Schenck instead follows their life trajectories along the paths these now middle-aged men and women have chosen. She shows us how some among them have ended up as agents of change, if not as their handlers originally imagined. Socialist revolution is no longer on their mind; they seek reform and aim to usher in a new, more just social order to replace the closed and iniquitous politics that filled the vacuum created by socialist collapse.

As a clear-eyed observer of the era once wrote, it was a time “replete with unfulfilled ambitions and disappointed hopes,” charged with seemingly world-changing ideas that did not turn out as anyone expected.<sup>1</sup> Marcia Schenck offers us a history full of ambition and hope, showing us how young men and women from Angola and Mozambique changed the worlds in which they lived, in ways other than anyone expected.

Ottawa, ON, Canada  
January 2022

Eric Allina

#### NOTE

1. Stephen Ellis, “Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa,” *Journal of African History* 43, no. 1 (2005): 3.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. ...the cloud and the paper *inter-are*.<sup>1</sup>

Thich Nhat Hanh beautifully expresses the concept of inter-being. Like the sheet of paper, a book is much more than the eye perceives. This one exists because of the tireless support of many people and institutions across several continents.

First and foremost, I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who agreed to be interviewed in Angola, Germany, and Mozambique. I am deeply grateful to the migrant workers, university students, Friendship School students, government officials, and family members of migrants who graciously gave of their time and willingly shared their life stories with me. Many of you went above and beyond to facilitate my research by welcoming me into your homes, finding me places to stay, providing drivers, making phone calls, and making sure I participated in cultural events in Angola and Mozambique. I cannot thank you all enough or even by name, but I carry you in my heart and am tremendously grateful for everything you have done. Without you, this book would not exist.

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## NOTE

1. Thich Nhat Hanh, "Peace is Every Step," New York: Bantam, 1992, 95.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Marcia C. Schenck** is Professor of Global History at the University of Potsdam, Germany. Her research interests include global and African history, oral history, labor and education history, and migration history. She received her PhD in History at Princeton University and holds an MSc in African Studies from the University of Oxford. Peer-reviewed articles have appeared in *Africa*, *African Economic History*, and *Labor History*, among others. She has co-edited a volume about the varied relationship between East Germany and the African continent together with Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, and Immanuel Harisch called *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War* (2021). Moreover, she is the co-founder of the H-Net Refugees in African History network (<https://networks.h-net.org/african-refugees-crossroads>) and the founder of the Global History Dialogues project (<https://globalhistorydialogues.org>), which is part of Princeton University's Global History Lab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AEX-TAA	Associação dos Ex-Trabalhadores Angolanos da Extinta RDA, Association of the Angolan ex-workers in former East Germany
AHM	Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, Historic Archives of Mozambique
AIM	Agência de Informação de Moçambique, Mozambican Information Agency
ANA	Arquivo Nacional de Angola, Angolan National Archives
ATMA	Associação dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos na Alemanha, Association of Mozambican Former Workers in Germany
CMA	Comunidade Moçambicana na Alemanha, Mozambican Community in Germany
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
FAPLA	Forças Armadas de Libertação de Angola, People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend, Free German Youth
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, Mozambican Liberation Front
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation
ICMA	Instituto Cultural Moçambique – Alemanha, Goethe Institute
IFA	Industrieverband Fahrzeugbau, conglomerate of companies for vehicle construction
J-MPLA	Juventude do MPLA, Youth organization of the MPLA

MAPESS	Ministério da Administração Pública, Emprego e Segurança Social, Ministry of Public Administration, Work, and Social Security, Angola
MAPTSS	Ministério da Administração Pública, Trabalho e Segurança Social, Ministry of Public Administration, Work, and Social Security, Angola
MDM	Movimento Democrático de Moçambique, Democratic Movement of Mozambique
MED	Ministério da Educação, Angolan Ministry of Education
MIREX	Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Angola, Angolan Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MPDA	Movimento para a Paz e a Democracia em Angola, Movement for Peace and Democracy in Angola
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MPLA-PT	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola – Labor Party (1977–1991)
PIDE	Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, Portuguese secret police
PRA	People’s Republic of Angola
PRM	People’s Republic of Mozambique
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, The Mozambican National Resistance
SAL	Staatssekretariat für Arbeit und Löhne, State Secretariat for Work and Wages in the GDR
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Socialist Unity Party of Germany
STASI	Colloquial for Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS), Ministry for State Security, East German secret police
UEM	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
VEB	Volkseigener Betrieb, Publicly Owned Enterprise in the GDR

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## Prologue: Juma Madeira—From Socialist New Man to *Madjerman* Activist

One of my favorite photos shows the young Mozambican Juma Madeira posing on the hood of a friend's car in front of his workers' hostel in East Germany (Fig. 1.1).<sup>1</sup> Who was this young man and what brought him to East Germany?

Juma was born in the district of Memba in northern Mozambique, on April 5, 1963. A year before his birth, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the current governing party of Mozambique, was founded. When Juma was one year old, the Mozambican war of independence started, which lasted until independence was finally attained on June 25, 1975. In 1974, Juma finished the fourth grade at a Catholic missionary primary school in Mutauanha called Paz e Amor, Peace and Love, a school in the tradition of the Portuguese civilizing mission. When the country finally became independent, Juma was in the fifth grade at the technical school in Nampula city. The Mozambican civil war erupted in 1977 while Juma was still in secondary school. He graduated in 1980. In the same year, FRELIMO constituted itself as a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

Juma's parents were non-practicing Muslims, engaged in subsistence agriculture. He remembers his upbringing as rural, working the fields, and sleeping on mats on the floor with his three siblings. He walked to primary school. To continue his secondary education, however, he moved to Nampula where he lived with his aunt, a housewife, and uncle, a tailor. Compared to many of his compatriots, Juma was well educated. Between



**Fig. 1.1** Juma in front of his workers' hostel in Zschopau, East Germany. Source: Juma Madeira

1979 and 1981, he taught a literacy course for adults as part of the national literacy campaigns aimed at workers and cadres of the party, army, cooperatives, and communal villages.

While still in secondary school, Juma was recruited to continue his training abroad. He was excited for the possibilities this opportunity offered: "I was sent by President Samora Machel, the father of our nation, to prepare myself in Germany to return to save our country through work." Before he touched down in Berlin-Schönefeld in 1981, he spent a few months in various collection centers across Mozambique, where he received quasi-military training and listened to lectures about life in East Germany. He was to learn how to conduct himself as a socialist New Man and ambassador for Mozambique abroad. Juma remembers: "we learned to eat with a knife and fork, to wear shoes, and to wash our hands. And we had to run, run, run, run!"

After six months of language training, Juma began working at the VEB Motorradwerk Zschopau, a so-called people-owned enterprise producing motorbikes, close to the city which is today called Chemnitz but was then

called Karl-Marx-Stadt. He underwent training for milling and lathe machines and received a diploma as a skilled laborer in November 1986. From 1983 to 1989 he also occupied a position in the company as FRELIMO Secretary for Information, Propaganda, and Finances. He worked for eight years at the motorcycle factory, serving two four-year contracts. According to company documents, Juma's open and gregarious character made it easy for him to integrate into the work collective. He sometimes needed reminding though that the goal of work was efficiency—a virtue Juma never came to fully embrace—and the fulfillment of the production quota. To the frustration of his supervisors, he constantly remained below quota. Even though he graduated with an overall evaluation of "good," Juma did not take work too seriously; to him, work was something that needed to be done, but his heart really beat for the many experiences Europe had to offer outside of the company gates.

Juma was in Germany for much of his youth. He left as an eighteen-year-old boy "who had never drunk alcohol, smoked, or made love to a woman" and returned as a twenty-seven-year-old adult, a trained skilled laborer with nearly a decade of work experience, a partner, and a child. Juma met his colleague Graciél in the motorcycle factory. She was born in Maputo in 1963 as the daughter of a cook and a housewife and went to school until sixth grade. Graciél's older brother had been recruited while still a student to work and train in East Germany, and his letters home, describing his life in the brightest of colors, inspired her and her two other brothers to sign up for the program, too. After four years in a beverage factory in Leipzig, she went back to Mozambique for three months before returning to East Germany on a second contract, this time to the motorcycle factory in Zschopau. She never aspired to have a European boyfriend and remembers: "Juma was love at first sight!"

Juma, who had several lovers in Germany from different nationalities and backgrounds, told me that Graciél was very persistent and would not accept no for an answer; only when Graciél became pregnant did Juma commit to her. They decided to hide her pregnancy to avoid her being sent back to Mozambique, which had happened to other women in their company. In the end, they were not only allowed to stay but moved together into a small apartment provided by the company. Juma Junior was born in 1988, and two brothers, born in Mozambique, followed him. Unlike many of his colleagues, Juma did not father children with German women, but he does have four other children with two other women in Mozambique. As is common among many former Mozambican labor

migrants, he never formally married and continues to describe his marital status as single.

For many Mozambican workers, German reunification continues to have a bitter aftertaste. On the one hand, they expressed happiness for the Germans, but for their own lives, it was often a catastrophe, as it meant a premature return to a war economy back home. In the ensuing disorder of the transition period that followed reunification, some companies decided to repatriate foreign workers; others withheld information about the conditions under which they could have stayed. Racism was rife. Juma and Graciél, however, experienced relatively little of this chaos. Graciél felt very strongly that she wanted to be closer to her parents to support them, as well as to receive help with her own children. They jointly decided to return, imagining a golden future in Mozambique.

The future, Juma and Graciél would quickly discover, turned out to be not quite so golden. Their bitter awakening came a few months after their homecoming. Socialist workers returned to a post-socialist country in flux economically and politically. Like the vast majority of workers who returned in the early 1990s, neither Juma nor Graciél found work in the areas for which they had been trained. They moved back to northern Mozambique. Juma worked as a driver and security guard but struggled to make ends meet in the beleaguered Mozambican economy. Graciél worked for eight years as a service worker in an informal soda shop. The family earned extra income in the informal economy, selling home-made foods in front of their house, and renting their phone out as a public phone. In 1992, the sixteen-year war ended in Mozambique, and the country continued its path toward market principles and multiparty democracy. In 1999, Juma moved to Maputo with his in-laws because his eldest son needed medical attention. The rest of the family soon followed. Juma worked a variety of impermanent jobs until, in 2003, at forty years old, he gave up looking for employment.

The family now depends on Graciél's earnings—she has been cooking for a catering firm for nine years—and on the proceeds from Juma Junior's bakery. One of Graciél's brothers is married to a German woman and lives in Germany, so the family still has ongoing contact with Germany today. Juma became a full-time activist for the *madjerman* cause: first as vice-president, and then as the treasurer of ATMA, the Association of Mozambican Workers in Germany, he served the largest and most durable organization of returned workers. Since 2010, he has also been an active member of Mozambique's second largest opposition party, MDM, the

Democratic Movement of Mozambique, and is hoping to build a political career. Though Juma was not able to capitalize on his training as a skilled worker, he puts his political training to use, no longer as a socialist New Man, but as an activist and aspiring opposition politician in a post-socialist Mozambique.<sup>2</sup>

In January 2014, on one of the first days of my second stay in Mozambique, I visited what is known as the park of the *madjerman*, where ATMA President Zecca Alfredo Cossa introduced me to his right-hand man, Juma. Juma had been given the task of detailing the official oral history of the organization of returned workers from 1990 to the present.<sup>3</sup> This introduction was the beginning of an ongoing conversation about the organization and his personal experiences in East Germany. During my time in Mozambique, Juma was my host, excited for the opportunity to reciprocate the hospitality that he had experienced in East Germany. He invited me to his home to meet his family, cooked typical Mozambican food, and brought a big cake to my birthday celebration, knowing the great importance to every German of *Kaffee und Kuchen*—coffee and cake. He showed me sites important to the *madjerman* in Maputo and Matola, such as their protest route, the airport where they had first returned to the country, and the collection centers where the future worker-trainees were assembled prior to their trip, among many other locations. He included me in *madjerman* reunions, and invited me to community events such as weddings, funerals, and wakes. Thanks to him, and many more returnees like him, I eventually came to understand their history, their present, and their dreams for the future.

I am sharing Juma and Graciél's story to illustrate the intricate interconnections between personal, national, and international events, and to contextualize the life choices of former migrants from Angola and Mozambique. Key personal decisions included the choice to migrate; how much energy to invest in training and work; what to consume in East Germany and how to invest in an eventual return home; with whom to establish relationships; and how to deal with exclusion and racism. This included navigating life in the conflict, post-conflict, and market economies of their homeland. They also had to negotiate with their home governments over withheld wages and other social security benefits. Among the national and geopolitical events that framed the possibilities of Juma's life were Portuguese colonialism, independence, the Cold War, regional and domestic armed conflicts, the disintegration of the global communist project, and the transition to the market economy and multiparty

democracy. Juma and Graciél, and other similarly situated workers, would have never migrated for training and work to East Germany had it not been for a combination of national and international factors that pushed them to imagine opportunities elsewhere. Geopolitical partnerships between socialist nations shaped by the Cold War era further enabled this migration from South to East. This book tells the story of the rise and fall of the socialist project in Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany, as experienced by the Angolan and Mozambican migrants.

## NOTES

1. The former Mozambican workers in East Germany became known as *mad-german* after their return. The information presented here is drawn from various interviews and conversations conducted with Juma and Graciél between January and June 2014 in Maputo, Mozambique.
2. MDM stands for *Movimento Democrático de Moçambique*, Democratic Movement of Mozambique.
3. The official name is Associação dos Antigos Trabalhadores na Extinta RDA, Association of former workers in the extinct GDR.

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## CHAPTER 2

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# Introduction

On a warm winter's morning in August 2011, I ambled through the center of Mozambique's capital city Maputo, known as the city of cement. On Avenida 24 de Julho, close to the labor ministry, I suddenly heard a voice. "Wie geht es Dir? Kommst du aus Deutschland?" ("How are you? Do you come from Germany?") Surprised to hear my mother tongue, I turned around. The man who had just greeted me was a little shorter than me. He was perhaps in his mid-fifties and was dressed in a t-shirt and jeans. He looked ordinary to me. What he was about to tell me, however, was anything but. For me, the ensuing conversation was the gateway to a new world, the world of the *madjerman*.<sup>1</sup> The *madjerman* were workers who migrated from newly independent Mozambique to communist East Germany and their story can tell us an enormous amount about Mozambique, about East Germany, about memory, and about people's endless capacity for adaptation and resilience.<sup>2</sup>

The name of the man who hailed me in fluent German in the middle of a city in southern Africa was João. He saw me, registered my skin color, clothes, and gender, and decided that he would like to speak to a young woman from Germany to reminisce about the past and tell me about the *madjerman's* struggle.<sup>3</sup> An impulsive decision led to, for me at least, a life-changing conversation. That morning, without knowing it, João had planted the seed for *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World: Socialist Mobilities between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany*.

For those readers not already familiar with the *madjerman*, the briefest and broadest possible summary of their story is as follows. About 21,000 young Mozambicans, and at most 2500 Angolans, migrated to socialist East Germany for work and training between 1979 and 1990.<sup>4</sup> The idea was that they would go to Germany to help alleviate the shortage of labor there. While in Europe, they would obtain practical capabilities and soft skills which would make them useful workers, not least for envisioned East German projects in Mozambique. They would also be inculcated with socialist ideals. They would become vanguard African socialist “New Men.”

The plan was that the worker-trainees would then go back to Africa and deploy these skills in the service of Mozambique’s and Angola’s nascent industrial revolutions. Sadly, it did not work out like that. The migrants did not receive the expected high-quality training and there were few industries in which to employ the skills they attained. The scheme then fell apart when communism ended in East Germany. Nearly all the Angolans and Mozambicans returned home, where they expected to receive the portion of their wages that they had been practically obliged to send back while they were working. Most of the migrants never saw the money they expected. Their homecoming was for many a traumatic process marked by poverty and dashed hopes. In Mozambique, where most of the migrants were from, they acquired the nickname *madjerman* as they campaigned to receive the money and other benefits that they believed they were owed.

I returned to Mozambique in January 2014, this time with a purpose. I systematically collected oral histories from former workers, students, and school children who had taken part in state-led migration schemes to East Germany. With João, and with the other Africans I spoke to, I found that my own German identity opened doors and provided a starting point for my conversations with people. Many were keen to share their stories about a time long gone, and somehow my Germanness stimulated them. I reminded them of a former German friend or colleague. Interviewees often assumed they knew how to read me: they felt that they had a special insight into the German mindset. The fact that I was born in West Germany and was too young to remember the two Germanys did not seem to matter much. The differences between the east and west of my home did not greatly resonate into Mozambique, and neither to Angola, where I also carried out interviews.

However, differences, which from Africa look small, matter enormously when seen from the German perspective. My *Wessi*-ness mattered greatly when interviewing former East German officials.<sup>5</sup> Whereas most Africans



assumed a shared horizon of experiences for all Germans, many East Germans anticipated that, coming from the Germany that “won” the Cold War, I intended to write a victor’s history.<sup>6</sup> I imagine the book I have written confounds these expectations. I hope it does.

When I began this project, I wanted to learn to see like a socialist New Man in training. Rather than looking at large-scale, high-modernist schemes which aimed to use the power of the state to improve the human condition, as James Scott has done, my goal was to examine these schemes from the perspective of the humans who were to be improved. Intrinsic to the history of these grand schemes was their failure, so the study of their subjects would also encompass how they experienced these failures.<sup>7</sup> How, I wondered, do labor migrants themselves remember their migration experience and how do they speak about its legacies in their lives? Scott is concerned with how the forms of knowledge underlying such plans shaped the manner of their failure. One of the key results of my way of doing things has been that my work focuses much less on the failures. This is because the schemes may have failed, but the people within them did not. They do not perceive themselves as having failed, and, even more fundamentally, there is no such thing as a failed life, because unlike schemes, lives do not have measurable criteria of success and failure against which they can be judged.

Instead of thinking about the schemes and their failures I pay attention to how Africans thought up in these schemes confronted the shortcomings they encountered, repurposing them to meet their goals. This is a story of individuals facing and (sometimes) overcoming institutional failures. The biggest example of this in my narrative is that although *madjerma*n participation in working-training migration schemes may not have ended up with them in secure employment as industrial vanguard workers as it was supposed to, it did give them a framework to organize together when they returned, in order to fight for their collective and individual rights. This collective action simply could not have occurred without the failure of the labor migration schemes.

Central to this narrative are the personal stories of the people who traveled across continents. As always, personal stories transcend the simplistic schematism which so often ensues when we think about concepts such as the Cold War, or dualities such as the global South and North, or East and West, the Second and the Third Worlds. The narratives in this book show how African migrants were simultaneously recipients of and contributors to German life. They examine how their experiences—as producers, as

consumers, and as intimate strangers—shaped their life trajectories as young migrants in the Socialist Bloc and, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as middle-aged citizens in post-socialist societies.

The tail end of the transnational workers' trajectory, especially, nourishes a nostalgia for some aspects of their lives under socialism, for which I have coined the word *eastalgia*. *Eastalgia* is both a historical outcome and a moral-political critique of post-socialism. The word, and the state of mind it represents, is central to this book. *Eastalgia* is ostensibly about the past—a nostalgia for life in East Germany which no longer exists—but really it is at least as much about the present and the state of things in Mozambique and Angola. It is therefore a specific form of one of the special qualities of oral histories, that they exist in several time frames at the same time.

As a fragment of the past in the present, *eastalgia* has a restorative dimension through the identity and belonging it provides to the returned workers. Their shared past and (often idealized) memories give them an anchor as they struggle to navigate a social landscape in which many of them can find little stable mooring. The narratives in this book, and the composite one that I have forged by putting together all the individual narratives, are thus in many ways a critique of the present. What my interviewees told me has as much to say about the present in Mozambique as it does about the past in East Germany. What matters is why interview partners recalled certain things while forgetting others; why they chose to relay their lives in a certain way and not another. Oral histories are products of the present and its selective recall of the past, and the criticisms that workers make of their present living conditions are thus intricately interwoven in their retelling of the past. Former worker-trainees who are still engaged in activism, fighting for reparations, often emphasize the unresolved nature of their struggle; yet this is a topic also of interest to many returnees who are not involved in activist work but whose social conditions do not let them forget the importance of the money for which they once worked.

What emerges through this composite of life histories is not a clear-cut story that fits the memories of the former workers into one neat argument. To try to force them into a unified direction in this way would be to do a great disservice to the men and women whose experiences this book details. Instead, dualities and ambiguities are central to this book. The narratives within it are about the past but are rooted in the present. The migrations were ostensibly state driven but could also never have

happened without a myriad of complex personal motives. The migrants to Germany lived there as both producers and consumers—a reminder that even within communism, where focus was so often on production, consumption remained a central part of life. They went to a country whose guiding principles were international socialist solidarity and anti-racism but ended up facing brutal racism that made many of them leave. And they trained as industrial workers but then returned to a country with limited employment opportunities in industry.

Therefore, I am offering to the reader a tapestry shedding light on different patterns, different perspectives of life in East Germany and in southern Africa from the unique perspectives of non-elite African socialist cosmopolitans. I am reminding the reader that nothing is more complicated, and indeed that nothing is more inspiring, than people's infinite capability for adaptation and for navigating macro-circumstances for their personal goals. This is a message that no archive-based or institutional-level study could hope to transmit.

### TRANSNATIONAL SOCIALIST LABOR MIGRATION SCHEMES

On February 24, 1979, Erich Honecker, General Secretary of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED) and Chairman of the State Council, visited Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, together with other members of the SED. During this visit an agreement regulating temporary Mozambican labor and training migration to East Germany was signed by German Secretary of the Central Committee for the Economy Günter Mittag and Mozambican Minister for Planning and Development Marcelino dos Santos. The Angolan version was signed six years later, on March 29, 1985. Until the premature cancellation of the agreements, about 21,000 contracts were signed with Mozambicans and up to 2500 with Angolans.<sup>8</sup> The signees were mostly young men, but there were also some women. They served contracts that averaged four years in length, combining (in theory, at least) labor on the factory floor with training in company schools, returning home as skilled laborers. The program's initial objective was to train the future vanguard of Mozambique's and Angola's working classes across various industries and companies in East Germany. It was to contribute to building up the human resources required for Angolan and Mozambican socialist industrial development, while also aiding the fragile East German economy.

It was not to be. The complex wars in Angola (1975–2002) and Mozambique (1977–1992) derailed industrial development. Furthermore, the age of socialist one-party states ended globally in the late 1980s. As Germany, Angola, and Mozambique shifted to market economies and reorganized around the principles (if not necessarily the reality) of multi-party democracies, most of the workers lost their jobs and returned home. Once back in Africa, very few succeeded in finding the kind of blue-collar work for which they were trained. More than a quarter century after their return, many workers remain nostalgic for their time abroad. To those of us who are more often exposed to the depiction of East Germany as a gray, oppressive place, *madjerman* positivity about it is a bracing change from the norm. Standpoint is everything. People reminisce about their youth—as people do the whole world over—and the *madjerman*'s mainly positive memories of East Germany serve to criticize the failures of contemporary Mozambique and Angola.

This book is concerned with seeing the world through the eyes of the Angolans and Mozambicans who spent part of their lives working and learning in East Germany. Their experiences were translocal, in the sense that they came from one specific context (e.g., a school in Beira, Mozambique) and migrated to another (e.g., a company in Karl Marx Stadt—now Chemnitz). Their navigation of the national stage was thus filtered through the prism of the local, and again filtered through their own personal experience. And yet, through their translocal and personal migrations they came to understand the national, and came to frame themselves as Angolans or Mozambicans. This was not a given in these newly postcolonial countries. After the event, they have generally come to reflect upon their lives in East Germany, not in Berlin, Cottbus, or Jena.<sup>9</sup>

The workers participated in bilateral migration schemes that connected two states along transnational socialist axes of mobility. Transnational has two meanings in this book that cannot be separated from one another. The first reads transnational as connections between two states, and therefore telling a story that cannot be contained within the national history of one of the states. This sense is of transnational as in international. The second sense suggests that the national frame is not the natural context for this story because individual workers are the historic actors we follow in this account, living both translocal and transnational lives.<sup>10</sup> This is transnational as in transcending the national.

This narrative is part of a plethora of migrations that connected the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War era, giving the lie to the notion of Second World societies as being insular and static.<sup>11</sup> While East German citizens' right to movement was indeed severely curtailed—even seeing family in the West proved an impossibility for many—workers from Angola and Mozambique gained mobility previously unimaginable to them as they were able to come to East Germany on labor contracts to gain work experience and skills training. As citizens of the global South, this mobility was lost to them after the fall of the wall and the collapse of socialism, whereas East Germans suddenly found themselves free to travel, but now simply as Germans. But it was not only laborers who made their way from across Africa to East Germany and other countries across the socialist world from Cuba to the Soviet Union. It was also school children from Mozambique, university students from Angola and Mozambique, youth going for vocational training, union members who attended trade union schools, journalists attending journalism schools, and freedom fighters receiving military training.<sup>12</sup> This book then dives deeper into just one migration current of many.

To understand Cold War migration from Africa to the rest of the world we must consider the conflict as enabling juncture—perhaps not the most natural thing to do. This book contributes to a wider retelling of the Cold War in Africa, not with a focus on destructive ideological and military conflict but instead paying attention to constructive alliances and the state-building schemes they engendered. The new focus is on what happened outside the war theaters: on factory floors, in vocational schools, supermarkets, and discos. In so doing, this narrative contributes to African, German, and transnational history by elucidating several aspects of the African experience of Cold War socialism and its legacies in present-day Angola and Mozambique.<sup>13</sup>

This book opens new ways of thinking about the socialist period in all three states. In the 1970s, what David Ottaway and Marina Ottaway called “Afrocommunism” made headway as the People’s Republic of the Congo, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique all adopted socialism, to varying degrees.<sup>14</sup> In 1977, Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia adopted Marxism-Leninism as official state ideology and opted for Marxist-Leninist state-led development. This meant building a one-party state, promoting industrialization and modernization, having a state-directed economy, and fostering ties with the Eastern Bloc. The Peoples Republics of Angola and Mozambique were

not exceptional in turning to socialism, as they did so as part of a wave of thirty-five out of fifty-three African countries which opted for some sort of socialism after independence.<sup>15</sup> In both Angola and Mozambique, Marxist revolutionary liberation movements assumed state power.<sup>16</sup> The relatively late independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975 coincided with what Fred Halliday calls the Second Cold War, a phase of increased military involvement in the Third World. This was certainly the case in southern Africa.<sup>17</sup> Here, the regional fight against white minority rule became entangled with Cold War objectives.<sup>18</sup>

The Cold War shaped lives, also across southern Africa. It shaped the options for the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO). Both parties had enjoyed extensive support from the socialist side of the Cold War from the outset, although this was not their only source of international support. First, they struggled against the colonial Portuguese, who saw themselves as part of the global fight against communism and received help from the anti-communist West and from apartheid South Africa, which also saw itself as an anti-communist bulwark. Then, after independence had been won, there were extended civil wars—in the case of the MPLA against the National Liberation Front (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and—in the case of FRELIMO—against the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO).<sup>19</sup> These opponents also functioned as proxies for a diverse group of self-declared anti-communist actors, such as the US, South Africa, and (as it was then) Rhodesia. The Cold War was distinctly hot in Angola and Mozambique.<sup>20</sup>

Because the opposing sides in Mozambican and Angolan politics came down on different sides of the Cold War, the conflict played a fundamental role in determining which development projects could be carried out. And, equally important, through the conflicts it fueled, the Cold War shaped both how Africa saw the world and how the world saw Africa. This is not a book about the Cold War's theaters of war—though as we will come to see, the ongoing wars in Angola and Mozambique shaped the lives of the labor migrants. My focus shows that the Cold War not only endangered but also engendered new connections. It resulted in a tight net of nations which professed to follow a socialist path, ranging from Cuba to the USSR. When Angola and Mozambique turned decisively to socialism after independence in 1975, they did so, too, to open the door to a world of possibilities. Among other things, one of these possibilities

was a priority partnership with East Germany. The result was comprehensive economic, technical, and educational cooperation.

To understand this important aspect of how socialist countries were interconnected, this book investigates points of convergence between national spaces and translocal and transnational migrations along axes of socialist mobilities. In the imagination of Angolan and Mozambican politicians, post-independence state building was done partially abroad, first in exile and then, after independence, by sending citizens abroad for skills training. This was a story of the formation of new Angolan and Mozambican citizens. We also see the creation of skilled workers for the East German market and—planned, but not always achieved—for Angolan and Mozambican industrial development. The worker-trainees who were sent on state-to-state contracts to be trained abroad expected to return as skilled cadres whose newly acquired technical knowledge could support the economic development of their home societies. Their migration was supposed to address three interests: it was to place young people in employment and teach them specific skills that qualified them for a variety of blue-collar jobs; it was to give them an international socialist perspective; and, through the ostensibly voluntary but *de facto* mandatory transfers of varying portions of the workers' wages (between 25 percent and 60 percent), it contributed to the reduction of Mozambican debt to East Germany.<sup>21</sup>

Ethnically, regionally, and educationally heterogeneous groups, drawn from various demographic backgrounds within Angola and Mozambique, were to share East German company dormitories, organized along lines of nationality. This environment encouraged interaction in Portuguese, fostering the emergence of a common identity as Angolans or Mozambicans amid the majority East Germans and labor migrants from other socialist countries. The migrants acquired technical and intercultural skills and learned German and gained more fluency in Portuguese as the primary means of communication.

The developmental side of the worker-trainee scheme failed. However, it is clear in this book that the program was notably successful in its cultural role of forming national Mozambican and Angolan identities in its participants. Being abroad and being treated as a collective, living together, in some cases working together, instilled a national identity that was not questioned in my interviews but rather uncritically adopted and asserted. A crack in that identity emerged after the return home but nevertheless the idea of a collective identity very much survives. It was created when

the migrants lived as intimate strangers—an existence which I discuss extensively in Chap. 5 of this book—in East Germany, and the experience forged a collectivity that continues to overwrite ethnic allegiances to this day. Hence, this is not a story of regional or ethnic variance. In both Luanda and Maputo, the workers' associations have members from different provinces and ethnic groups, and this illustrates the forging of commonality that the country-wide recruitment intended.<sup>22</sup>

The labor migration programs between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany were no isolated phenomenon. State-facilitated and -regulated socialist mobilities came in many shapes and forms. These groups often shared an understanding that their individual journeys were part of a wider struggle for progress, decolonization, and development. At the same time, African states like Mozambique and Angola received foreign consultants, teachers, doctors, and military professionals, also from East Germany. East Germany ran programs of solidarity between socialist brother nations in the name of proletarian internationalism and supported liberation movements like the FRELIMO. African students, trade unionists, journalists, military professionals, apprentices, and school children traveled to East Germany. The Angolan and Mozambican men and women who came to work in East Germany also found themselves in good company once they were there. People from other socialist countries like Algeria, China, Cuba, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, and Vietnam also migrated to East Germany for labor and on-the-job training.<sup>23</sup> Nor was East Germany the only country in Central and Eastern Europe to employ laborers from outside Europe: Vietnamese workers not only constituted the largest number of foreign workers in East Germany, they were further employed in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and Cuban workers also worked in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.<sup>24</sup>

English-language literature about socialist labor migrations is growing, providing a better understanding of migration within and to the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). State-socialist migrations differ fundamentally from other types in several regards.<sup>25</sup> First, the state arranges the travel documents and sets the travel date. Workers in Angola had to make their own way to Luanda to board a plane to East Germany, whereas Mozambicans were collected in regional holding centers and transferred collectively to Maputo, where they were preoccupied with paramilitary training to keep them physically fit, and some received talks about life in East Germany and what was expected of them. Second, workers had no say regarding the group in which they were



placed, the industry they worked in, or in which city or village they lived or with whom they shared a room. Third, all states involved also made it very hard for workers to break the mold which saw workers return home after the end of their contracts. This thwarted the dreams of workers who sought to advance to university once abroad or wanted to marry or live with an East German partner. That is not to say that these things did not happen but marriages and university degrees for worker-trainees from Angola and Mozambique were the exception rather than the rule. Fourth, the Angolan and Mozambican state promised that it would place returned skilled workers in the appropriate jobs back home. And finally, these states were to be the custodian of fictionally transferred wages, which meant they had to find money to pay the deferred wages. What all of this meant was that very little was down to the workers. If you had a mindset that allowed you to go with the flow, it could be a comfortable and easy-going life. Workers were provided for, and could spend the money they received as they pleased, free from having to worry about the basics of life such as employment, accommodation, and food. To those whose wishes challenged what home and host states expected of them, the lifestyle felt restricted. It curtailed life plans that did not fit the mold.

In part, labor migration to East Germany from within the socialist world was justified by labeling it as vocational training migration. Whereas the capitalist West, especially West Germany and its guest worker program, was said to exploit labor, East Germany emphasized the human capital development nature of its programs.<sup>26</sup> Their stated purpose was to create a professionally skilled and consciously socialist vanguard workforce. As part of the international proletariat, the workers were to return to their home countries to aid industrialization and spread the socialist revolution.<sup>27</sup> This was soon enough revealed as propaganda. Accusations of exploitation emerged. Algeria, Poland, and Cuba all raised sensitive issues such as mistreatment and exploitation of their workers in East Germany. Algeria was the first to sound the alarm in the early 1980s. It passed a protective law “against the exploitation of Algerian citizens by foreign states” as a result of which the agreements with East Germany were dissolved.<sup>28</sup> In 1987 the Polish government demanded better treatment of their workers in East German factories, and one year later Cuba threatened to annul a bilateral labor agreement on the grounds of attacks on their citizens and a concern for their safety.<sup>29</sup> It is probably not a coincidence that Poland’s and Cuba’s complaints were voiced in the second half of the 1980s, a time in which the recruitment of foreign labor to East

Germany was being driven primarily by economic concerns and was neglecting vocational training and the well-being of workers. Increased numbers of Mozambican workers were to offset the reduction of Cuban and Polish workers. The planned increase in Mozambican laborers was calculated so that the deductions from their wages would be used to reduce the Mozambican trade deficit with East Germany. Exactly how much labor power could be sold was a sore point in Mozambican and East German negotiations.<sup>30</sup>

The socialist training of the New Men (and Women) became less relevant as the Cold War ended and East Germany, Mozambique, and Angola all shifted to market economies. Some, especially of the first generation of migrants who returned in the mid-1980s, were integrated into relevant industries upon return, but toward the end of the programs that outcome became increasingly unlikely. For many, this failure defined their return to their homeland. The unfulfilled dreams and broken promises still fuel the workers' activism a quarter century after their return. In another of the ironies of their story, the *madjerman* have become a vanguard, but of a totally different sort than once envisioned. They are no socialist vanguard workforce driving socialist industrialization in one-party states. They have become a protest vanguard that tries to hold the German and Mozambican governments accountable to the promises they made.

From the German perspective, the presence of roughly 25,000 worker-trainees from Angola and Mozambique was a part of the history of foreign labor employed through bilateral state agreements. The workers' vocational training was celebrated in East Germany as an example of socialist international solidarity. It was part of the fight against capitalist colonialism as it helped brother nations to develop along independent, socialist lines. East Germany continued to distinguish transnational state labor migration from stays related purely to vocational training. The former were truly about work while the latter were primarily about education.<sup>31</sup> Despite all this, the celebration of the international proletariat, as personified by the workers from Angola and Mozambique, rang hollow when compared with the reception of African university students. It was the students—many of whom were drawn from among already established elites—not the workers, who East Germany courted as future leadership cadres of their respective home countries. Regarding the students as the face of a future leadership, East German authorities were willing to make concessions to some students—for instance, in terms of freedom of movement across the Iron Curtain—that they did not make to the workers or, for that matter,

the vast majority of their own citizens.<sup>32</sup> East Germany did little to challenge social structures among the people who migrated there from Africa.

Afro-European encounters under the banner of socialism could lead to dialectical processes of globalizing. The presence of Africans globalized East Germany and the Eastern Bloc.<sup>33</sup> Some African sojourners experienced East Germany as pan-African space: “the opportunity to meet is better here [...] than in Africa,” as one African student at the trade union school in Bernau put it.<sup>34</sup> An Angolan university student thought of a Black East: “Ours was a Black East, ...we learned so much about other African cultures when we were in East Germany. We participated in official celebrations of national holidays but also informal student parties and made new friends not just from Angola but from Nigeria and other places.”<sup>35</sup> This book then contributes toward challenging the view of socialism as a time of stasis, stagnation, uniformity, isolation, and immobility by tracing a particular kind of Afro-European encounter.

## STRUCTURE AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The story told in *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* is far more than one of diplomacy or technical cooperation. It is, above all, a story of migration, mobility, *and* immobility told from the perspective of the migrants themselves. Studying migration through its participants’ memories brings both sending and receiving countries into a single methodological framework.<sup>36</sup> This book follows labor migrants over their life course and reveals how theirs is a story of love *and* suffering, enrichment *and* loss. These are contradictions, but given the intrinsic contradictoriness of human experience, the presence of these contradictions is itself no contradiction. Seeing the world through the memories of the workers underscores the human side of the state-migration scheme. East Germany comes into view from the perspective of African migrants. But having been to East Germany allowed the new socialist cosmopolitans to also revalue Africa.

*Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* is structured by the workers’ life course which it follows in a prologue, introduction, five substantive chapters, and an epilogue. The book’s prologue offers an account of Juma and his wife Graciél, in which I present a narrative of their life. Each of the book’s chapters divides into two parts of what might at first glance be perceived as antagonistic concepts: state vs. the individual, working vs. consuming, integration vs. exclusion, loss vs. gain,

the past in the past vs. the past in the present and future. All these dualities exist together in this story of African migration to the Eastern Bloc. Indeed, the constant existence of these dualities and contradictions within the lives of the migrants is the overarching theme of this book. Within this overriding narrative of the inherent contradictions in human experience, the book makes five important interventions.

First, adopting a bottom-up perspective, it uncovers the multiple overlapping reasons that led Angolan and Mozambican migrants to sign up for work and training programs in East Germany. The migrations were state-sponsored and could not have happened in the form that they did without extensive state direction. But this coexisted with a myriad of personal motivations. In the third chapter of this book, I argue that the labor migrants were also educational migrants, war migrants, and aspirational migrants. Migration was, and is, polyvalent. Motivation and intent are not inscribed in the act of migration. Therefore, this book provides an important corrective to the top-down designation of the program as simply labor migration. The migration was top-down, but also bottom-up.

Second, once in East Germany, the Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees experienced and observed East German society from the vantage point of their lives in Angola and Mozambique. Much other scholarship on labor migrants privileges their role in production, losing sight of their place in consumer life. As laborers, they negotiated their work and training environment, which was designed to form and discipline skilled socialist workers. As consumers, they not only used and enjoyed the goods they produced, but they read the East German consumer landscape through the lens of their experiences of scarcity in the conflict economies at home. They lived in (East) Germany the way they did because of their Mozambican-ness and Angolan-ness, and their attitude to East German consumer culture was indistinguishable from this. This is an important corrective to the frequent imagination of communist societies as societies with limited consumption. It is also a corrective that cannot exist without a global approach.<sup>37</sup> Chapter 4 recounts how migrants invested in necessities and luxury goods, from East and West, to maintain host and home networks alike; and they invested in items to build their own futures.

Third, my life history approach elevates the importance of affective ties, bringing a three-dimensionality to relationships that otherwise appear as only interest-based. Whereas existing work tends to either whitewash East German history or decry the treatment of foreign workers as uniformly shabby, this approach adds much needed nuance and ambiguity. Human

relationships shaped the migrants' thinking about themselves as African migrants, and about socialism in East Germany. As intimate strangers, they became part of discos and shops, and became immersed in East German family life despite governmental attempts to maintain distance between guests and the East German population. Chapter 5 focuses on this social life of socialism. The relationships ranged from romantic encounters and family formation to racist and xenophobic hate crimes, illustrating how the migrants carved out their own social spaces, despite and because of an increasingly hostile environment. The results of my approach are a powerful reminder that when historians and sociologists talk and generalize about things like integration or racism, they are erasing the most important part of the migrant experience—the experience. What is important to migrants is not what happened to a group of people to which they have been deemed to belong, but what happened to themselves. Individual human relationships are the most important thing in people's lives, and any approach that neglects them loses something enormous. Most scholarship on foreign workers in East Germany is based on East German archives and tends to describe the more technical aspects of the labor migration rather than their social lives—important as these aspects are, they leave us with an incomplete picture.<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, it would be easy to tell the labor migration as a story of the inevitable failure of the labor migration programs.<sup>39</sup> They did indeed fail, but, as I show in Chap. 6, this narrative itself fails to capture Africans' experiences of East Germany or the memories they retain of life there. Following German reunification in 1990, Germany canceled the contracts, leading to a mass return of migrants to Angola and Mozambique.<sup>40</sup> The workers returned home while their experience as socialist industrial workers became irrelevant. In the process of reintegration, many lost their belongings, their social standing, the prospect of working as blue-collar workers, and the ties to their partners and children left behind in East Germany. Yet, it was not all loss, and this is not a narrative of victimhood. It shows how, despite everything, workers had lived in and observed a society where sexual and gender politics were debated, nudism became a national pastime, and mass demonstrations became familiar. They witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall. After their return, many *madjerman* and their Angolan counterparts came together and organized. They founded returned workers' associations and formed a community which supported its weakest members financially and formed informal spaces to talk about displacement and belonging. They saw

themselves as doing so in the tradition of the protests which helped to bring down the government in East Germany. While the labor migrants had not become the New Men of the socialist project, they returned as new people nonetheless, with new ideas and different expectations of the role of government and citizens. An institutional approach would not be able to capture this. Indeed, it is a fallacy that institutions exist separately from the people that make them. They do not. An approach like mine can get at how the migration scheme affected the lives of its participants during and after the fact.

Finally, in Chap. 7, this book carves out a space for Africa on the global memory map of studies about post-socialist nostalgia. There are other studies exploring the longing for aspects of the communist past by citizens of post-communist nations of the Eastern Bloc. However, Africa has not yet been part of this conversation.<sup>41</sup> In following socialist migrants back home, and documenting their critique of the nation's path, the book returns to the discussion about eastalgia. It sheds light on the ongoing debate over how, and indeed whether, the transition to democracy and a market economy resulted in a new, more just society. By reading the former workers' eastalgia as both nostalgic longing and a political critique of the present, this study contributes to the nascent discussions on memory in post-socialist Africa. For my interlocuters, reflecting on their German past was to comment on their African present.

Throughout the book I refer both to the Angolan and Mozambican labor migrations. I do not treat the two cases as comparative but rather as two intertwining stories that have many similarities and some differences. While my emphasis lies—in accordance with its numerical dominance—on the Mozambican case, exploring the Angolan case—to the extent possible—is imperative since almost nothing has been published about Angolan workers in East Germany.<sup>42</sup> Comparing the case of the Mozambican and Angolan worker-trainees, the absence of fundamental differences is notable. This is not to say that the schemes were identical—the Angolan program started six years later in 1985 at a time when the East German foreign labor programs were shifting away from smaller numbers and skilling opportunities toward simply being work programs. As one might expect, the first Angolan workers were none too happy with the arrangement. In addition, the Angolans included former MPLA soldiers and older migrants than in the Mozambican case. This gave many workers the confidence to stand up for themselves while in East Germany, earning the Angolans the

reputation of being more “difficult” than their Mozambican counterparts. The Mozambicans, who were often described as “friendly” and “social” by contemporary East German actors, were younger and often straight out of school or from unemployment but rarely with significant prior vocational or military experience. Today the *madjerman* have become an integral and visible part of life in Maputo, whereas the highly irregular demonstrations of the Angolans are mostly taking place internationally. Despite these differences, both groups of returned workers found a collective voice to engage their governments regarding their rights. Overall, their stories are similar, which in itself is a significant finding. Migrants from both countries share stories about formative times abroad, disappointment or satisfaction with their place of work (depending on prior expectations, level of education, and placement in East Germany), stories of adventure and youth abroad, and a disappointing return which induces a more nostalgic look upon the past. For both Angolans and Mozambicans, this nostalgia deepens the more their lives lived today diverge from those once envisioned.

Furthermore, these stories in turn are like the stories told by Vietnamese, Cuban, and Algerian former labor migrants to East Germany.<sup>43</sup> Again, it is not a total absence of difference that surprises. There are some variations. For instance, Vietnamese tell more stories of making extra income with the sale of self-fabricated jeans than Mozambicans who rather took on extra shifts (which were not subjected to transfer payments). Overall, however, the script remains surprisingly constant between different groups of migrants, and many former workers from places as diverse as Hanoi and Luanda today look back nostalgically—eastalgotically.<sup>44</sup> There is a shared experience and collective memory among former foreign workers to East Germany. This might extend even beyond East Germany and into other parts of the Eastern Bloc. English-language scholarship on international labor migrations across the Eastern Bloc remains scarce but the experiences of foreign workers in East Germany seem to be echoed by other comparable groups such as Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia or Cubans in Hungary.<sup>45</sup> We are sure to see more work emerge that fills in the gaps about our knowledge of transnational labor migrations between the Second and the Third Worlds. Hopefully as this work progresses, we will be able to talk more confidently about commonalities and differences between the programs and what this says about the societies and peoples concerned.

## SOCIALIST MOBILITIES BETWEEN ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND EAST GERMANY

This book is the first to explore the life histories of Angolan and Mozambican migrants to East Germany and their subsequent lives from the vantage point of the migrants' memories of their lived experiences of socialism and post-socialism. In the narratives, worker-trainees emerge as workers, learners, consumers, lovers, parents, activists, and travelers. Their emotions, dreams, and opinions add richer descriptions to our understanding of the everyday nature of socialist and labor migration and its afterlives.

Writing histories of the connections between socialist countries reveals transregional entanglements, "alternative form[s] of global interconnectedness."<sup>46</sup> This suggests an alternative globalization to the one that people usually mean when they use the term.<sup>47</sup> Rather than perceiving globalization as a singular, homogenizing process or as a Western project of diffusion or Western-led integration, studying socialist migrations leads to conceiving of globalization in the plural, as "a set of multidirectional processes stemming from different world regions."<sup>48</sup> This includes Africa, as well as socialist Eastern Europe (in a geopolitical rather than geographical sense). Much of the literature concentrating on the diversity of these connections does so from the perspective of writing aggregate narratives about the Second World's Third World.<sup>49</sup> In this context, Africa too often assumes the role of passive object of external intervention.<sup>50</sup> The rich literature on African student migrations, for instance, rarely traces the impact of the students back home. This situates Africa as point of departure rather than a site of transformations and socialist afterlives. It leaves little room for the projects and motivations of African states, intellectuals, and workers in Cold War exchanges with what became known as the Eastern Bloc.<sup>51</sup> This book shows that alternative forms of globalization were about more than political rhetoric and policies or economic regimes. They were also about engendering transnational ties of affection, affinity, and friction.<sup>52</sup> I was inspired in part by the Afro-Asian Research Collective's call to study how "African actors navigated, ignored, and subverted the power dynamics of the Cold War" in Europe and Africa.<sup>53</sup>

Narrowing down from the broad scope of Europe and Africa, the book contributes to a body of literature that investigates relations between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany. The first wave of scholarship produced in the early 1990s chartered new territory based on recently



opened archives and included valuable first-hand accounts of former diplomats, students, and experts. These studies highlighted the East German perspective and explored its bilateral relations with several African countries, sometimes assuming a comparative perspective with West German policies.<sup>54</sup> A second wave of historiographic literature focused on studying power asymmetries, including an examination of the category of race in officially anti-racist societies, and the ambivalent meanings of slogans such as “solidarity” and “mutual benefit.”<sup>55</sup> More recently scholars have turned toward discussing relations between Africa and East Germany in the context of global history and the history of globalization(s).<sup>56</sup> By breaking out of the bilateral frame, this book adds to the study of African and East German relations and in so doing contributes to a wider set of literature examining relations between the Second and the Third World and thinking about alternative forms of globalization.

Often, the story of an all-encompassing, teleological globalization is narrated as one of steady and inevitably increasing flows of people and decreasing distances. The life histories of the *madjerman* undercut such narratives, showing how globalization lacks easy linearity. As this book demonstrates, geopolitical conditions can change quickly and dramatically and with them the range of international movement accorded to an individual. Angolan and Mozambican unskilled workers from non-elite backgrounds were able to enter East Germany by the thousands to work and gain skills on factory floors. Today, these very same people are all but barred from international travel through prohibitive visa requirements and a lack of personal funds. These workers once saw themselves as belonging to an elite socialist vanguard working class in the making which allowed them to travel into the heart of Europe. Subsequently, most have become marginalized as they have not found a place in the struggling market economies of post-socialist Mozambique and Angola. As a result, they are confined to their current place of residence, at best being mobile within their home country or, occasionally, the southern African region. Worker-trainees benefited from the brief coming together of socialist axes that enabled a shrinking of distance and a transnational migration. With the asymmetries of the post-socialist globalization, their international mobility was curtailed, and their cosmopolitan world disintegrated. Even though we can trace interaction, circulation, connection, exchanges, and transfers of ideas, people, and goods, their stories force us to reckon with the processes of fragmentation and disconnection that continue to undergird the global production of inequalities and unevenness.

Circular migration was of importance to the Angolan and Mozambican state to educate skilled labor for the planned expansion of heavy and light industries to support development along a Stalinist path of industrialization. To the migrants, it mattered because it contained a promise, through training and work experience abroad, of escaping the status and roles prescribed by genealogy, birth, and previous socioeconomic status. Labor migrants thus saw migrating abroad as a crucial part of forming their selfhood. The migrations undertaken from Angola and Mozambique stressed being and becoming. It was about *being* a worker-trainee in East Germany and it was also about *becoming* a productive socialist citizen back home.<sup>57</sup>

Between the late 1940s and 1990, the Cold War overlapped with decolonization and development in Africa. Cold War alliances directed many of the Angolan and Mozambican educational migrations toward Marxist regimes, among them Cuba, East Germany, the Soviet Union, and other Eastern European states. This nexus opened new African migration routes within Africa, to hubs like Cairo, Accra, or Dar es Salaam.<sup>58</sup> It also opened migration pathways to places such as China and India.<sup>59</sup> The diverse groups who traveled often understood their migrations in the framework of an international battle for decolonization, progress, and development. Socialist migrations have become a point of interest, with increasing attention on African students and trade unionists in East Germany.<sup>60</sup> Prolific work explores African migrations to the former Eastern Bloc, examining how Africans journeyed across borders to “points of reference, places of education, and ports of exile.”<sup>61</sup> Few studies as of yet trace the migration movements from Europe to examine their effects on socialism and post-socialist legacies at home, an approach crucial to tracing the worker’s life course in this book.<sup>62</sup>

*Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* is in conversation with these studies but differs in important ways. First, its close-up view of worker-trainees sheds light on an occupational category distinct from the students, school children, exiles, military personnel, and trade unionists that were the focus of many prior publications. Second, this book builds primarily on oral history interviews with returned migrants, in contrast with the vast majority of existing studies that rely on archives in the former Eastern Bloc. Third, this study traces the life course of the migrants before, during, and after migration, while the existing literature focuses on the migration phase of Africans within the Eastern Bloc and tells the story from the viewpoint of the receiving countries. And lastly,

this study documents the history of connections, including their unraveling, to illustrate disconnection, rupture, and fragility in the post-migration lives of the worker-trainees.

This labor and training migration circuit departs in significant ways from histories of migrant labor elsewhere on the continent. First, the context of postcolonial African states engaging with “socialist brother nations” puts the labor migration, rhetorically and experientially, on a different playing field from colonial labor migrations. Angolans and Mozambicans signed up voluntarily for a variety of reasons, which I discuss in Chap. 3. In the early stages of the program, they were not only exploited for labor power but also gained professional skills and were expected to return as socialist vanguard workers buttressed by having experienced socialist internationalism and East German “real socialism.” This made these South to East migrations fundamentally different to migrations in the colonial era, or indeed to most of the migrations between South and West. On the other hand, as we shall see, the later stages of the labor program largely failed to live up to these standards.

Moreover, travel to the geopolitical East intensified a re-making, re-framing, and re-articulating of fluid identities. The laborers underwent a racialization process whereby their identities shifted from the ethnic identities significant at home to the national and racial categories salient abroad. The journey to East Germany meant not only that they were black in the eyes of the white majority in their host country but also that they experienced their identity as black Africans differently in a white majority society. More specifically, it also meant primarily becoming Angolan or Mozambican instead of (for example) Makua or Mbundu. The East German government not only declared solidarity with Angola and Mozambique against imperialism in the battle against regional white minority rule, it also understood East Germany as explicitly and intrinsically anti-racist.<sup>63</sup> Despite this, racism, as unacknowledged legacy of German colonialism, was a marked characteristic of East German society.<sup>64</sup> East Germany was the only country in the Eastern Bloc with a direct colonial history on the African continent. Despite this history, many African governments included East Germany in the socialist and therefore anti-imperialist and anti-racist camp, so that it was viewed by many as political alternative to continued relations with the former colonizers and their allies. Yet, the colonial legacy was not overcome by state-socialist doctrine in East Germany, as becomes highly visible when examining the lives of former worker-trainees in East Germany. Tracing the conditional and

superficial official inclusion of the workers as intimate strangers and the ways in which many worker-trainees subverted the barriers, such as when they formed personal relationships or founded families, reveals the limits of state planning in the parameters of integration.

Focusing on the complex lives of migrants and their knowledge about a migration movement is an important counterbalance to state-centric treatments.<sup>65</sup> I draw inspiration from Alf Lüdtke's approach to studying workers' everyday lives through *Eigensinn*, or self-willed-ness.<sup>66</sup> The point is to write histories which make space for an examination of the complex ways in which agency is negotiated, expressed, and erased. Lüdtke emphasizes historical actors' "own meaning" or the workers' "own sense" in terms of small acts of resistance, or the absence thereof, in the workplace.<sup>67</sup> Both of these phrases are possible literal translations of the German term. I share that focus on individual perspectives, but I go beyond the focus on resistance which is in much of the German scholarship on labor and *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of the everyday, and is also the staple of labor history and the history of slavery in African history. This does not mean that complex power differentials were not an important factor in the worker-trainees' lives but resistance was, while present, not an all-encompassing factor that determined the memories of their everyday lived experiences.<sup>68</sup> Studying the workers migration experience and remembrance alike involves a multilayered and multitemporal understanding of agency, one that follows Lynn M. Thomas's call to pay attention to "how all people shape—if in varying and unequal ways—the worlds in which they live" and to "attend to the multiple motivations that undergird meaningful action, motivations that exceed rational calculation and articulated intentions to include collective fantasies, psychical desires and struggles just to get by."<sup>69</sup>

The microhistories of travelers' lives that undergird this book move across various scales and temporal divides. Their individual lives and collective experiences are shot through with individual encounters, national state-building, bilateral socialist solidarities, and the global socialist movement set against the Cold War. Their lives have bridged temporal divides. The protagonists of this book lived through colonialism, independence, socialist state-building, and the shift to a market economy and multiparty democracy. They are living demonstrations that lives do not conform to neat historical periodization or containers such as the nation state. A narrative that traces the migrants' life course reminds us that the end of the Cold War and socialism was not the end of their story or, indeed, of anyone's story.

Small spaces and collective microhistories shed new light on the study of alternative forms of global entanglements. They reveal both the reach and the limits of the socialist rhetoric of friendship and proletarian internationalism, and official policies. Focusing on the memories, fictions, and limits of entanglements reveals much about their meaning. This book explores the repercussions and legacies of South–East encounters and demonstrates that power structures and inequalities remain to the present day. Ultimately, this narrative complicates how Africa fitted into what was, for a time at least, a global socialist world.

### ORAL HISTORY AND MEMORY

Mozambican historian and writer João Paulo Borges Coelho argues that telling post-independence history in Mozambique is part politics, part memory work, and part history writing. The official FRELIMO legitimizing narrative has remained strong in the form of a fixed oral “liberation script” that advances in linear fashion based on binary opposites.<sup>70</sup> The recent rise of memory accounts in Mozambique poses one challenge to this singular account through their multiplicity. Similar “liberation scripts” exist across southern Africa and across the world. The voices of the former workers, the stories they tell, and the memories they share add cacophonous voices to the post-independence history of Mozambique and Angola as well as to East German history, illustrating the ambiguity and serendipity of the experiences of non-elite historical actors.

I merge the collected life history interviews to arrive at a collective biography of sorts. This approach allows for tracing the different life phases of Angolan and Mozambican workers. I do this to understand the contours of the migration experience.<sup>71</sup> That means that rather than in-depth discussions of individual life histories, as in the prologue, I have chosen quotes and memories to illustrate particular points. The story this book tells is made from many people’s individual stories. Despite the shortcomings of such an approach—an obvious one is that the reader cannot dive deeply into the different life histories—I have chosen this approach to do justice to the 268 interviews on which this work is built. It also allows me to discuss an illustrative variety of issues. A collective narrative is best served by a collection of voices. An individual biography, while fascinating and meaningful, can never be more than just that—individual.

Producing the oral history primary source material for this book was no simple task and necessitated thousands of kilometers of travel in minibus taxis, rattling buses, and trains and planes over a period of two years in 2014 and 2015. When I was doing this, I was afforded a visceral sense of the expansion of a small part of the global socialist world. Retracing that world was for me a multi-sensual experience, whether it was listening with former returned workers to East German bands like *Silly, City*, or the *Pubhdys*, encountering an old MZ (an East German brand of motorbike) on the streets in Mozambique, or being baked a German birthday cake by Juma and his family. To access the memories and life stories of former labor migrants, I spent many hours talking to workers in what is colloquially known as the park of the *madjerman* in Maputo, in cafes across the Mozambican provinces from the Rovuma to the Maputo (to echo a saying that resonates in Mozambique from the liberation war), and in restaurants and offices around Luanda.<sup>72</sup> In the process, I was invited into the homes of some of my interview partners who sometimes served up *xima* and *matapa* to introduce me to local dishes, as they had once been introduced to German *belegte Brötchen* and *Abendbrot*. During my travels I stayed in hotels recommended by workers and sometimes with returned workers themselves. They helped organize my onward journeys, accompanied me on several occasions to show me the local sights, and on these occasions spoke about solidarity and reciprocity. It was important to my hosts that I was able to see Mozambique and Angola the way they remembered exploring East Germany.

Oral historians do not usually select interviewees with a claim to scientific sampling. They are simply glad when they find a first-person witness to an event that is of interest to them. In my case, as with many oral histories, my first interviewees in Mozambique found me. They approached me on account of my white skin and German appearance and my German accent in Portuguese. We also sometimes seemed to be brought together by fate. One of my interviewees was the waiter in a restaurant where I had lunch, another the taxi driver who drove me from the airport to town. Then there were those friends and acquaintances who referred me to speak to their *madjerman* employees, a janitor, a maid, an office assistant. There were the neighbors of friends and their acquaintances—when I talked to people in Maputo, everyone seemed to know a returned worker from East Germany. And most of the people I interviewed in turn recommended others. I was able to adjust the snowballing to a certain degree to listen to

stories of male and female workers hailing from different regions and trained across sectors and companies.

This was not the case in Luanda, where my search for interview partners proved more difficult mostly because comparatively few workers had been to the East and those who returned are more dispersed across the country. While I easily made contacts with returned university students via the embassy and a few key connections, it proved much harder to access returned workers who mostly did not live or work inside Luanda's city center. This reflects income and class differences between the returned workers and students. Former workers in Luanda had no public meeting place like Maputo's park of the *madjerman*. In Luanda, I found my interviewees through the members of two rivaling organizations, confusingly both named AEX-TAA, but located in different office spaces. I introduced my project and volunteers came forward.<sup>73</sup> While talking to those belonging to workers' organizations skewed my sample in Angola to include those who were actively interested in associating with their former transnational worker identity, it did give me access to a group otherwise hard to locate.

In Mozambique, too, I relied on more organized approaches. In addition to chance encounters and snowballing, I contacted institutions connected to Germany like the embassy and the German cultural center Instituto Cultural Mocambique—Alemanha (ICMA). The most important help was the main (and by 2014, the only active) organization of returned workers: the ATMA.<sup>74</sup> It was the tireless work of Zecca Cossa and Juma Madeira in Maputo and the representatives of the regional groups that facilitated a trip from Maputo up the East Coast. I stopped in the provincial capitals of Beira, Quelimane, Nampula, and Pemba with further stops in the small village of Namialo on the way to the Ilha de Mozambique, on that beautiful island itself (where I even got a tour in German by a former worker) and in the then bustling port city of Nacala. In each location I would introduce my project in front of an assembled crowd ranging from a handful of people to eighty returned workers and family members. After the meetings I would take phone numbers and make appointments for individual and sometimes group interviews.<sup>75</sup>

All participants gave informed consent to participate in this oral history project. In fact, all but a few, who asked to be anonymized, expressed an interest in sharing their personal stories. Storytelling brought a sense of validation with it, a feeling that the life lived mattered, that their experiences in Germany were retrospectively valued and important enough to be

included in a history book. I hope that this book, with all its shortcomings, helps to satisfy this sense.

Far from only inquiring about the past, the conversations were about the present and the future, too. The act of telling became an opportunity to reminiscence over a coffee or Coke. Yet, the fact that the workers' claims have not met many a returnee's satisfaction in either Angola or Mozambique rendered the issue topical to numerous interviewees. Another issue on the minds of many of those returned workers with whom I came into contact was children left behind, children with whom contact had been lost some years after return—or with whom there had never been any contact at all. Sometimes my respondents remembered little more than the first names of the children and their mothers, while others gave me addresses and complete life histories. As part of the interview process, I offered to collect the data of those who were searching for their offspring, as I was volunteering with *Reencontro Familiar* in Germany. This group of volunteers seeks to bring together family members from Mozambique and Germany who have lost touch. The future was also a recurrent topic in the interviews. Many workers were in their late fifties and sixties and were approaching what they saw as old age. They were concerned about their physical fitness, were contemplating retirement, and were worried about financial security.<sup>76</sup>

Even though I was clear to the interviewees about the limits of my role as a then graduate student living outside of Germany and explained what an academic history book does (speak to scholars and students, and perhaps a few members of a broader public) and what it does not do (shape policies, convince governments to pay compensation), the very fact that I had come all the way to Africa, learned Portuguese, and sought to write a book suggested the importance of the topic. The fact that I came from Princeton University was not a factor for most of my interview partners. If anything, for some it was a disappointment that I did not come directly from Germany. In Germany, too, the fact that I studied in the US was not helpful for my credibility with former East German employees. In Angola and Mozambique many former workers and school students hoped I could tell people back in Germany about their plight. Some sought me out because they had heard rumors that I was with the German government or had come to collect data about past financial claims. The vast majority decided to participate in an interview even after I had the opportunity to address these misconceptions.



I understood that my listening to people's life stories was a more or less direct involvement in people's lives.<sup>77</sup> But there are structural limits to this involvement. At its heart academic publishing is an extractive endeavor, not a community-centered one. This is especially problematic in the (post) colonial context of African studies, where since the inception of the discipline, knowledge has been produced in the global North about Africa which remains inaccessible to Africans. This book is published open-access and in English to reach a broad audience, but this means that sadly most people involved in this story in Angola, Mozambique, and Germany will not be able to easily read it.<sup>78</sup>

I was an outsider to all communities that I interviewed and yet, in some way, I was also treated as an insider—perhaps my own version of an intimate stranger. I was not an insider privy to the world of the returned workers, but because I grew up in Germany, at times my African interview partners assumed a shared horizon of experiences in Germany, which in reality only existed in a very limited way. I was not yet born when the Angolan and Mozambican labor migration programs were initiated, and my experience of work culture in East German state-owned companies was as nonexistent as my experience of East German cities and private life. By age and chance, being born in West Germany, I was removed from that expected shared horizon. In fact, I went to Angola and Mozambique also to learn about “the other Germany.” And learn I did. For instance, I learned the word *Broiler*—East German for roast chicken—and the habit of knocking on the table as a form of greeting, widespread in the former East of Germany until today—from my Mozambican interlocutors, and both served me well in my current life in Brandenburg state, a former East German territory. These experiences of mine are poignant echoes of the way that Angolans and Mozambicans learned about their own countries by going to East Germany. But even if I had been an East German factory worker, my experience would have differed from those of the “Freunde” (friends) that came from what was then known as the Third World to work in East German factories. My differences to them are not only of age and in most cases gender, but also—and most significantly—of race. I do not and cannot claim to speak for anyone. But I can provide a platform for people's voices.

As a white German academic, I am writing this book from a position of relative power and privilege. It was the privilege of a German passport and research funding from the US and Portugal that facilitated the necessary travels to be able to write this book. Being white, in some situations,

accorded me authority. On the other hand, being a young woman sometimes worked to undermine that authority. Having pursued higher education at anglophone elite institutions shaped the way I approached scholarship and writing and, in many cases, worked to remove me from the concerns of the people I interviewed. On the other hand, we shared the experience of arriving in new cultural and class environments in our late teens/early twenties, which often engendered a sense of connection and mutual understanding across the many divides and contributed to building relationships of trust.

In my oral history interviews I identified strongly with the position of a learner. By listening intently and being taken along to *madjerman* weddings, funerals, and birthday celebrations I started moving on the outsider-insider continuum more toward the knowledge of an insider.<sup>79</sup> Coming from the outside allowed me a perspective that was not overwritten by present-day community concerns. It also allowed people to be open with me, for the same reasons. Fernando Machava, an undergraduate history student at Eduardo Mondlane University (at the time) who diligently transcribed many of my interviews, also conducted a few interviews with his *madjerman* neighbors on his own because I wanted to see how far the storyline differed when it was not told to a German. The content of the interviews did not change much, but other issues of age and authority came into play, leading to briefer and less open interviews.

When I did the interviews, I started with a questionnaire in my mind that covered the different phases of the life course of the workers. I would flexibly adapt each interview; some wanted to speak to me about the present and future first, before they turned to their past, while others preferred to walk me through their lives in chronological order. While I had to guide some people closely, others took the lead. I started interviews explaining the purpose of my research, asking for consent, and then began with some basic identification questions before progressing to the more open-ended questions. Some interview partners I met several times to finish their stories, but most I met once. Most of the interviews lasted several hours. Despite some being more akin to an informal conversation, all interviews were three-way conversations between me, the interviewee, and the imagined audience represented by my recording device.<sup>80</sup> During these intersubjective encounters we each brought something of ourselves to the meeting which was also a transactional space, where we exchanged information.<sup>81</sup>

I did not pay people for the interviews but rather invited them for a drink or lunch while we spoke. Each interviewee had their own reasons for speaking to me. These ranged from a general interest in sharing their life histories, to doing a favor for a friend, to harboring a hope that somehow this might help in bringing about another round of payments. A few wanted to set the historical record straight by speaking about strikes, workplace accidents, or racism. Others wanted to meet me and show their world as they had once been shown the German world. Those interviews would start in a formal setting and end up becoming informal with an invitation home or a mutual sight-seeing trip. My priorities and the questions driving my research project did not always align perfectly with the interviewees' interest. We would then come to a middle ground in the interviews, where I got to ask the questions that were important to me and the interviewees could tell me why they had come to see me.

I asked interviewees to bring photos, letters, and anything else that they felt to be relevant. Some brought treasures like friendship books (*Poesiealben*), letters, photo albums, poems, magazines, postcards, diplomas, or prizes. But I also heard a lot of stories about burned and flooded abodes, suitcases stored with relatives and subsequently lost, and other painful ways in which the physical leftovers from their time in Germany had diminished over time. No matter whether each incident was true, these stories, together with what I saw in people's houses, suggest that storing and maintaining a personal archive in a condition that saves photographs and letters from deterioration is a luxury only those with more settled and slightly more affluent lives can afford.

Armed with the occasional treasures of personal tin trunk archives and oral histories, I set out to understand what happened and how it was remembered. Oral history is a unique historical research methodology that allows new insights, especially from non-elite actors whose voices might often be excluded from the archival record. What appealed to me about oral history was that it provides a sense of human connection and makes history a more democratic exercise. I was excited to capture the workers' worldviews. It was later that I came to understand that the value of the oral history interviews lies not in their accuracy of recall, particularly not of routine events like a workday, which tend to blend into one another. The value lies in remembering something a certain way, choosing to tell a narrative about something that speaks not only to what happened at the

point in time the story treats, but also what happened at subsequent points in time in the person's life.

In the 1960s, Jan Vansina pioneered the use of oral traditions in African history and argued that oral history is a legitimate primary source. Very few people would doubt that today. Vansina was on a quest to recover the kernel of objective historical truth that he assumed was hidden beneath many layers of interpretation. It was the historian's task to peel back the layers of impressions like the layers of an onion to arrive at the narrative of interest.<sup>82</sup> Luise White, on the other hand, challenges Vansina through her interpretation of oral history as highly subjective and emotive. In many of her works, White does not look for facts, let alone truth in her interviews, but concentrates on rumors and lies to ask what the speakers relate about their desires, fears, and feelings.<sup>83</sup> I do not go as far as to sever the link between memory and historical event completely. I have tried to corroborate information with other sources, as a historian should do with any type of source.

I contend that one of the unique potentials of oral history is the multiplicity of temporalities it contains. This is powerfully illustrated in my discussion of eastalgia in the epilogue. The narratives are simultaneously about the past, the modal past ("should have been"), the present, the modal present ("should be"), and the future. Leroy Vail and Landeg White argue that praise poems are "history as drama, evaluation and judgment: history with the metaphysics included."<sup>84</sup> This is also true for the workers' life histories which deliver subjective versions of history that evoke their opinions but even more so "invoke not merely an alternative interpretation of history but also an alternative vision of how life *ought* to be lived."<sup>85</sup> The workers' many stories about the past often come back to a criticism of their living circumstances in the present. Life histories, much like praise poems, are oral sources that provide us with an understanding not simply of what happened, but what storytellers think about what happened and what should have happened.

Oral histories are as close to the living as a historian can get. I employ oral history to inform the study of the past and the study of that past in the present. The accounts that people gave me are valuable both for their information about the role of the individual in society today and their memory of that role in the past.<sup>86</sup> Following Lynn Abrams, I think of the interviewees as interpreting and performing their recollections of their historical experience in a collaborative and intercultural co-production

with me during the interview.<sup>87</sup> My imagination of what it was like to have lived under socialism met my interview partners' interpretation of their lives and we sought to bridge these two perspectives in our interviews.

Memory is no synonym for imagination, but we must remember the constructed nature of memory. Each act of remembering is an active creation of meaning. I conducted the interviews on which this book draws about a quarter of a century after the return home of the workers; their memories of their time in East Germany are colored by what they have experienced since then and by a nostalgic recollection of their own youth. They are not simply a depiction of what happened but rather of what is remembered and what has been selected to share.

Memories are life-giving. Without memory, we have no social existence.<sup>88</sup> Memories are also fallible—the more time passes between an event and the interview, the more the memory becomes an interpretation of the event rather than a description. Each retelling of the event changes the recall. In their frequent retelling, memories crystallize and become part of a collective memory, a *madjerman* script. Those who are used to sharing narratives of their past do so fluidly, while those who must work harder to remember and unearth almost forgotten memories often construct a messier narrative arch, but also a narrative which has had less intermediary filtering since it was first laid down in memory.

While some memories are thus easily accessible, others remain hidden. Of course, some memories might be recalled but interviewees decide not to share. Extraordinary events are remembered with more clarity than the quotidian. Against this backdrop it is no surprise that workers speak little about their everyday experience but remember the outstanding, the parties, the trips, the consumption, the award won, the workplace accident, or the strike. Our brains sometimes need to be triggered to make a connection to a particular memory. Oral historians use “memory joggers” like photographs in seeking to trigger recall, something I did where possible and relevant. For many of my African interview partners, meeting me, exchanging a few words in German prior to switching into Portuguese refreshed memories. This book is not about me and is not primarily about communication across divides. It is about my interviewees and their lives. Hence, after having positioned myself and made transparent from where I am speaking and how I collected my data in this introduction, I will disappear from the narrative in the following chapters. On my interviewees' narratives I build my own interpretation as historian, an interpretation that is informed by reading the work of other scholars and primary sources

in official archives, in tin trunk archives of workers, diplomats, and East Germans involved in the labor migration scheme, and published primary sources.<sup>89</sup>

I am not offering an account of the labor migration program based on a nuanced reading of company archives and Stasi archives—that has been done and continues to be done elsewhere.<sup>90</sup> I am offering an account that engages the memories of the workers and reads them against the background of a multitude of other sources. Those looking for a narrative that will focus on the exploitative aspects of this labor migration scheme will be disappointed, as will those looking for a triumphant success story.

History is not written from one kind of evidence, and neither is *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World*. Though this book draws primarily on oral histories, it is informed too by different kinds of archives across five countries. Some interviewees generously shared their personal tin trunk archives with me which included photos of their time in East Germany. They also showed me letters and postcards, documentation relating to their training and lives as workers in East Germany, and in a few cases artistic works such as paintings, poetry, songs, and prose. In Germany, I worked at the national archive, where most of the documents relating to foreign workers in East Germany on a ministerial level are held. I consulted some Stasi (East German secret police) reports on foreign workers; the archives of the foreign ministry hold the agreements ratified between East Germany and Angola and Mozambique. I pieced together relevant information across institutional archives of various forms in Angola, Mozambique, and Portugal.<sup>91</sup> This project is further informed by the infusion of the story of the *madjerman* into popular culture in Mozambique and Germany. This includes music such as *marrabenta* or rap, but also documentaries and YouTube videos, exhibitions, coffee table books, memoirs, and a graphic novel.<sup>92</sup> This eclectic evidence comes together to form a context against which I read the oral histories.

The experiences of the Angolans and Mozambicans in this book took place in “spaces that were categorically different from the national frame” and can thus not be contained in any single national archive.<sup>93</sup> Jean Allman posits that the postcolonial archive in Africa “is a global transnational archive.”<sup>94</sup> The archival history of the Angolan and Mozambican labor migrations can be told—up to a point—through consulting East German archives.<sup>95</sup> Yet, Nana Osei-Opare rightfully reminds historians of the postcolonial African past of the importance of using African archives, and rejects “postcolonial African archival pessimism.”<sup>96</sup>

This, maintains Osei-Opare, is especially urgent for historians engaging with the Cold War period.<sup>97</sup> Accessing postcolonial archives can, however, be challenging in Angola and Mozambique. The Arquivo Histórico Nacional, the Angolan National Archive, for instance, does not contain records of post-independence Angola, and in the MPLA archives the archivists curate what information they make available. Even where the socialist period resulted in relatively transparent archival practices, as Benedito Machava and Euclides Gonçalves argue for Mozambique, the multiparty democratic period that followed erased much of what was gained.<sup>98</sup> To quote Achille Mbembe, the state exercises “its ability to control time, to abolish the archive and anaesthetise the past.”<sup>99</sup> In neither country were relevant holdings with regard to information about the Angolan and Mozambican workers to be found through the state archive.<sup>100</sup> Instead, I puzzled together relevant information across many institutions. The fragmented nature of the archival work is likely influenced by the ongoing workers’ claims in both countries, processes that encourage silencing of the archival record.<sup>101</sup> The labor ministries in both countries, which presumably hold the records—or what is left of them—pertaining to the labor migration, granted me interviews with employees, which resulted in access to a few sources, but nothing that would allow me to trace the Angolan or Mozambican governments’ plans or actions in any meaningful way. Even though the East German archives can function as transnational shadow archives to some extent, a project centering the workers’ experience seemed more promising as a way of breaking new ground.

Oral history shifts the focus from institutions to actors.<sup>102</sup> As discussed above, interviewees made decisions about what to say and how, and their recall was influenced by later experiences, conditioned by social retelling, or forgetting.<sup>103</sup> The Mozambican author Mia Couto writes:

They [the Madjerman] returned from a dead country, from a time beyond the wall, beyond memory. But they are not only *those that returned*. They created their lives anew, once again on a journey with unknown destinations. Each and every one has a history, a trajectory, a face, a name.<sup>104</sup>

I wanted to work with some of these histories, trajectories, faces, and names to craft a narrative that foregrounds the collective memory of the returned workers. Inspired by Hannah Arendt, I wanted to contribute to interweaving the private and the public through storytelling. For Arendt,

there is a close association between the public realm and reality. She claims that people need to be “seen and heard” to escape the “uncertain, shadowy kind of existence” of the private realm.<sup>105</sup> Jürgen Habermas noted that “the lifeworlds and voices of marginalized classes also tend to be ‘privatized’ by being denied public recognition.”<sup>106</sup> There is a reason why workers, women, or refugees feature prominently in oral history works. It is to move their lives from the private into the public sphere. But more than that, the storytelling that is performed during the interviews is part of a meaning-making process. It is also an exercise of agency. That said, it is not my intention to include “the African voice” as final authority in an emancipatory recovery historiography. As discussed above, there are many limitations to these voices.<sup>107</sup> Tracing the influences on memory over time, reading them for what they reveal about the interviewees’ emotions, dreams, and desires, remains as crucial as learning what (subjectively) happened.

Hannah Arendt claims that historic actions are given meaning through the retrospective mention by historians. While that is certainly not the only meaning—actions have their own effects on contemporaries, creating immediate meaning—it is in the telling and retelling that an action is interpreted and accorded new meaning. As an author, I create meaning by sharing my interpretation, but, as I hope I have made clear in this introduction, I do not create the meaning of this history alone. On the one hand it is built on hundreds of interpretations and the interpretation inherent in archival material and secondary sources. On the other hand, meaning is also created by those who receive this narrative, who read and discuss this book. Wondering whether in writing history based on oral history “any interpretation is acceptable,” Luise White responds: “Hardly. It means that interpretations have to be made with care and caution, not because they are risky in and of themselves, but because interpretations build on so many layers of interpretation that they have to be well grounded or they topple over.”<sup>108</sup> I hope that my interpretation of the *madjer*man’s (and their Angolan counterparts) experiences and memories gives the reader both an idea of what their migration experience was like for them, and an understanding of why they remember and recount in the way that they do.



## NOTES

1. There is no standardized spelling but *madjerman*, *madjermanes*, *madgermanes*, and *MaGermanes* are common. The name took hold in the early 1990s during the politicization of the workers' reintegration process. The term often has a derogative connotation when used in the Portuguese-speaking media. It is, however, also proudly employed as a label by many workers themselves and has been used by the *madjerman* activist group. According to my interview partners, it means "those who have been to Germany" or "those from Germany" in Shangaan and other languages of the south. Thank you to Emmanuel Kreike for pointing out that *madjerman* might linguistically hint at a collective concept like "Germanhood" or doing the "German Thing." "Ba" would be the prefix for the linguistic class designating people. The Ji-ma class for things is especially used with words that are borrowed from other languages, in this case "djer-man." The prefix "ma" designates the plural, *madjerman*, being many, *mudjerman* a single individual. This holds true across languages spoken in the south of Mozambique like Changana, Ronga, and Tsonga. The name shows parallels to names referring to Mozambican migrant workers to South Africa like *madjondjones*, Paulino José Miguele, "Sobre o Mito da Solidariedade. Trabalhadores Contratados Moçambicanos e Angolanos na RDA," in *Projekt Migration*, ed. DOMiT Kölnischer Kunstverein, Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über Migration in Deutschland, Köln, Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main, Institut für Theorie der Gestalt (Köln: DuMont, 2005), 432. I opted for *madjerman* to avoid misreadings of "mad Germans" that occur on the internet.
2. I refer to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as East Germany throughout this book.
3. For reasons of privacy, I identify João and all workers cited in this book only by their first name, unless they have published under their full name or have been cited prominently elsewhere. Occasionally a number will be cited instead of a name, which marks occasions on which interview partners asked for anonymity. All translations from non-English sources into English are my own, unless otherwise specified.
4. As we will see in Chap. 3, these numbers are but an approximation.
5. *Wessi* is the (slightly derogatory) German nickname for West Germans. *Ossi* is its equivalent for East Germans.
6. This mirrors the politically and emotionally charged nature of East German historiography in unified Germany; see David Clarke and Ute Wölfel, *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

7. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
8. Counting the exact number of contract workers remains difficult because often signed contracts form the basis of the numbers, no matter how many contracts were signed by the same individual. In the Angolan case, the numbers cited in the secondary sources and by the interviewees differ between about 1600 and 2500; see Karin Weiss “Zuwanderung und Integration in Ostdeutschland,” in *Zuwanderung und Integration in den neuen Bundesländern. Zwischen Transferexistenz und Bildungserfolg*, Karin Weiss and Hala Kindelberger, eds. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus Verlag, 2007) 37; Miguèle, “Sobre o Mito,” 432. The number of Angolan individuals who travelled to East Germany is likely closer to 1600.
9. Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective, Studies in Global Social History* (Leiden The Netherlands; Boston: Brill, 2010).
10. Marcel van der Linden, “Transnationale Arbeitergeschichte,” in *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, ed. Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 265–74.
11. The three-world model emerged in the mid-twentieth century, influenced by the Cold War. The First World referred to the US and its allies, the Second World to the Soviet Union and its satellite states, and the Third World in this context subsumed all non-aligned countries. The meaning of the term subsequently changed to mean the developing world. While the three-world model has become obsolete after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in this historic context it helps us think through the asymmetrical relationship between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany.
12. This is a vibrant research field; for instance, see the special issue edited by Eric Burton and Constantin Katsakioris “Africans and the Socialist World: Aspirations, Experiences, and Trajectories. An Introduction,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 54, no. 3 (2021): 269–77.
13. Socialist nations like East Germany referred to themselves as “real socialist” regimes to distinguish the contemporary reality from the communist ideal which they strove to attain one day. “Socialist-leaning” is how East Germans labeled the African regimes to distinguish the expression of socialism on a gradient, which saw Angola and Mozambique as committed but in terms of real socialist expressions in need of development; see, for example, Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1985* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995). I follow this emic use of “socialist” and “socialism” in a Marxist-Leninist sense as a stage on the road to communism in this book.
14. David Ottaway and Marina Ottaway, *Afrocommunism* (New York and London: Africana, 1981).

15. Allison Drew, "Communism in Africa," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 285; M. Anne Pitcher and Kelly M. Askew, "African Socialisms and Postsocialisms," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76 (2006): 1.
16. The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) are still in power in Angola and Mozambique respectively, though they no longer pursue a Marxist-Leninist state-led development agenda.
17. Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1983).
18. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 331–63; David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, and Michael E. Latham, *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Piero Gleijeses, "Havanna's Policy in Africa, 1959–1976: New Evidence from the Cuban Archives," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* No. 8–9 (Winter 1996/1997): 5–20; Vladimir G. Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa* (London and Scottsville, South Africa: Pluto Press and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).
19. The Cold War is inextricably linked with the history of decolonizing and independent Africa and regional and national interests. Angola in 1975 is a case in point for the effect that outside interests could have in tipping the balance between the three independence movements; they facilitated the escalation of violence. The superpowers' proxy wars resulted in destruction of many lives and crucial infrastructure in southern Africa. Many of its direct casualties were African, as were many of the victims that suffered the failure of revolutionary experiments and ideological warfare. Consequently, at the end of the ideological battle the fighting died down in Mozambique. In Angola, the conflict shifted to being about profits and power. As the end of the socialist road seemed to be reached economically, the neoliberal 'counterrevolution' of the Reagan administration contributed to the death of statist and left-wing development initiatives across Africa. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War many African nations found themselves discarded by their former allies; see Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2; Jeffrey James Byrne, "Africa's Cold War," in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J. McMahon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 101–23.

20. Odd Arne Westad and Piero Gleijeses, among others, decentered the Cold War through underscoring how hot the Cold War was at the “peripheries.” They argue that the diversity of experiences necessitated the breaking down of the monolithic concept of a singular Cold War; see Westad, *The Global Cold War*; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).
21. East Germany never transferred money to Mozambique for the workers’ deferred wages but simply reduced the Mozambican trade deficit with the GDR accordingly. Both nations were engaged in barter exchange, and debits and credits existed on paper only in a clearing system. Alves Gomes, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 16, 2014; Hans-Joachim Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz: Die Politik der DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien* (Berlin: Links, 1999), 232–9; Jochen Oppenheimer, “Mozambican Worker Migration to the Former German Democratic Republic: Serving Socialism and Struggling under Democracy,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 12 (2004): 164.
22. Tanja Müller also observed an adherence to a strong collectivity overwriting regional and ethnic differences in her book on the memories of former Mozambican school children in East Germany; see Tanja R. Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014).
23. For an overview of labor migration to East Germany from socialist countries around the globe, see Sandra Gruner-Domic, “Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration in der DDR: Die bilateralen Verträge zur Beschäftigung ausländischer Arbeiter (1961–1989),” *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 32 (1996): 204–30.
24. See, for instance, the special issue edited by Alena K. Alamgir, “Labor history, labor and labor migration in state socialism,” *Labor History* 59, no. 3 (2018): 271–76; Alena K. Alamgir and Christina Schwenkel “From socialist assistance to national self-interest: Vietnamese labor migration into CMEA countries” in *Alternative Globalizations. Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World*, James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 100–26; Hana Bortlová-Vondráková and Mónika Szente-Varga, “Labor Migration Programs Within the Socialist Bloc. Cuban Guestworkers in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia and Hungary,” *Labor History* 62, no.3 (2021): 297–315.
25. Alamgir and Schwenkel, “From socialist assistance,” 102–3.

26. To contextualize guest worker programs in Europe, see Dimitria Groutsis and Lina Venturas, “Guest Worker Schemes Yesterday and Today: Advantages and Liabilities,” in *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 110–17, and historically, see Cindy Hahamovitch, “Creating Perfect Immigrants: Guestworkers of the World in Historical Perspective,” *Labor History* 44, no. 1 (2003): 69–94. For an overview of labor and education induced mobility under socialist regimes see Alena Alamgir, “Mobility: Education and Labor” in *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization*, ed. James Mark et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 290–317. For an in-depth study of Italian guest workers in West Germany offering some parallels to the narrative under discussion here, see Hedwig Richter and Ralf Richter, *Die “Gastarbeiter-Welt:“ Leben zwischen Palermo und Wolfsburg* (Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012). Rita Chin offers an overview of labor migration to postwar West Germany, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
27. Dirk Jasper, “Ausländerbeschäftigung in der DDR,” in *Anderssein gab es nicht: Ausländer und Minderheiten in der DDR*, ed. Marianne Krüger-Potratz (Münster: Waxmann, 1991), 151–89; Damian Mac Con Uladh, “Die Alltagserfahrungen ausländischer Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR: Vietnamesen, Kubaner, Mozambikaner, Ungarn und Andere,” in *Erfolg in der Nische? Die Vietnamesen in der DDR und in Ostdeutschland*, ed. Karin Weiss and Mike Dennis (Münster: LIT, 2005), 51–68.
28. Marjam Schulz, “Migrationspolitik der DDR: Bilaterale Anwerbeverträge von Vertragsarbeitnehmern,” in *Transit | Transfer: Politik und Praxis der Einwanderung in der DDR 1945–1990*, ed. Kim Christian Priemel (Berlin: be.bra Wissenschaft Verlag, 2011), 154.
29. Schulz, “Migrationspolitik der DDR,” 155.
30. Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz*, 233–8.
31. Bettina Husemann and Annette Neumann, “DDR—VR Angola: Fakten und Zusammenhänge zur bildungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit von 1975–1989,” in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, ed. Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona Schleicher, Afrikanische Studien (Münster: Lit, 1994), 158–78.
32. Marcia C. Schenck, “Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan student migration during the Cold War, 1976–90” *Africa*, 89, no. 1 (2019): 158–9.
33. For the 1960s Soviet Union see Maxim Matusevich, “Expanding the Boundaries of the Black Atlantic: African Students as Soviet Moderns,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2012): 325–50. Constantin Kastakioris, “African

- Intellectuals and the Soviet Union: Internationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Négritude during the Years of Decolonization: 1954–1964,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 47 (2006): 15–32; Constantin Kastakioris, “Transferts Est-Sud. Échanges Éducatifs et Formation de Cadres Africains en Union Soviétique pendant les Années Soixante,” *Outre-mers* 94 (2007): 83–106; Constantin Kastakioris, “The Lumumba University in Moscow: Higher Education for a Soviet–Third World Alliance, 1960–1991,” *Journal of Global History* 14 (2019): 281–300; Constantin Kastakioris, “Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–1974: Anti-Colonialism, Education, and the Socialist Alliance,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no.1 (2021): 142–65.
34. Cited in Eric Angermann, “Agency and Its Limits: African Unionists as Africa’s ‘Vanguard’ at the FDGB College in Bernau,” in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton et al., eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021), 121.
  35. No. 259, interview by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 27, 2015; see also Marcia C. Schenck, “Constructing and Deconstructing the ‘Black East’—a helpful research agenda?” *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 34, no. 18 (2018): 134–52.
  36. Jennifer Coles and Christian Groes, eds., *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 5.
  37. See Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016) for an excellent explanation of approaches to the writing of global history. Jeremy Adelman has drawn our attention to some of the flaws of focusing on the global, Adelman, Jeremy. “What Is Global History Now?” *Aeon*, March 2, 2017. <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>, accessed September 5, 2019. For a reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of writing global labor history, see Marcel van der Linden, “The Promise and Challenge of Global Labor History,” in *Global Histories of Work*, ed. Andreas Eckert (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 25–48 and Andreas Eckert, “Why All the Fuss About Global Labour History?” in *Global Histories of Work*, ed. Andreas Eckert (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 3–22.
  38. For example, Oppenheimer, “Mozambican Worker Migration;” Jasper, “Ausländerbeschäftigung in der DDR;” Schulz, “Migrationspolitik der DDR;” Dennis Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat? Ausländische Vertragsarbeitskräfte in der DDR,” in *Fremde und Fremdsein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in*

- Ostdeutschland*, Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus, eds. (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 271–81.
39. See, for instance, the reference to the failed experiment in the title of Ulrich van der Heyden’s monograph on Mozambican contract workers in East Germany, Ulrich van der Heyden, *Das gescheiterte Experiment: Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik in der DDR-Wirtschaft (1979–1990)* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019).
  40. Of 15,100 Mozambican and 1300 Angolan worker-trainees who were registered in 1989 only 2800 Mozambicans and 200 Angolans were left in East Germany at the end of 1990; see Almuth Berger, “Annäherungen—Bericht der Ausländerbeauftragten des Landes Brandenburg,” (Potsdam: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Landes Brandenburg, 2006), 38; Andreas Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation,” ed. Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für die Belange der Ausländer (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996), 18.
  41. For an introduction to the literature on Eastern Europe, see Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, eds., *Post-Communist Nostalgia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 1–13; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), especially Ch. 6. An example of a contribution examining the tensions of forgetting and memory in Mozambique is M. Anne Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 76, no. 1 (2006): 88–112. The study of post-revolutionary memory is slowly expanding in Africa; see David Ratner, “Remembering the Revolutionary Past: The Post-Revolutionary Generation(s) of Ethiopia and Memory of the Revolutionary Period (Late 1960s–Late 1970s),” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines* 55, no. 2 (2021): 373–91.
  42. Mozambican and Angolan workers are discussed in Miguele, “Sobre o Mito.” For more on Angolan–East German relations see Luís Madureira, “‘Kalashnikovs, Not Coca-Cola, Bring Self-Determination to Angola.’ The Two Germanys, Lusophone Africa, and the Rhethoric of Colonial Difference,” in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Langbehn, Mohammad Salam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 275–93; Immanuel R. Harisch, “Handel und Solidarität: Die Beziehungen der DDR mit Angola und São Tomé und Príncipe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Austauschs ‘Ware-Gegen-Ware’ ca. 1975–1990” (MA, Vienna University, 2018); Paul Sprute, “Diaries of Solidarity in the Global Cold War: The East German Friendship Brigades and their Experience in ‘Modernizing’ Angola,” in

- Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton et al., eds. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 293–318.
43. *Verloren im Bruderland—Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR*, ZDF, 45 min, Jan. 17, 2021, TV documentary; Kim Christian Priemel, ed. *Transit | Transfer: Politik und Praxis der Einwanderung in der DDR 1945–1990* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2011).
  44. Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel, eds. *Ostalgie International: Erinnerungen an die DDR von Nicaragua bis Vietnam* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2010).
  45. Alena K. Alamgir, “Socialist Internationalism at Work: Changes in the Czechoslovak-Vietnamese Labor Exchange Program, 1967–1989” (Rutgers University, 2014); Bortlová-Vondráková, Szente-Varga, “Labor Migration Programs.”
  46. James Mark et al., eds., *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 9.
  47. Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, for instance, has examined the political economy of what he calls “red globalization,” highlighting Soviet responses to trade initiatives from the global South in the 1950s and 1960s, *Red Globalization. The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Krushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Johanna Bockman has engaged with what she refers to as “socialist globalization,” seeing it as an alternative political project to “capitalist neocolonialism” in her work about the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in negotiating the parameters of the mooted New International Economic Order, “Socialist Globalization against Capitalist Neocolonialism: The Economic Ideas behind the New International Economic Order,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development* (2015): 6. The depiction of state socialist Europe transformed significantly: previously depicted as absent from or a victim of (Western) capitalist globalization, it is now recognized as a co-producer of globalization, or as an instigator of alternative globalization(s), James Mark and Tobias Rupprecht, “The Socialist World in Global History: From Absentee to Victim to Co-Producer,” in *The Practice of Global History: European Perspectives*, ed. Matthias Middell (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 81–115.
  48. Anna Calori, et al., “Alternative Globalization? Spaces and Economic Interactions between the ‘Socialist Camp’ and the ‘Global South,’” in *Between East and South: Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, Anna Calori et al., eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 9.



49. Recent scholarship, produced mainly by historians of East Central Europe and the Soviet Union, has discussed relations between the “Second World” and the “Third World” using terms such as “internationalism,” “red globalization,” and “Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World.” Westad, *The Global Cold War*; Maxim Matusevich, ed., *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007); David C. Engerman, “The Second World’s Third World,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12 (2011): 183–211; Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization*; Tobias Rupperecht, *Soviet Internationalism After Stalin: Interaction and Exchange Between the USSR and Latin America During the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Matthias Middell, “Weltgeschichte DDR. Die DDR in globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive,” in *Die DDR als Chance: Neue Perspektiven auf ein altes Thema*, ed. Ulrich Mähler (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2016), 149–56; Matthias Middell, “Auf dem Weg zu einer transregionalen Geschichte des Kommunismus,” in *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung: Kommunismus jenseits des Eurozentrismus*, ed. Matthias Middell (Berlin: Metropol, 2019), 1–14; Philip E. Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva, eds., *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, eds., *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).
50. Thinking about the East from the perspective of African sojourners opens up new vistas that start with African actors; see also my argument about the “Black East” constituting a geographic entity with blurry borders as much as a political and social entity in Marcia C. Schenck, “Constructing and Deconstructing the ‘Black East’—a Helpful Research Agenda: Research Note,” *Stichproben Vienna Journal of African Studies* 34 (2018): 136.
51. We should not think of the Eastern Bloc as a monolithic actor, but rather as an experiment with inter- and transnational dimensions; see Steffi Marung, Uwe Müller, and Stefan Troebst, “Monolith or Experiment? The Bloc as a Spatial Format,” in *Spatial Formats under the Global Condition*, ed. Matthias Middell and Steffi Marung (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 275–309.
52. Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, “Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa,” *Radical History Review* 131 (2018): 177.
53. *Ibid.*, 178.

54. Ulrich van der Heyden, Ilona Schleicher, and Hans-Georg Schleicher, eds., *Die DDR und Afrika: Zwischen Klassenkampf und neuem Denken* (Münster: Lit, 1993); Ulrich van der Heyden, Ilona Schleicher, and Hans-Georg Schleicher, eds., *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II* (Münster: Lit, 1994); Jude Howell, "The End of an Era: The Rise and Fall of G.D.R. Aid," in *Journal of Modern African Studies* 32 (1994): 305–28; Schulz, *Development Policy*; Ulf Engel and Hans-Georg Schleicher, *Die beiden deutschen Staaten in Afrika: Zwischen Konkurrenz und Koexistenz, 1949–1990* (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1998); Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz*; Ulrich van der Heyden and Franziska Benger, eds., *Kalter Krieg in Ostafrika: Die Beziehungen der DDR zu Sansibar und Tansania* (Berlin: Lit, 2009). One of the few studies based on African archival materials is Haile G. Dagne, *Das entwicklungspolitische Engagement der DDR in Äthiopien: Eine Studie auf der Basis äthiopischer Quellen* (Münster: Lit, 2004).
55. Toni Weis, "The Politics Machine: On the Concept of 'Solidarity' in East German Support for SWAPO," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37 (2011): 351–67; Hubertus Büschel, *Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe: Deutsche Entwicklungsarbeit in Afrika 1960–1975* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014); Young-Sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Quinn Slobodian, ed., *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015).
56. Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel Harisch, and Marcia C. Schenck, eds. *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany During the Cold War*, *Africa in Global History* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021).
57. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa," *Social Identity* 7, no.2 (2001): 272.
58. Eric Burton, "Hubs of Decolonization: African liberation movements and Eastern connections in Cairo, Accra and Dar es Salaam" in *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War "East": Transnational Activism 1960–1990*, Lena Dallywater, Helder A. Fonseca, and Chris Saunders, eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 25–56.
59. At the same time, African students also made their way via various paths directly to the "West." Some of these pathways for African students to study in the West, paradoxically led them via placements in the "East"; see Eric Burton "Decolonization, the Cold War, and Africans' routes to higher education overseas, 1957–1965" *Journal of Global History* 15, no. 1 (2020): 169–91.
60. See, for instance, the special issues edited by Eric Burton, *Journeys of Education and Struggle: African Mobility in Times of Decolonization and*

- the Cold War*, Special Issue (34: Stichproben 2018); Sara Pugach, “African Students and the Politics of Race and Gender in the German Democratic Republic, 1957–1990,” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 131–56; Eric Burton, “Navigating global socialism: Tanzanian students in and beyond East Germany,” *Cold War History* 19, no.1 (2019): 63–83; Eric Burton, “African Manpower Development During the Global Cold War: The Case of Tanzanian Students in the Two German States,” in *African Research in Austria. Approaches and Perspectives*, Andreas Exenberger and Ulrich Pallua, eds. (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2016); Marcia C. Schenck, “Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan student migration during the Cold War, 1976–1989” *Africa* 89, no.1 (2019): 144–66; Marcia C. Schenck, “Small Strangers at the School of Friendship: Memories of Mozambican School Students to the German Democratic Republic,” *Bulletin of the GHI* 15 (2020): 41–59; Immanuel R. Harisch, “‘Mit Gewerkschaftlichem Gruß!’ Afrikanische Gewerkschafterinnen an der FDGB-Gewerkschaftshochschule Fritz Heckert in Bernau bei Berlin,” *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 34 (2018): 77–109.
61. James Mark, Quinn Slobodian, “Eastern Europe,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 15.
  62. See, for instance, Schenck, “Negotiating the German Democratic Republic”; Tanja R. Müller, “‘Samora’s Children’—the Celebration of (Post-) Socialist Citizenship in Mozambique,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 55, no. 2 (2021): 287–305; Constantin Katsakioris, “Return from the USSR: Soviet-Educated Africans, Politics and Work, 1960s–2000s,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines* 55, no.2 (2021), 267–86; Daniel Branch, “‘Political Traffic: Kenyan Students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958–1969,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no.4 (2018): 811–31.
  63. Warsaw Pact governments claimed that they had overcome racism, which they located elsewhere, either in the “West” and/or, in the case of East Germany, in the imperial and Nazi past. These governments, however, did not reject the idea of race outright, but rather made political use of a racial rainbow to emphasize equality between physiologically and folklorically distinct peoples and render visible the themes of international solidarity, a phenomenon that Quinn Slobodian aptly termed “socialist chromatism”; see Quinn Slobodian, “Socialist Chromatism: Race, Racism and the Racial Rainbow in East Germany,” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 24.

64. Andreas Eckert shows some of the ways in which German and African history “overlapped at various levels and influenced each other,” a history marked by “violence, racism, and hierarchies”; see “Germany and Africa in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: An Entangled History?” in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds. (New York; Oxford: Berghan Books, 2009), 240. Sebastian Conrad, in the same volume, highlights the importance of studying German history in transnational perspective, not least to reappraise its colonial past, Sebastian Conrad, “Double Marginalization: A Plea for a Transnational Perspective on German History,” in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds. (New York; Oxford: Berghan Books, 2009), 52–76.
65. Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move: New Approaches toward a History of Migrant Knowledge,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43 (2017), 313–46.
66. Alf Lüdtke, ed. *The History of Everyday Life* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Paul Steege, Andrew Stuart Bergson, Maureen Healy, and Pamela E. Swett, “The History of Everyday Life: A Second Chapter,” *Journal of Modern History* 80 (2008): 358–78.
67. Glossary, in Alf Lüdtke, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 313–14.
68. Some historians of Africa have moved beyond resistance in telling African social history; see, for instance, Eric Allina-Pisano, “Resistance and the Social History of Africa,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 187–98.
69. Lynn M. Thomas, “Historicizing agency,” *Gender & History* 28, no.2 (2016): 335.
70. Joao Paulo Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes,” *Kronos* 39 (2013): 20–31.
71. My use of “collective biography” departs from that of other scholars for whom it is a process of collectively writing, performing, and interpreting one another’s’ biographies; see Marina Gonick, Susan Walsh, and Marion Brown, “Collective Biography and the Question of Difference,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 17 (2011): 741–9; Susanne Gannon, Susan Walsh, Michele Byers, and Mythili Rajiva, “Deterritorializing Collective Biography,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27 (2014): 181–95.
72. According to Colin Darch and David Hedges, the phrase ‘do Rovuma ao Maputo’ was a characteristic rhetoric device in Machel’s public speeches

- that “summarized and encapsulated the idea of national unity as an overriding political virtue in post-independence Mozambique.” Colin Darch and David Hedges, “Political Rhetoric in the Transition to Mozambican Independence: Samora Machel in Beira, June 1975,” *Kronos* 39, no. 1 (2013): 37.
73. AEX-TAA is an abbreviation of Associação dos Ex-Trabalhadores Angolanos da Extinta RDA, the Association of former Angolan workers in the extinct GDR.
  74. Associação dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos na Alemanha, the Association of Mozambican Former Workers in Germany.
  75. In addition, I administered a questionnaire to gain more data points than I could in individual interviews—this had the side effect of refreshing people’s memories and often increasing an interest in the research, engendering a willingness to talk. A lack of glasses impeded quite a few workers from filling out the form without help.
  76. The Angolan workers were able to claim a monthly pension of about US \$450 as of 2015. Each of the 1600 registered former workers should have received a total of about US \$26,000 in compensation regardless of their time in service. No such retirement support is forthcoming in Mozambique. I discuss this in more depth in Chap. 6.
  77. I am staying involved through consulting for exhibitions on the topic of foreign workers in the GDR, remaining a point of contact for *reencontro familiar*, and supporting a transnational movement that seeks to re-open debates about compensation payments for Mozambican workers in Germany, which I mention in Chap. 6.
  78. I am working toward finding ways to make the book available in Portuguese and German.
  79. For a discussion on the outsider–insider continuum, see Alan Wieder, “Testimony as Oral History: Lessons from South Africa,” *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 6 (2004): 24.
  80. For the idea of interviews as a three-way conversation, see David Mould, “Interviewing” in *Catching Stories: A practical Guide to Oral History*, Donna DeBlasio et al., eds. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 88, 90f.
  81. Lynn Abrahams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 54, 69f.
  82. Jan Vansina, “Oral Tradition and Its Methodology,” in *General History of Africa I: Methodology and African Prehistory*, ed. K. Ki-Zerbo (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1981): 154; “Memory and Oral Tradition,” in *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History*, ed. Joseph Calder Miller (Hamden CT: Flokestone, Dawson, 1980), 263–4.

83. Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 4–6.
84. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Oxford: James Currey, 1992), 73.
85. Vail and White, *Power and the Praise Poem*, 247.
86. Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 2.
87. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 22.
88. *Ibid.*, 78–9.
89. Books written by former Mozambican workers are Fernando Pedro, *Magermanes na RDA vida cotidiana* (Maputo: Ndjiura, 2003); and Ibraimo Alberto and Daniel Bachmann, *Ich wollte leben, wie die Götter: Was in Deutschland aus meinen afrikanischen Träumen wurde* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2014). East German authors such as Landolf Scherzer and Ursula Püschel wrote about their impressions in Mozambique and of Mozambican migrants in East Germany; see Landolf Scherzer, *Bom Dia, weißer Bruder: Erlebnisse am Sambesi* (Pößneck: Greifenverlag zu Rudolstadt, 1984), *Die Fremden: Unerwünschte Begegnungen und verbotene Protokolle* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2002); Ursula Püschel, *Der Schlangenbaum: Eine Reise nach Moçambique* (Halle, Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1984).
90. Van der Heyden, *Das gescheiterte Experiment*, is based on the archives of the East German secret police and the federal archive, and Eric Allina at Ottawa University is working on a book about Mozambican laborers based on East German company archives.
91. I consulted the following archives: In Germany: BStU, Bundesarchiv, PAAA. In Angola: ANA, Biblioteca Nacional, Biblioteca Central, MPLA, Ministério das Relações Exteriores, Ministério da Administração Pública, Trabalho e Segurança Social. In Mozambique: AHM, AIM, Biblioteca do Rádio Mozambique, INAC, Ministério de Negócios de Estrangeiros, Ministério de Trabalho, Biblioteca Estudos Africanos da UEM, Biblioteca Central da UEM, Biblioteca do Banco de Mozambique, Biblioteca Nacional, Biblioteca da Assembleia da República, Biblioteca do Ministério de Planificação e Desenvolvimento, Biblioteca do Ministério de Educação. In South Africa, the archives of the Department of International Affairs, DIRCO. In Portugal: Arquivo Histórico Diplomático, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.
92. Coffee table books include, Bourquin, *Madgermany* and Malte Wandel, *Einheit, Arbeit, Wachsamkeit*. The graphic novel I am referring to is Birgit Weyhe, *Madgermanes* (Berlin: Avant Verlag, 2016). Exhibitions include

- Jens Vilela Neumann, *Identidade um Romance Danado*. Tamara Hentschel and Susanne Harmsen, “Bruderland ist abgebrannt: Katalog zur Ausstellung zur Geschichte der Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR: Erst willkommen...dann abgeschoben” (Reistrommel e.V., 2008). Documentaries include Malte Wandel, “Madgermanes” (Germany, 2014); “Madgermanes—Die DDR in Mosambik” (Germany, 2015); Jason Byrne, “Base Camp Germany” (2014); Marcia Cathérine Schenck and Jack Davis, “Republic of the Mind,” in *Cosmopolitan Wild*, ed. Jack Davis (2015); *Adeus RDA*, Lício Azevedo (Maputo Ébano Multimédia, 1992).
93. Luise White and Miles Larmer, “Introduction: Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40 (2014): 1272.
  94. Jean Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Post-Colonial History-Writing,” *American Historical Review* 118, no.1 (2013): 126. See also Luise White, “Hodgepodge Historiography: Documents, Itineraries, and the Absence of Archives,” *History in Africa* 42 (2015): 309–18; Kate Skinner, “West Africa’s First Coup: Neo-Colonial and Pan-African Projects in Togo’s ‘Shadow Archives,’” *African Studies Review* 63, no. 2 (2020): 375–98.
  95. Given that East Germany ceased to exist as a country, its archives have been open since the early 1990s, a windfall for historians.
  96. Nana Osei-Opare, “‘If you trouble a hungry snake, you will force it to bite you’: rethinking postcolonial African archival pessimism, worker discontent, and petition writing in Ghana, 1957–1966,” *The Journal of African History* 62, no.1 (2021): 63–4.
  97. Nana Osei-Opare, “Uneasy Comrades: Postcolonial Statecraft, Race, and Citizenship, Ghana–Soviet Relations, 1957–1966,” *Journal of West African History* 5, no. 2 (2019): 87.
  98. Bendito Machava and Euclides Gonçalves, “The Dead Archive: governance and institutional memory in independent Mozambique,” *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 91, no. 4 (2021): 555.
  99. Achille Mbembe, “The power of the archive and its limits,” in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dodrecht: Kluwer, 2002): 23.
  100. The Angolan archive about the labor migration might or might not exist; the Mozambican archive was created at the labor ministry during my research time but barred from access by researchers.
  101. Moses E. Ochonou, “Elusive History: Fractured Archives, Political Orality, and Sensing the Postcolonial Past,” *History in Africa*, 42 (2015): 290.
  102. Paul Richard Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 34.

103. In getting to know the interviewee a whole library opens up. The challenge remains how to access relevant information. The most common advice is not to ask leading questions but, as Allesandro Portelli discusses, holding back too much of one's intentions may lead to biased data based on the interviewees' assumptions about the researcher; see Alessandro Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 31.
104. Mia Couto, "Retratos de vidas, Retratos de Moçambique," in Ulf Dieter Klemm, *Moçambique—Alemanha, Ida e Volta: Vivências dos Moçambicanos Antes, Durante e Depois de Estadia na Alemanha* (Maputo: Instituto Cultural Mocambique—Alemanha (ICMA), 2005), 25.
105. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1958), 50.
106. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1989) cited in Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press University of Copenhagen, 2002), 12.
107. For a discussion of African voices and their limits see Louise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen "Introduction: Voices, Words, and African History," in *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 2001), 3–10.
108. White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 312.

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## CHAPTER 3

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# Between the Hammer, Machete, and Kalashnikov: Labor Migration from Angola and Mozambique to East Germany 1979–1990

### INTRODUCTION

Today we look with pride to our hoes, our scythes, our hammers, our books, our shotguns. We cherish our ploughs, our machines, our weapons. We pick up our weapons with strength and determination, these decisive weapons in our fight for the construction of socialism; the socialism that means definite abandonment of misery, ignorance, and superstition and all the evils of society. These are the weapons of all the workers in the world, with whom we are united and stand in solidarity in the same trenches, in the same fight against exploitation.<sup>1</sup>

Mozambican president Samora Machel saw workers, soldiers, and peasants as the bearers of socialist progress. In 1979, when he made the above speech, the first Mozambican worker-trainees were sent to East Germany.<sup>2</sup> In common with many socialist-inspired postcolonial leaders, Machel

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M. C. Schenck, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World*, Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06776-1\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06776-1_3)

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declared that the working class was central to Mozambique's advancement. His vanguard party cadres were to be drawn from among the most able workers.<sup>3</sup> His was the way of thinking that defined the state-driven ambitious labor and training migration schemes that linked Mozambique and Angola to East Germany. However, the migration schemes were not only a political and economic project. This was how they were conceived, but they also had multifaceted impacts on individual human lives which were far more profound than state-level ideological goals. People used the schemes to further their dreams and desires. They also were deeply disappointed on being confronted with the ruins of a dream after the collapse of international socialism, a decade after the start of the program.

This chapter is divided into two parts, which mirror the dual nature of the scheme's motivations. The first half provides the political and economic background of the labor and training programs that brought Angolan and Mozambican migrants to East Germany and explains their workings and objectives. The focus will mainly be on the Mozambican scheme, as it came first, was bigger, is better documented, and is more illustrative of the development of socialist migration programs thanks to its longer time frame. First, we will briefly explore the historical background to the migrations in the book: a long history of southern Africans migrating abroad for work in schemes surprisingly similar to the East German one. Second, we move from that historical background nearer to the present and look at the context of Cold War labor migration programs. Lastly, we examine the economic and geopolitical context, and why it was that Angola and Mozambique chose East Germany as a partner (and vice versa).

The second part of the chapter departs from the well-trodden path of geopolitical analysis and zooms in on the people who made the migrations. It draws on my interviews with migrants to examine their complex reasoning for signing up for the labor migration. I have tried to take up the challenge laid down by the renowned historian of Africa, Frederick Cooper, "to look at different modes of thinking, speaking, and acting as a worker, patterns shaped not by statically conceived 'cultures' but by history, by layers of experience and memory." The idea of the second half of this chapter, and the task that nobody else has taken up in depth before, is to discuss, from the migrants' perspective, the migrants' own experience of migration to East Germany.<sup>4</sup> The accounts reveal to us things utterly unencompassed by the state- and institution-level analysis of the first half of the chapter: emotions, dreams, intuition. This greatly enriches the

analysis by opening up the inner life of socialist labor migration.<sup>5</sup> Exploring migrants' multiple, overlapping, and fluid motives, as we do here, challenges prevailing concepts of socialist migrants as passive participants, as well as stagnant definitions of labor migration.

In far too much of the academic literature on labor migrations to East Germany, young people appear on German soil from faraway places as if out of nowhere, and the analysis is concerned only with their stay in Europe.<sup>6</sup> This is a criticism that I could also make of the study of migration as a whole. Although the last few decades have seen an improvement in this situation, a remarkable amount of migration discourse remains astonishingly incurious about migrants. I firmly believe that the migrants' point of view is the most important part of any migration. Indeed, I think that it is a peculiar outcome of the development of historiography that institutional-level studies, focusing on archival sources, have become the default way of looking at historical events which affected participants' lives far more deeply than they affected the institutions which catalogued them and then shoved their files onto dusty shelves. The case of Mozambicans traveling to East Germany has not been comprehensively and historically examined from the migrants' point of view.<sup>7</sup> The history of the Angolan labor migration regime is yet to be written at all, let alone studied from its participants' perspective. Consequently, this chapter brings together disparate strands of labor history, socialist education history, migration and refugee history, and affective history. It shows for the first time how state and individual agency intersected to form unique trajectories for migrants.

## PART I: STARTING POINTS—THE LABOR MIGRATION PROGRAMS

### *Historical Continuities: African Labor Exports*

Africa is, and has always been, a global continent. Frederick Cooper reminds us “how much Africa has been shaped by its connections to the rest of the world and how much the world as we know it has been shaped by the labor of Africans.”<sup>8</sup> A key theme in the African history of global connection, especially in the last 500 years, is of Africa as a source of cheap labor. Instances of this include the obvious example of slavery, whether that be trans-Saharan, transatlantic, or trans-Indian Ocean. Other cases

are of Africans serving as soldiers in colonial armies or, more recently, as migrants to wealthier countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.<sup>9</sup> The nexus between migration, labor (often forced or exploitative), and Africa in the world therefore has a long history.<sup>10</sup>

One such node, Mozambican migration to South African mines, formed an important historical antecedent to the labor migration explored in this book.<sup>11</sup> Like many of the people from southern Mozambique who were interviewed for this book, president Samora Machel's family had direct experience with labor migration to the South African mines. His father had brought back enough capital for a small family farm. Machel also lost a brother to the mines. These contradictory experiences made Machel, like many other Mozambicans, acutely aware of the possibilities, but also the pitfalls, of labor migration.<sup>12</sup>

Jochen Oppenheimer and Hans-Joachim Döring have separately concluded that Mozambican labor migration to East Germany was conceptualized from the Mozambican side as a substitute for the dwindling employment of miners in South Africa, starting in the late 1970s.<sup>13</sup> There are several reasons sustaining this argument. Firstly, South Africa canceled the migrant labor program which it maintained also to help prop up the Portuguese colonial state. South Africa did not want to see the gains go to the newly independent Mozambican state. Mozambique's earnings from migration to South Africa dropped from between \$150 and \$175 million in 1975 to less than \$15 million in 1978.<sup>14</sup> Migrant workers and their families subsequently suffered significant financial losses. Sending workers to East Germany was a possibility to provide work and access to remittances to a new generation in a labor market which did not provide anywhere near enough work for everyone. Secondly, the migration programs to South Africa and to East Germany were organized through what Oppenheimer refers to as a "paternalistic legal and institutional framework."<sup>15</sup> Neither of the two migrations were driven on an individual basis but took place within state-organized structures. These structures determined who would migrate, where they would go, what work they would perform and for how long, and under what conditions. Thirdly, some similarities regarding the social and working conditions persisted. In both cases, mostly single young men migrated for pre-determined contract lengths on a rotational basis. There was little intention for workers to integrate in the host country. Miners in South Africa were housed in ethnically separated compounds while workers in East Germany lived in

company-owned dormitories, separated by nationality. Working conditions could be harsh in both circumstances, especially as the numbers of Mozambican and other foreign workers in Germany grew substantially toward the late 1980s, and the quality of the training began to deteriorate. A comparison of the South African and the East German migrant labor regimes with Mozambique reveals important continuities. Both groups of labor migrants marked the areas from which they came and to which they returned through the remittances they brought; both migratory experiences were shaped by a transition from youth to adulthood, by separate housing in dormitories, and by the key role that local women played in the workers' incorporation (or non-integration) into local communities.

Crucially, the governments profited from both labor migration schemes by selling the labor power of Mozambican workers abroad. The Mozambican-South African contract labor regime contributed significantly to the Portuguese government's ability to finance their colony and was marked by exploitative working conditions and deferred pay.<sup>16</sup> In the post-independence labor schemes, using labor power to finance both the East German and Mozambican economies and workers' exposure to exploitative conditions remained important characteristics. However, the "flow" of money changed: the Mozambicans were obliged to "send home" between 25 and 60 percent of their salaries. This, however, was a fiction, as what in fact happened was that this "remitted" money was simply money that East Germany did not pay. The Mozambican government promised to pay the deferred wages from its own pocket on the workers' return. Thus, Germany was the beneficiary of labor which it had to pay substantially less than it had to pay German workers. The surplus the Germans made from the scheme partly offset Mozambique's trade deficit with East Germany, which could not be settled in cash as the countries operated a barter system.<sup>17</sup> However, a majority of the workers did not receive from the Mozambican government the deferred pay they were expecting. In the years after 1990 workers engaged—and continue to engage—in a variety of protests seeking full salary payments and repayment of social security deductions.<sup>18</sup>

There were similarities between the South African and East German migrations, but there were also fundamental differences. The regional labor migration to South Africa was a product of colonial rule and a bargain struck between South Africa's white minority regime and colonial Portugal to help buttress white dominance in the region. The workers'

professional or personal growth was of no concern. The East German labor program was designed by the independent FRELIMO government, seeking to build a socialist nation state with the help of a northern socialist “brother state” that had already supported them during the independence struggle. In the words of Samora Machel, Mozambique’s industrialization was the “historic duty of the working class” and “production a militant act” during the “fight for economic independence.”<sup>19</sup> He prioritized education and defended “unity, discipline and organization” as key principles for Mozambican workers.<sup>20</sup> The post-independence state continued the tradition of sending workers to improve their lives through work. However, in contrast to previous migrations, not only did the young migrants sign up voluntarily, but many also believed in the double mission of personal education abroad and serving the socialist revolution on the factory floor. They took pride not only in the work they were doing but also in doing their bit to help bring economic development to the newly independent state. To that end, candidates signed up from all over the country and from across ethnic groups and social classes.<sup>21</sup> This enthusiasm for the training of a socialist vanguard labor force was an expression of its time, determined by the global confluence of the Cold War, decolonization, and development.

### *Angolan and Mozambican Labor and Training Migration in the Cold War*

Comparing the Angolan, East German, and Mozambican flags, one is immediately struck by the emphasis on peasants and workers. Of course, this iconography was (and is) typical for socialist nations. The Angolan flag features an emblem of half a yellow gearwheel, crossed by a machete, and embracing a star (adopted in 1975). The East German flag showcased a hammer and compass surrounded by rye (1959–1990). The Mozambican flag has a yellow star, superimposed by a triangle which is composed of an AK-47 and a hoe over an open book (since 1983). The triangle represents the war of liberation: armed struggle, tilling the land, and education.<sup>22</sup> The two African flags highlight the military struggle for independence and hint at the role of socialism, industrial production, and education in Angola’s and Mozambique’s aspired futures. East Germany supported both Angolan and Mozambican freedom fighters and was among the first countries to formalize relations after independence. FRELIMO and the MPLA had received East German support since the early 1960s.<sup>23</sup> In

1977, East Germany declared Angola and Mozambique to be priority trade partners. Comprehensive economic, technical, and educational cooperation ensued.<sup>24</sup> But these plans remained preliminary and turned out to be somewhat detached from reality. This was in large part because both Angola and Mozambique suffered from decades of civil wars after independence. Aside from the dire humanitarian consequences that wars inflict, the newly independent countries were also inhibited from developing an adequate education system, infrastructure, or functioning labor market. For obvious reasons, this impeded the industrialization which the independence leaders, schooled in socialist development thought, considered essential for Angola's and Mozambique's entry into the world of modern and successful states.

The schemes recounted in this book were an important part of the solution to these challenges. In part, labor migration to East Germany—which, in addition to Eastern Europeans also included migrants from Algeria, Angola, China, Cuba, Korea, Mozambique, and Vietnam—was justified through emphasizing vocational training. Whereas the “capitalist West,” especially West Germany's guest worker program, was said to exploit labor, East Germany emphasized the human capital development nature of its temporary labor programs.<sup>25</sup> Their purpose was to create a professionally skilled and consciously socialist vanguard workforce.<sup>26</sup> As part of the international proletariat, the workers from around the socialist world were expected to return to their home countries to aid industrialization and spread socialist revolution.<sup>27</sup> This goal did not preclude East Germany from profiting from their labor power in the meantime.<sup>28</sup> Governments negotiated bilateral agreements of mutual advantage in the name of proletarian internationalism and solidarity. The agreements that governed the temporary employment and training of Angolan (1985–1990) and Mozambican (1979–1990) workers in East German companies were, therefore, part of a broader context of socialist development policies.<sup>29</sup>

The confluence of decolonization, the Cold War, and a new emphasis on progress through development opened new migration routes to many Africans, among them university students, school children, trade unionists, vocational trainees, party cadres, government personnel, journalists, soldiers, political exiles, refugees, freedom fighters, and contract workers. These migration paths connected independent African nations with each other, and extended along socialist axes to what is commonly described as the “Eastern Bloc,” to Asia, and to Central America. Gone was the time when the majority of internationally mobile Africans migrated to the

colonial metropole.<sup>30</sup> International socialist travel and migration reveal an alternative narrative to the more usual conception of socialist societies as static and insular.<sup>31</sup> New forms of South–North mobility emerged during a period when confidence was high in the possibility of building a socialist development alternative in the South. On-the-job training programs came into existence as an expression of solidarity with newly independent states which needed to increase their population of skilled workers. The state remained central to socialist labor migrations, be they from Angola and Mozambique to East Germany or from Vietnam to East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union, or from Cuba to East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The central control and the training aspect therefore rendered the socialist migration programs distinct from Western guest worker programs.<sup>32</sup>

The literature on bilateral and transcontinental labor regimes within the socialist world is slim compared to that dealing with labor mobility in the twentieth century in general. Most of what has been written, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, highlights the exploitative nature of the programs.<sup>33</sup> This was indeed an important aspect of the programs and, as highlighted above, there were many continuities between colonial and post-colonial labor migration programs. However, it is also important to discuss these programs in the framework of a history of development that identified knowledge and technology transfers as central tools with which to support anti-colonial struggles, and the socialist cause generally. Across much of the socialist world socialism and anti-colonialism were seen as almost synonymous, at least on a rhetorical level. The rhetorical emphasis on training cannot simply be ignored as propaganda, as the programs did indeed initially try to train their participants.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the extent and quality of actual training provided became a bone of contention. Mozambique admonished the State Secretariat for Work and Wages of the GDR that it did not do enough to check the quality of the training provided, as in many cases the fulfillment of the production quota seemed to trump the fulfillment of worker qualification. In light of that, the Mozambican government insisted on a thorough job training along with the amelioration of living arrangements for their workers. Groups of foreign workers continued to insist on the same, and work stoppages occurred occasionally.<sup>35</sup> The training aspect also remains, as we will see, at the heart of how those who migrated understood and recounted the program.

Socialist labor programs were not static but changed their emphasis over time. At the start there was greater emphasis on socialist solidarity,



while later political and national expediency became more visible. Three phases are distinguishable. In the first phase, mainly African students and small groups of vocational apprentices migrated to the Eastern Bloc.<sup>36</sup> This stage started in the 1950s and continued into the 1970s. The second phase of socialist labor migrations saw greater numbers of people move and a balance struck between training and work. Starting as migration from Eastern to Central Europe, these labor training programs gained momentum just as guest worker programs in Western Europe slowed down, starting in the mid-1970s.<sup>37</sup> It was this juncture at which the Mozambican program was born. Sometimes, as in the case of East Germany and Mozambique, the receiving country, East Germany, was at first reluctant to enter into the labor agreement because of the costs of training.<sup>38</sup> Economies worldwide were struggling with the consequences of the 1973 oil crisis. Within these programs, migrants were both trainees and workers, which is why I often refer to them as worker-trainees. Foreign workers in East Germany were referred to as *ausländische Werktätige*. *Werktätige* was an East German socialist term denoting those involved in productive labor. As discussed above, Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees are not to be confused with apprentices who came in the context of education aid, a central aspect of East German development strategy.<sup>39</sup> In addition, East Germany also trained skilled workers in other programs, such as the education and vocational training of 900 Mozambican children who attended the Friendship School in Staßfurt between 1982 and 1988.<sup>40</sup>

The third phase began in the 1980s, the decade during which the Angolan contract was signed, and so-called mutual assistance became the guiding principle. The economic interests of the receiving country began to play an increasing role in determining both the number of recruits and the placement of worker-trainees, and training increasingly took a backseat to work. Some members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), among them Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Soviet Union, made use of foreign labor to increase their productivity and alleviate their rising labor shortages. The purpose of employing foreign labor increasingly became the extraction of surplus value, more akin to Western European guest worker programs after the Second World War.<sup>41</sup> The 1980s saw both Comecon countries and the global South facing debt crises. Civil wars raged in some of the countries involved in the labor migration programs, for instance in Angola and Mozambique, where they also played out as proxy wars in a Cold War

setting. Consequently, arrangements without foreign currency were more attractive as everybody was short of cash that would be accepted by other countries. Similarly, an increase in the numbers of workers doubly aided the ailing northern economies. Firstly, they could take advantage of cheap, imported labor power, and secondly, it had the potential to function as a form of payment for outstanding debt from their poorer socialist partners.<sup>42</sup>

Much of the differentiation between socialist migration and migration to capitalist countries is to be understood in the context of Cold War international competition. However, while the Cold War is important for this story, the story is not really about the Cold War. The Cold War is central to understanding why the MPLA and FRELIMO were interested in an alliance with the Eastern Bloc, and their subsequent choice to follow the socialist development path. In addition to this, the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars were also hot proxy wars in the Cold War super-power competition.<sup>43</sup> However, despite this context of war, Cold and hot, this story is about training, labor, and migration—not war.

### *From Luanda and Maputo to Berlin: Transcontinental Labor and Training Migration*

In February 1979, Erich Honecker, General Secretary of East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED) and Chairman of the State Council, visited Maputo to sign a treaty of friendship and a series of trade agreements. Next, the delegation proceeded to Angola where Honecker and the Angolan president, António Agostinho Neto, signed an equally comprehensive treaty of friendship.<sup>44</sup> These visits were grand affairs, with the national press covering every step of the state leaders to emphasize the historical importance of this trip and the brotherly relations between the states. Bilateral joint commissions, which met alternately in Maputo, Luanda, and Berlin, subsequently worked out the details of cooperation between the states.<sup>45</sup>

An agreement regulating temporary Mozambican labor training migration to East Germany was signed on February 24, 1979, during Honecker's Maputo visit by Günter Mittag as secretary of the Central Committee for the Economy and Marcelino dos Santos as Minister for Planning and Development.<sup>46</sup> The Angolan version was signed six years later, on March 29, 1985. The labor migration accords were part of a series of similar agreements which the East German government negotiated with several socialist states, from Vietnam to Cuba. They did not vastly differ from one

another. State planners envisioned ambitious economic, political, and cultural programs which served the interests of all partners. The objective was to train the future working-class vanguard in Mozambique and Angola. The trainees were to be employed in industries common to both nations, such as mining, agriculture, or the textile industry.<sup>47</sup> The programs intended both to build up the human resources required for Angolan and Mozambican industrial development and to help with the East German need for labor, raw materials, and increased productivity.<sup>48</sup> Workers were spread across industries, but especially employed in light and heavy industry. Table 3.1 draws on the years 1979 to 1989—essentially the life of the scheme. It illustrates the distribution of worker-trainees.

In total, about 21,000 contracts were signed with Mozambicans and at most with 2500 Angolans up until 1989.<sup>49</sup> The agreements governing the labor programs were then suspended during the process of German reunification.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 3.1** Mozambican workers by industrial sector in the East German economy

<i>Economic sector/industry</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of seconded workers</i>
Light industry	33.53
Electrical engineering	1.98
Chemical industry	7.36
Agriculture	4.65
Civil construction	2.96
Geology and mining industry	6.87
Transport sector	6.07
Heavy industry	15.60
Interpreters	0.48
Other	17.91

Aníbal Fernando Lucas, “Mão-de-obra Moçambicana emigrante na ex. República Democrática Alemã, 1979–1990” (Licenciatura thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2002), Annex 3, Table 1 and Table without number titled *Mapa de controle dos jovens enviados a RDA 1979 a 1989*. This does not account for 100 percent of the workers. A former contract worker himself and now working at the Mozambican labor ministry, Aníbal Fernando Lucas’s history thesis gives an overview of the migration and reintegration of Mozambican labor in East Germany

Eligible Mozambican candidates for transnational migrant labor positions to East Germany had to be between eighteen and twenty-five years of age, physically fit, and have completed at least a fourth-grade education.<sup>51</sup> The requirements and conditions for Angolans were similar. They had to be between eighteen and thirty years of age, pass a physical exam, and have completed at least a sixth-grade education. However, unlike the Mozambicans, many of the Angolans also had a military background.

Overall, there were fewer female worker-trainees than male trainees. Women comprised only about 10 percent of Mozambican and Angolan worker-trainees.<sup>52</sup> In theory, socialist ideology posits that men and women are equal participants in the workforce. Yet, some work was considered more suitable to women, textile production for instance, and other professions more suitable for men, such as coal production, reflected in the numbers of women employed in these industries. Female migrant workers whom I interviewed were in the majority unmarried but quite a few were single mothers motivated to provide for their offspring. One of the limitations in recruiting more women were the education requirements stipulated in the labor agreements. Looking at the data for foreign workers as a whole, 29.8 percent were female in 1989, which amounted to about 57,000 women.<sup>53</sup>

The workers, male and female, were not free to choose their area of employment. Worker-trainees were usually given four-year contracts. Some of them served two or three contracts. A number attained the level of skilled workers; very few reached the skill level of master craftsmen.<sup>54</sup> Many, especially those who came after the expansion of the program in the late 1980s, only received inadequate training, for example only in operating a particular machine. They never rose to the pay level of a skilled laborer. Table 3.2 provides evidence of the increase in recruitment over time. The first generation of workers (in the period 1979–1984) usually received better training than the second generation (the period 1985–1990).

Table 3.2 gives an approximation to facilitate understanding recruitment patterns of Mozambicans and Angolans. As has become clear by now, the exact numbers are a matter of dispute. Angolans arrived only in the second half of the 1980s, when foreign labor programs in East Germany had shifted away from training and toward productivity. This often meant that most workers received minimal language and equipment training, before being placed in unskilled positions. The intensification of the recruitment of foreign labor in the late 1980s reflected East Germany's

**Table 3.2** Annual number of Mozambican and Angolan worker-trainees newly entering East Germany

<i>Year</i>	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. of Mozambican workers	447	2839	2618	0	382	0	1347	2896	3203	6464	1992
No. of Angolan workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	312	33	206	687	418

For the Mozambican numbers, see Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz*, 237. For the Angolan numbers, see Riedel, 1994, 5 cited in Karin Weiss, “Zuwanderung und Integration in Ostdeutschland,” in *Zuwanderung und Integration in den neuen Bundesländern. Zwischen Transferexistenz und Bildungserfolg*, Karin Weiss and Hala Kindelberger, eds. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus Verlag, 2007), 37

struggling economy. The Angolan government had difficulties meeting the demand.<sup>55</sup> The year 1988 set a record for both Angolan and Mozambican migrants as the East German government had set ambitious production targets and wanted to use foreign labor to compensate for East Germans leaving the country in ever greater numbers. Curiously, numbers fell again in 1989, pointing at greater recruitment challenges. Yet, more than 90,000 Mozambicans had purportedly been calculated for 1990, both to meet East German demand and reduce Mozambican debts.<sup>56</sup>

As Hans-Joachim Döring argues, Mozambican labor power had been calculated against Mozambique’s trade deficit from the beginning of the program. A portion of their wages, social security benefits, and pension claims all counted toward the transfer.<sup>57</sup> As both countries increasingly struggled economically, Mozambicans were interested in a break in their debt payments and East Germany wanted to import more labor power to address the debts and the labor shortages at once. East Germany sought to use Mozambican labor power to reduce Mozambican debts, calculated in 1987 to amount to US\$ 260 million until 1990. East Germany’s suggestion to increase the number of Mozambican workers in 1988 and count their transfer payments and social security contributions toward a reduction of Mozambican debts did, however, meet with initial resistance based on financial and moral concerns from the Mozambican government. Mozambican Finance Minister Abdul Magid Osman expressed his incomprehension as to why East Germany insisted on debt service at a time when Mozambique was ravaged by war and most Paris Club members had already consented to adjusting debt service to terms more

favorable than what East Germany was offering. On the contrary, he insisted, given the sorrowful situation in Mozambique, he might well insist on the transfer payments of the workers being paid out in hard currency.<sup>58</sup> Nothing came of it, but the exchange elucidates that the relationship between East Germany and Mozambique deteriorated as both countries moved farther away from the future each government had envisioned by the second half of the 1980s.

In 1987, the planning commission together with the finance ministry calculated that a single Mozambican worker produced 18,487 East German marks toward the national income after deducting all associated costs.<sup>59</sup> This figure can be compared with the GDP per employee, which was 40,721 marks in 1989.<sup>60</sup> Given that GDP per employee is a “before costs” measure and the figure for the migrants’ contribution was after costs, this was a substantial per-worker contribution.<sup>61</sup> According to the calculations of the East German Ministry of Finance, 13,000 Mozambican workers would have produced 240 million East German marks annually, a number that did not yet satisfy the politburo.<sup>62</sup>

Seeking to obtain more labor power from Vietnamese and Mozambican migrants in the latter half of the 1980s needs to be seen in connection with the transfers that both groups of workers made but also reflects the strained relationships with other partners. The Polish government demanded better treatment of their workers in 1987, Cuba threatened not to send further workers only a year later, and Algeria had stopped sending workers by the mid-1980s, after the government had adopted a law against the exploitation of its labor force by foreign governments.<sup>63</sup> In an economy short of labor power, foreign labor was important to fulfill production quotas, and consequently Mozambican and Angolan workers gained in importance as other recruiting options shrank.

Supervision of the worker-trainees was shared between the East German State Secretariat for Work and Wages (SAL), the Ministry for State Security (Stasi), and FRELIMO and MPLA representatives in the dormitories and companies. Factory staff were crucial in supervising the workers, both on the factory floor and in the dormitories, which often had a live-in supervisor. But—and this point cannot be stressed enough—the interviews brought to the fore the inconsistency with which rules were applied in practice. There was an uneven level of integration and education between one company and the next. The location, company, supervision personnel, colleagues, and the other migrant groups that the worker-trainees encountered therefore heavily shaped their experiences.

Unsurprisingly, in many respects the lives workers organized for themselves inside and outside of the factories often did not coincide with the state officials' expectations. The archetypical foreign worker was imagined as healthy, disciplined, intelligent, and willing to adapt to a foreign life-style, cuisine, and value system, and was implicitly male and single. The workers' physical and mental health issues, their struggles to adjust to a foreign language, food, and work discipline, their willingness to spend their free time upholding their family ties, their intimate relations with East Germans and other foreigners, were all ways in which they diverged from state plans. The German state archives are replete with descriptions of behavior deviating from the norms, dividing the foreign workers into victims and perpetrators. Oral histories counter archival descriptions of this behavior, coming instead as they do from an affirmative place of agency.

The following section constitutes the moment in which this book escapes from the straitjacket imposed by following the archive-bound, state-centered, institutional conception of the schemes and their relationships with their participants. After all, without the migrants, any migration scheme remains a fictional entity. We now move on to investigating the motivations and decision-making processes of Angolans and Mozambicans, the future worker-trainees, as they determined whether to migrate.

## PART II: THE MIGRANTS' MOTIVES TO MOVE

A better future,  
 The one that now I own.  
 Like a bee, I drink from roses.  
 The rest does not matter,  
 I embraced Germany.

Regina, February 27, 2007

In 1988, Regina migrated, as a young Mozambican woman, to work and receive vocational training on East Germany's factory floors.<sup>64</sup> What is notable about Regina's poem is that it claims ownership of her new future, despite the fact that she arrived in Berlin as part of a bilateral agreement between socialist states that regulated her contract length, place of employment, housing, and pay, and, to a certain extent, even monitored her free time and regulated her personal relationships. Yet Regina embraced her new life in the face of multiple challenges, including learning to communicate in a new language and navigate a foreign culture, while

acclimatizing to an industrial work routine. Regina's poem is about her individual expectations, dreams, and desires; it is about the human side of migration.

Various motivations led young Angolans and Mozambicans to actively seek out the possibility of signing up, or to consent to being recruited. After all, to work and receive technical training thousands of miles away from home was no casual undertaking. Focusing on the decisive moment in the migrants' lives, prior to departure, reveals the complex decisions they faced. Such an approach challenges prevailing conceptions of migrants as passive participants. It also renders unviable institutional designations of labor migration. As the migrants' memories uncover, it was not clear to all the young people why they were sent north, and their decisions were often based on hearsay, hunches, and imperfect information. Economic considerations, which fuel labor migration the world over, predictably played a significant role, sustaining dreams of material independence and satisfying filial duties. Young people were also drawn by the promise of education, of laying the foundation for their own careers through the acquisition of skills. Some saw their migration in the light of aiding their country's development. Escaping the risks of military service, the violence of combat, and the privations of the conflict economy also featured prominently. Emotional motivations were important to some migrants, who followed personal ties abroad to reunite with a partner or family member, or who signed up for a second contract to stay with their newfound family in East Germany. Most migrants' decision-making processes were a combination of some or all of the above. But in their memories, conveyed to me long after the socialist revolutions had come to a premature end, no interviewee used the language of the "New Man" to state that their primary goal was of a political nature and lay in supporting socialism.<sup>65</sup> Far more, they remembered wanting to contribute to the greater good (and simultaneously personal good) through work. Many also had a personal admiration for the now late President Samora Machel.

For potential migrants, East Germany was also part of "Europe." This was an imagined space of possibilities that bundled expectations of adventure, prosperity, and the good life. This idea was illustrated by Marieta's postcard on which she wrote, "This is the capital of Europe, called Berlin."<sup>66</sup> The Angolan and Mozambican migrants to East Germany were dreamers as much as they were cogs in an international socialist scheme. Examining the myriad reasons that led these young people to board the planes from Luanda and Maputo to East Berlin challenges the assumption



that migration was primarily about finding work elsewhere. Indeed, it challenges the historiographical category of labor migration, to show that migration is never just about work.

### *Reasons to Migrate*

As birds, we passed flying,  
 Crossing oceans, rivers, continents,  
 On a thunderclap we descended on Berlin,  
 My dream came true.

Regina, February 27, 2007<sup>67</sup>

The following four migration types emerge as drivers of migration: work, education, war, and personal reasons. While the state could pressure future worker-trainees to an extent, most of them signed up convinced that they had made the best possible choice for a better personal future. Although the structure of the migration schemes was ostensibly not one that allowed for a great deal of personal freedom, the migrants who took part nevertheless exercised a considerable level of agency. The four categories of motivation were not mutually exclusive; rather, worker-trainees were positioned to take advantage of any combination of them and gave weight to different factors in their own decision-making process. The different impulses were also weighted differently for migrants at different points in time over the lifetime of their participation schemes. For instance, in the early stages, a person might first want to escape the insecurity of war, then later seek a stable job, and then after living in relative security they might aspire to a better education, and finally, after founding a family abroad, they would feel the emotional ties that connected them to their new home. Fabião, a worker-trainee from Mozambique, summarized these myriad factors in the following way:

There was free choice but a real lack of spaces. So, in the end you took what you could get. ...The advantages [of going to East Germany] were many. First of all, you were occupied. You could go and work and receive technical training, which was better than doing nothing. Secondly, we had a sixteen-year war in this country, and life here was very difficult. It was a chance to escape the insecurity. Also, to escape the poverty because here in Mozambique we faced a lack of jobs, a lack of security, a lack of schools, no free movement of people and a severe lack of things. There were so many refugees and displaced people, but there were no safe spaces. Thirdly, it was a real benefit for

my personal life. I had the ability to work to support myself and my family. I learned a lot about a different way of life. I learned how to be organized and it was my first work experience. I liked it.<sup>68</sup>

*The Political Context: “The Principles of Marxism-Leninism  
and of Proletarian Internationalism”<sup>69</sup>*

Samora Machel described the relationship between Mozambique and East Germany in the following terms:

We have a solid foundation for our relations: the principles of Marxism-Leninism and of proletarian internationalism, which enable us to coordinate our goals and opinions and show that there exists a harmony of interests between us. Our alliance thus has a strategic character. It does not threaten anyone. It promotes the common struggle for peace and socialism, for freedom and independence of people. This alliance contributes to the progress of the revolutionary world movement.<sup>70</sup>

The migrants, most of whom were born in the 1960s, firmly placed their migratory experiences into the context of a socialist world. Part of the attraction of socialism at the time lay precisely in its claim of establishing an alternative development path for countries still economically intertwined with their former colonizers, and of offering ideological and economic support through the new partnership model of proletarian internationalism. When asked about the purpose of their migration, many migrants spoke about a personal mission for their country to acquire skills with which to build the young state. President Samora Machel, to whom many Mozambican migrants still felt a deep personal connection and allegiance when they spoke to me years later, was central to this sense of mission. They portrayed Machel as the father of the nation, who had sent them, his children, abroad to develop the nascent Mozambique. This mission was therefore a personal one, built on trust. While Angolan former worker-trainees generally did not reminisce about the socialist period with the same emotional tone as those from Mozambique, they nevertheless similarly placed their migration experience in this wider global framework. In the words of the Angolan José Antonio:

Many young people went to East Germany in this program because this was already an agreement from the time of the old presidents of Angola and East Germany in the context of what they used to call ‘mutual help.’ This was a

project of the socialist countries and [President] Agostinho Neto [1975–9] thought about the professional education of those young people, and of those people who they said would be demobilized from the Angolan military forces, so that they wouldn't remain unemployed. ...There was a need to arrange job training at least...for this country to have skilled workers so that our industry could develop.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, migrants as a whole bought into the state rhetoric of socialist development. However, they did not frame their own motivation primarily in political terms. Socialist development was a happy consequence, not the main attraction.

*Labor Migration: "German Businesses Asked for a Mozambican Workforce, But they Got People Instead"*<sup>72</sup>

Most migrants understood before they left Africa that they would be expected to work, not just train. Gilda recounted: "I went to [East] Germany because I knew that our government had made an agreement with the German government for us to work and receive an education so that upon our return, we would be placed in the various companies in accordance with our training."<sup>73</sup> But not everybody was as well informed prior to leaving. Lino's father knew of the 900 Mozambican school children who attended the Friendship School in Staßfurt and concluded that his son should therefore also sign up to go to East Germany, assuming it would provide a similar educational possibility:

The first groups who went to [East] Germany were children of nine or ten years who went to study until they were about sixteen or seventeen years old, when they returned here. We had a cousin in this group and my father thought that I should also leave this country to study. At that time, the agreement the government had with Germany was another one, it was one to go and work. ...But I preferred to go and work to staying here as a carpenter and without any chance at studying further. I finished sixth grade and still had many grades left but at that time there were no jobs [in Mozambique], which was a very serious problem and the reason why I preferred to go to Germany.<sup>74</sup>

This quotation reveals that many migrants had a far from perfect understanding of the multiple bilateral migration agreements prior to leaving. The schemes in existence included options for Angolans and Mozambicans

to temporarily relocate as apprentices, workers, or university or school students, or for political training. Word of mouth was an important factor driving migrants north. Many worker-trainees already had a family member abroad and were influenced by the depictions of European life they saw in letters and pictures sent by those abroad. It is important to keep in mind that it was probably the case that many potential migrants only partially understood the information contained in government agreements as these were not generally accessible. Many worker-trainees only learned about the reality of daily life that they had signed up for once it started. The migrants made their decisions based on imperfect information, gathered through hearsay and the experiences of friends and family members, more than from official written information. For many, it was a courageous leap into the unknown.

Labor migration was, and is, intrinsically linked to economic migration. Adérito, a migrant from Angola, stated very clearly that his motivation to sign up was to “have a change in living standards while also continuing my training.”<sup>75</sup> For Armando, a worker-trainee from Mozambique, the “unsatisfactory economic situation” he encountered upon returning from his first contract in June 1984 led him back to East Germany by December of the same year, despite not having had the intention to return.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, like Adérito and Armando, many of the interviewees mentioned economic motivations. However, these economic considerations were rarely portrayed as the driving force behind the decision to migrate. In addition to the opportunity to work in East Germany, migrants mentioned the ability to live a comfortable and fashionable life there, while also supporting their families at home, and laying a foundation for their economic independence after their return. For young women migration also meant financial independence and therefore a greater degree of independence in their lives. Migrants remitted their income mostly in goods because the East German mark was not readily convertible, and because goods were hard to come by in the conflict economies of Angola and Mozambique. Patricio described the economic contrast between his Mozambican and his German life as follows:

Before we went to Germany, there was war in Mozambique. We had nothing to eat. And I mean there was nothing to buy, not even sugar. The stores were completely empty. Money was not the problem but there were simply no goods to buy. We just ate cabbage with salt. If you wanted to have bread you had to get up at 4:00 am and start queuing, but even then, you were not

guaranteed bread. At some point the government introduced rations but what we got per family was nothing, like 2 kg rice for a whole month per family. You could not buy things like clothes, and what existed was disproportionately expensive. Now in Germany, we had everything, more than enough of everything.<sup>77</sup>

This vision of East Germany is often discounted when talking about the experience that foreign workers had there. It is far more usual to focus on the difficult living conditions of foreign workers and the limited supply of consumer items in East Germany (relative to the West), as well as on the restrictions foreign workers faced when transferring goods.<sup>78</sup> The subjective experiences of comfort and consumption expressed by people from what was then known as the Third World shed a different light on perceptions of life in East Germany.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, by migrating to East Germany, young Angolans and Mozambicans followed a regional tradition of labor migration in southern Africa. For many, it was a rite of passage. From the latter nineteenth century onwards, young men migrated to the South African mines to accumulate the capital to pay a bride price, and through marriage assume the role of adult men in their communities. For the new generation of (male) worker-trainees for whom going to South Africa was no longer an option, economic independence, and therefore independence from their families, was still paramount. Saving for marriage was no longer the central concern, but rather building a life independent of their families or place of origin. In the words of a Mozambican migrant who preferred to stay anonymous:

I already had seen some people who left and returned from there [East Germany] and they were doing well for themselves. I was greedy and wanted to have similar things. ...I dreamed of having my own house because I lived in a house with my family. Therefore, the plan was to arrange for my own house and live on my own.<sup>79</sup>

Historically, especially in southern Mozambique, contract labor migration to the South African gold-bearing Witwatersrand was a way of achieving these goals. Pedro from Mozambique originally wanted to go to South Africa because that was the only opportunity that he knew of for making good money. However, once he learned of the alternative to go to East Germany, he quickly changed his mind: "To go to South Africa was

difficult, but to go to East Germany was better,” and so he migrated from 1985 until 1989.<sup>80</sup> Seen through the eyes of the worker-trainees who went to East Germany, the comparison seemed favorable in retrospect:

My father went to South Africa, my uncles, my grandfather. All the men in my family went to South Africa, I went to [East] Germany. Germany was definitely better because I amassed much more in a shorter time. My cousin left before me to South Africa, and we returned at the same time, and I had been able to afford much more than him. The work in the mines is also harder and paid worse.<sup>81</sup>

Other migrants, particularly women, construed their economic migrations in terms of supporting their wider families. Irene remembered:

I went to register [for work in East Germany] in a suburb and was called after a month. What happened is that many of the young people in my suburb did not want to register their names because they thought that in [East] Germany, they would wash the streets, wash the animals and therefore they did not have much interest. I, because I saw my suffering and that of my daughter, who was only eight months old at the time, went there [East Germany] in 1988. ...The father of the girl left me with my hands tied, because he went to work in South Africa, and I was suffering with the girl and that is why I decided to go work in Germany to be able to support my daughter and my family.<sup>82</sup>

Irene’s motives for signing up to migrate were deeply personal—indeed, considerably more personal than the commitment to abstract concepts of socialist development could ever be. Migrants did not parse their lives into neat categories but instead lived their lives as integrated wholes. The point at which the need to support a baby daughter merged into a wider narrative of socialist development was different for each individual. The lines between the categories of motivation were often indistinct—indeed, such categorization does no favors to the true complexity of human motivation. The point is to understand that the human dimension of the migrations was incomparably richer than state-imposed parameters could ever be.

*Educational Migration: "I felt Selected for the Days to Come and Everything Was a Project of the Future"*<sup>83</sup>

Socialism opened new avenues of international mobility. From Mozambique, about 20,000 worker-trainees left for East Germany, while more than 1200 East German citizens, teachers, agricultural specialists, consultants, nurses, and miners came to work in Mozambique. Nine hundred Mozambican children were sent to the Friendship School in East Germany, while at least 750 Mozambican apprentices and an unknown number of Mozambican university students studied in East Germany. The worker-trainees were the most numerically significant group of Mozambican migrants to East Germany.<sup>84</sup> Estevão from Angola also placed his decision to go to Germany in the larger context of Cold War educational opportunities:

At that time, there was this opening. Our [Angolan] government worried about the education of man and therefore engaged in partnerships with various countries such as East Germany, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary. ...As we were starting to build our independent nation, given that we did not have national cadres, he [President Agostinho Neto] created agreements with socialist countries to train the Angolan man. It was then that the Isle of Youth opened in Cuba. I even applied to go and work in that country but then I withdrew. ...Only after the end of the Cold War things became difficult for the people because before the state sent people for training and professional employment to other countries.<sup>85</sup>

Like Estevão, worker-trainees occasionally had the option to choose between various training schemes, the most frequent being in Cuba or the Soviet Union, either for continued education or military training.<sup>86</sup> In some cases, migrants were on the list for other educational programs in socialist countries, but due to bureaucratic processes beyond their understanding, found themselves unexpectedly in a group bound for East Germany. Therefore, the decision to go to East Germany was sometimes a rather arbitrary and last-minute affair.

Former worker-trainees often framed their professional training in Germany as learning for the future in a double sense. They acquired skills for their personal professional development, and for contributing to the development of their countries. The temporary nature of their migration was thus implicit. In the world back then, they could hardly contribute to Mozambican development if they stayed in East Germany. The

worker-trainees' emphasis on the educational aspect of the program forms a counter-narrative to portrayals of East Germany's political emphasis on migrant education as a strategy of propaganda rather than practice. Some scholars maintain that the East German migration schemes were labor migrations that only employed the terminology of training as development aid to set themselves apart from the West German guest worker program.<sup>87</sup> There is some justification for this, as foreign worker-trainees' vocational training rapidly deteriorated toward the second half of the 1980s. Nonetheless, the training component remained the most crucial aspect for many of the young Angolan and Mozambican migrants.

It was not only the worker-trainees who believed in the importance of education for their careers; the governments of both Angola and Mozambique hoped to address the severe lack of skilled workers in both countries by educating citizens abroad and importing educational personnel.<sup>88</sup> Emphasizing vocational training further distinguishes the worker-trainees' experiences from earlier labor migrations undertaken in the context of colonial forced labor and slavery, or from the transactional migrations to the South African mines. Taking the vocational training aspect seriously reflects both the worker-trainees' own understanding of their migration and the sending countries' interests. David remembered:

According to the information we received here [in Angola] this was professional training, which meant that a person would go and train and afterwards implement what they had learned here in the country. We thought it would be convenient to go and get this formation because we would return trained in a discipline. Although we had theoretical classes that lasted half days, it seems to me that this was more for those people who thought about this as academic training. In my company, I was the best student, and I was selected based on merit as one of the elements that got to know the entire company. I was even mentioned in the company newspaper and the director sent for me to speak to him. This was in 1988.<sup>89</sup>

The temporary migration to East Germany remained a formative part of the migrants' personal careers and professional biographies. Many former worker-trainees have processed their experience as job training and work experience, an episode that marked the early years of their professional lives. That the former migrants were so keen to talk about education in interviews with me might have partly stemmed from a need to justify the validity of their training in the context of failed job placements upon



return. Some worker-trainees struggled with the training requirements in East Germany, and thus did not achieve the aspired level of skilled workers, instead returning with partial qualifications, a fate shared by those whose companies neglected to offer appropriate training opportunities. In retrospect, Fabião was critical about the professional value of his East German training:

We received training there that could not be applied in Mozambique because the factories did not exist here. I, for instance, worked in a factory that produced glass for glasses, binoculars, specialized telescopes; we did not have such specialized machinery here in Mozambique. The formal education was thus of questionable applicability, but on the personal level we learned a lot and benefited tremendously from having been employed in East Germany.<sup>90</sup>

Fabião raised an important distinction, namely between learning technical know-how and soft skills. Many returned migrants highlighted the personal benefit from having lived abroad and having successfully adapted to East German (work) culture. At the same time, they acknowledged that the vocational training received could only be applied in a few areas, such as coal mining, textile work, and in port facilities. Technical knowledge did not transfer as easily as authorities had envisioned and led workers to believe.

The educational alternatives open to many young Mozambicans and Angolans at the time were limited. Guiro remembered: “I was already unemployed for about a year and then I heard about the possibility of going to [East] Germany and I immediately went to register myself. ... I saw this as the only possibility to do something, but I did not even know what I would do over there.”<sup>91</sup> For women, the options were often more limited, as it was harder to gain access to education. Lídia described the kinds of challenges young women faced:

I started attending school very late. I matriculated for the first time at age twelve, and after having completed fourth grade, my name was listed to continue my schooling at night, but my brother refused to let me go study. He rejected it because if I went to school at night, I would quickly become pregnant, he said, and so I went to East Germany with the intent to continue my studies. Only when I got there, they told me I was in the group of the workers and not of students, and I couldn't do anything about this, and so I went to work.<sup>92</sup>

Women were less likely to attend school and as a result were less likely to qualify for the training opportunities abroad. In addition, male household members often made decisions about their lives on their behalf. Lídia's story also underscores that education served as a lure to attract at least some workers who were disappointed to find themselves unable to transition to school or higher education once in East Germany. Not everyone simply transitioned to work as Lídia did.

There were many difficulties in accessing education and jobs at home, and the migrants assumed that education in East Germany would allow them to invest in their personal and their home country's future in ways unimaginable in their native land. Socialist countries—most notably East Germany, Cuba, and the Soviet Union, but also Czechoslovakia, Hungary, China, and others—offered various degrees of educational support. For East Germany, extending education aid in the form of school support, vocational training, higher education, and military and political training was as much part of spreading the global socialist revolution and acting in solidarity with “Third World” countries as it was economically motivated.<sup>93</sup> East Germany hoped to send skilled workers back to Angola and Mozambique, believing not only that they would be useful to develop industries there for the sake of development, but also that they would be useful for future German involvement in that development.

*War Migration: “The Military Was an Awful Place to Be. They Scraped your Head and Collected Baskets of Fresh Blood”<sup>94</sup>*

Born in the 1960s, the lives of the young Angolan and Mozambican migrants were marked by war. They grew up in a globally tumultuous decade that saw violent divisions emerge between the global North and South. In both Angola and Mozambique, the anti-colonial struggle turned violent. In Angola, fighting against the Portuguese broke out in 1961, and in Mozambique in 1964. Independence in 1975 ended the wars with former colonial rulers but did not bring the desired peace; Angola was engulfed in civil war almost continuously from 1975 until 2002, and Mozambique from 1977 until 1992. Postcolonial Mozambique's and Angola's civil wars were part proxy theaters of the Cold War, part expressions of regional, national, and ethnic power struggles.<sup>95</sup> The MPLA's and FRELIMO's close ties with the East even prior to independence situated them within a framework of “Third World Liberation Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>96</sup>

Migrating to East Germany was a way for young Angolans and Mozambicans to escape the many impacts of war on their lives. The fear that many young people felt was not abstract but based on real experiences of death, violence, displacement, and hunger. War meant interruptions to education and an early end to childhood. “To tell the truth, most people who left the country at that time were motivated by fleeing the war, military service, and more,” claimed Augusto from Angola.<sup>97</sup> Many young people had already abandoned rural areas and had relocated to the relative safety of urban centers prior to migrating to East Germany. Cities, however, did not offer safety from indiscriminate conscription by the government. Young people’s freedom of movement was also severely limited, as every trip over land exposed them to the possibility of being forcibly recruited. Frequent relocations interrupted young people’s schooling. The fragile school system was overstretched, and spaces were hard to obtain. Limited employment opportunities existed in these conflict economies and young people struggled to envision a future at home. Interestingly, while oral history interviews are replete with references to fleeing war, German-centered narratives about labor migrations to East Germany are silent on this point. The East German government did not think of its country as a safe haven for refugees.

Many worker-trainees migrated internally before going to East Germany. Inocência colorfully described his life in rural Manhica, in Mozambique, as marked by war and death: “The desire to flee was more exciting to me than sex with a nymphomaniac.”<sup>98</sup> In 1984, after he had finished the seventh grade, his uncle brought him to Maputo to continue his studies at secondary school, from where he later went to Germany. Like Inocência, many tried to make their way to the provincial capitals and ultimately to the capitals Maputo and Luanda to continue their education and live a more secure life. This was especially so given the rural nature of the civil wars in Mozambique and Angola. Family networks facilitated this internal mobility; the lucky would-be migrants could stay with extended family members in the bigger cities.

Zeca, from the district of Maganja da Costa, in Zambézia province, had been in the provincial capital of Quelimane, but because of the violence in the countryside was prevented from going home. He stayed in the city instead. He remembered that in the mid-1980s, “when they picked up a youngster of seventeen, eighteen years walking in the street, he was recruited to go to war. This was commonplace and I did not want this to happen because I had a brother who died during military life.”<sup>99</sup> He

arrived in Maputo by plane in February or March 1987 and stayed with his older sister there to prepare for East Germany: “When I arrived, I started making contacts. I needed to leave my name at the Ministry of Labor and in the suburbs...then they called me saying that I needed to leave my documents and that is how I started to go to the hostel [holding center].”<sup>100</sup> In Mozambique, future worker-trainees were collected in regional holding centers, first in the provinces, and finally in Maputo. The labor ministry was central to the recruitment in both Angola and Mozambique. Women’s, youth, and worker organizations were also involved in recruitment in Mozambique.<sup>101</sup> While candidates in Angola received little orientation, Mozambican candidates in holding centers were given political and moral training, a how-to behavior course, and general knowledge about East Germany. The selected candidates also participated in demanding sports routines which many interviewees describe as a quasi-military-style training. Some of those selected started to think that they had fallen into the hands of the military. The relief came only once they boarded the airplane to East Germany.

Male interviewees in Angola and Mozambique alike returned in their interviews to the worry of random military conscription. Yet, the military was not the only organization looking for recruits: some also fell into the hands of the rivaling parties. While many of the Angolan interviewees served in the military for significant periods of time prior to migrating, most Mozambicans did not. This difference was ascribed by some interviewees to an Angolan policy favoring reintegration of former combatants, although this idea was not supported by the Angolan labor delegate in East Germany, Manuel da Costa.<sup>102</sup> Moisés, from Mozambique, recalled recruitment to East Germany as “a light at the end of the tunnel” because it allowed him to avoid military conscription.<sup>103</sup> A few young Angolans were able to sign up straight from school, like the majority of Mozambicans. Ilíbio, who migrated with his brother, was among them:

Here there wasn’t another alternative, aside from the military. We weren’t disabled but rather very healthy and all Angolan citizens had to obligatorily fulfill military service upon turning eighteen. This was real war, and we were afraid, and I can guarantee that nobody went there [to war] voluntarily. And in fact, this was my opportunity not to become a soldier. When I returned from that country [East Germany], many of my colleagues from school had lost their lives to the war. ...We of the 1960s lived through the indepen-

dence war and afterwards there was the South African military invasion into our territory, and this impacted us much more because we were in the South and I was really very lucky to have this scholarship to go the East Germany for this job training. I remember that I had to leave Lubango for Luanda by airplane because to travel by car during that time you needed to have a military license. Many officials did not like to see one because they saw this as a form of discrimination because they were there, serving military service, whereas the other person was somehow exempted from serving. This wasn't easy and you needed to proceed really very carefully because at times the military commanders tore up your documents and then the next time there was no way to justify the missing document.<sup>104</sup>

This sentiment of never being safe, even after having regularized their paperwork with the military or having achieved an exemption through connections, was echoed in many interviews.<sup>105</sup> It illustrates the culture of fear and the arbitrariness with which Angolans and Mozambicans were confronted, even in the cities. For those Mozambican worker-trainees who were among the first cohorts to travel to East Germany, it was not uncommon to become embroiled in the war after their return to the provinces in the mid-1980s. Some, like Armando, therefore decided to sign up for a second contract:

I was lucky to have been in Germany because I knew that military service was not easy to perform. ...Therefore, I preferred to return to Germany and stay for another four years there rather than to stay in Mozambique and to fulfill the obligatory military service requirement.<sup>106</sup>

In some cases, fleeing the war zones via labor migration necessitated elaborate planning, as Jacinto's story illustrates. A firm believer in a socialist Mozambique, Jacinto attended the FRELIMO party school to train as a provincial monitor for organizers of communal villages. From 1981 onwards, he trained the district leaders of the communal villages in and around Beira. On his way to Najawa, in the District of Milange, he was captured by Renamo soldiers and brought to Manjodira. He managed to escape, but then the government insisted that he return to his work in the same area. Understandably, he felt unsafe. He was transferred to work with consumer cooperatives in January 1982 but encountered the same risks when traveling to various districts such as Chundo and Mubaute. In the end, he decided to try to get out.

I first signed up in March of 1983 in Quelimane. But due to organizational aspects, there was no recruitment that year in that province and I continued to work, waiting for a possibility to get this training. Luckily, in June of the same year, the recruitment started again. I could not show who I was, because if the government knew that I wanted to abandon my post, I would have been blocked and would have gotten into problems. Fortunately, I was in contact with the provincial director of the labor ministry, and he helped me to get into the group... On the 17<sup>th</sup> of June I received the news, with the help of the director, that the group would leave on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month. ...I was lucky and left Maputo for Germany on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August of the same year and arrived in Germany the next day to fulfill my contract.<sup>107</sup>

Jacinto stayed in Germany from 1983 until 1987, and signed up again in 1988, finally to return in 1991 to Nicuadala, in Zambézia.

As these cases show, we can only understand the young men's and women's myriad motivations for mobility if we abandon the strict and artificial division between the terms "migrant" and "refugee." As Alexander Betts convincingly argues, upholding the distinction between a migrant—somebody who is choosing to move to ameliorate their lives—and a refugee—a person fleeing persecution—has important policy ramifications and therefore analytical value for the study of international relations.<sup>108</sup> After listening to the Mozambican and Angolan migrants, it becomes clear that this is not a historically useful analytical framework. According to standard conceptions of migration, they were economic and educational migrants, but many of them had motivations which could be classed as those of a refugee. This has been, and remains, the case for a great many different streams of migration around the world.

*Personal Migration: "...this Was My Chance to See Europe"*<sup>109</sup>

The study of emotions contributes to understanding the human side of migration by revealing the inner lives of the migrants.<sup>110</sup> Emotive reasons cannot be separated from labor and economics, educational concerns, or wartime migration. As with all the categories we have examined so far, the distinction is somewhat artificial. It is important to acknowledge that in some cases the primary motivation for going to East Germany had to do with personal reasons, such as an established relationship to someone already in East Germany, or dreams of adventures abroad. Emotions

played as much a role as rational considerations for many worker-trainees.

Romantic relationships were the most common emotional drivers of migration. Lúcia introduced me to the role that emotional networks played in migration: “I went to East Germany because my husband who was there to study called for me.”<sup>111</sup> She was already trained as a nurse and had spent two years in military service. To join her husband, she needed to leave their child with family in Mozambique and relinquish her ability to determine her profession. Couples sometimes signed up at the same time, keeping their relationship status a secret, and visited each other regularly while in East Germany. Officially, only single individuals were accepted, precisely to avoid needing to deal with family reunifications. Worker-trainees were paid nontransferable separation compensation of four marks per day, and were eligible for child benefits according to East German law, which could be transferred to Mozambique, and in return, they were expected to leave their family attachments behind.<sup>112</sup> The practice, however, diverged from the plans as couples signed up individually to spend time together abroad and, unsurprisingly, new couples were formed between worker-trainees while abroad. One of the legacies of the program was that such couples continued to form after their return, based on their shared experiences.

Other forms of emotional ties to East Germany served as pull factors. Fernando, a product of the many links between Mozambique and East Germany in education and technical training, had been selected to attend a vacation camp in East Germany as a teenager, and was willing to give up his studies to return to see his adoptive family:

In 1981, I went for the first time to East Germany. I was one of the best students here and that is why I was selected to go and spend my vacation there. ...I studied at the time and wanted to return to East Germany to see my adoptive family again with whom I lived when I was there on vacation. ...When I returned home, I told my parents that I would go to Germany. They asked whether I wanted to leave my studies and I said yes. They said that the decision was mine and they wouldn't prevent me from going.<sup>113</sup>

Like Fernando, others who were already familiar with East Germany decided to return using the work contracts as a vehicle to do so, including some of the children who had previously attended the Friendship School

and returned collectively to Mozambique in 1988 to be integrated into the military. Other worker-trainees decided to sign up for a second contract to be able to stay with their own families in East Germany. The emotional bonds that sustained this type of migration ranged from friendship to family ties. They show that migrants' relations with their social ties were at least as important as, if not more important than, their relations to ideology and state-building.

Another set of emotional drivers was more self-oriented and focused on feelings of hope and self-realization. Migrants dreamed of traveling to Europe in search of adventure. They desired to live an independent life as young adults, and hoped for a better life, both in the immediate future in East Germany and in the long term after their return home. For young people like Gaspar, from Angola, a dream came true: "That was the thing I dared the least to hope for in life. At the time, most young people were really fighting to succeed with this opportunity to go to East Germany."<sup>114</sup> For Luzia, from Angola, leaving was a rite of passage: "I left for a new adventure. I lost my mother very early, at seven years old, and I grew up with my siblings and my father and when I reached this age [seventeen years] I left when I had the first possibility without really knowing what awaited me in the future or what I would encounter."<sup>115</sup>

Some worker-trainees wanted to explore the world. Lázaro, who moved in with his sister in Maputo when his father's livelihood as a mission teacher and sisal factory owner in Zambézia fell apart after independence, learned about the possibility of enlisting for East Germany from her: "At that time I thought foremost that this was my chance to see Europe."<sup>116</sup> Migrants like Lázaro were keen on adventures abroad and motivated by seeing for themselves places they had heard and read about. "Well, I thought... actually, I didn't deliberate, I was just very satisfied. At the end of the day, I was going to get to know a country about which I had only heard. ...If I stayed here, I would just be suffering, but there I had the hope that things could change."<sup>117</sup>

Regina framed her decision to migrate as an emancipatory act of liberation from domestic duties and family life: "I felt that I needed to do something different. I could not associate with their [my older sisters'] domestic life. At nineteen years old, I resolved to abandon my studies. I wanted to receive vocational training and be an independent woman before marrying."<sup>118</sup> The desire for personal independence voiced by young women in Angola and Mozambique who left for Germany in their late teens or early twenties is echoed in other life stories of southern African women.<sup>119</sup>



Under the emancipatory aegis of socialism, the women had the opportunity to migrate to East Germany, in theory like their male counterparts. The Ministries of Labor invited single men and women to partake and many of the worker-trainee groups sent to East Germany were mixed, although with fewer women. Despite the official emancipatory line, gender discrimination was pervasive. Some industries were gendered; coal mining was deemed more suitable for men while women were perceived to be better suited for the textile industry. The foreign labor programs in East Germany further discriminated for most of their existence against pregnant worker-trainees, who often faced the stark “choice” between abortion and deportation. Mothers who signed up for the program were left to organize childcare in their home countries individually; they depended upon family networks, especially their mothers and sisters, to temporarily raise their children.

Many Angolan and Mozambican migrants later portrayed their decision in individualistic terms. The ideal of the independent, self-made person in search of new possibilities stands in stark contrast to the socialist ideal of contributing to a vanguard workforce for industrialization at home. For the migrants, there was a tension between individual desires and collective duties, between adhering to the socialist state’s urging to become *New Men* and their ability to hold onto their individual motivations.

## CONCLUSION

This is the beginning of my dream,  
I foresee a better future!

Regina, February 27, 2007<sup>120</sup>

Like Regina, many young Angolan and Mozambican men and women left for East Germany expecting an important development in their personal lives but also conscious of their contribution toward building a skilled socialist labor force. A confluence of state, familial, and personal expectations influenced their decision-making. As worker-trainees, they were to constitute a national vanguard workforce, serve as their family’s providers of goods, and become the masters of their own fortunes. The young people who went weighed their options at home and abroad and decided to volunteer for East Germany.

The migrants’ experiences and memories show that the designation of the program as labor migration can only be used as a shorthand. Those

who left were labor migrants, as they worked abroad for wages. They were economic migrants who remitted consumer items to their home countries. They were also educational migrants; in this regard they wanted to invest in both professional development and the development of their home countries. Many were war migrants, too,—whether refuge seekers, internally displaced persons, or conscription avoiders—who were fleeing from the violent impact of the prolonged civil wars in their home countries. Moreover, their emotional attachments to loved ones from home and abroad facilitated their decision to migrate for the first time or return on a second or third contract. And lastly, their aspirations to travel to Europe and their vague hopes for a better future propelled the young adventurers to leave. All these motivations for migration were interrelated. Together, they expand the aperture of our analysis beyond the limitations of the labor migration framework.

The view from the ground affords us a glimpse of the complexity of decision-making which defies dichotomous categorizations. Mobility in southern African labor literature is often perceived as playing a crucial role in local responses to coercive environments, whether climate, warfare, slavery, or forced labor.<sup>121</sup> As an evasion strategy, people choose to migrate in response to oppressive structures to increase their personal and economic security. However, worker-trainees do not only migrate away from war and economic difficulties. They also migrate toward education, toward adventure, toward love, and toward a hope for a better personal future and the mission to contribute to their home country's development upon return. They employ mobility equally as an evasion from peril and a productive strategy for personal betterment. Their migration was often influenced by their personal networks of family, friends, and contacts. The migrants' lives—in common with all human lives—were ambivalent and complex, driven by rational and irrational considerations and emotions, vague hopes, and concrete disappointments.

Labor migration is a top-down designation. It is a bureaucratic category that has often also been employed as an analytic category. The oral record provides a corrective and demonstrates that the bottom-up perspectives on migration are more complex. Labor migration is best used as an umbrella term encompassing other aspects obliterated by uncritically adopting its bureaucratic sense.

The interviews which I have quoted in the second half of this chapter reveal the simultaneous ordinariness and extraordinariness of this migration of Angolans and Mozambicans to East Germany. Within the

framework of these bilateral agreements, unskilled Africans migrated into the heart of Europe to work and receive vocational training. This window of opportunity, created by the ideological and economic ties between socialist East Germany and socialist-leaning Angola and Mozambique, closed with German reunification. Today, unskilled migration from Angola and Mozambique to Germany is possible mainly through marriage. What remains of the socialist migration is a group of Angolans and Mozambicans who became members of an interconnected socialist world. Following them brings together diverse histories that occurred simultaneously across disparate spatial registers, linking localities in East Germany, Mozambique, and Angola. We will now look at the migrants' experience once they got to East Germany. The next two chapters turn toward the worker-trainees' experiences on and off the factory floor.

## NOTES

1. Tempo No. 448—13.05.1979, *1º de Maio: Discurso do Presidente da FRELIMO e da República Popular de Moçambique, Samora Moisés Machel nas celebrações do dia internacional do trabalho*, 26. Machel was president from 1975 to 1986.
2. I employ the term *worker-trainee* to highlight the importance of the connection between work and vocational training in the minds of the migrants.
3. Tempo No. 448—13.05.1979, *1º de Maio: Discurso do Presidente da FRELIMO*, 31.
4. Frederick Cooper, "African Labor History," in *Global Labour History: A State of the Art*, ed. Jan Lucassen (Bern; New York: P. Lang, 2006), 116.
5. I draw inspiration from: Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).
6. Eva-Maria Elsner and Lothar Elsner, *Zwischen Nationalismus und Internationalismus: Über Ausländer und Ausländerpolitik in der DDR 1949–1990* (Rostock: Norddeutsche Hochschulschriften Verlag, 1994); Hans-Joachim Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' *Die Politik der DDR und der BRD gegenüber Mosambik* (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005); Annegret Schüle, "'Proletarischer Internationalismus' oder 'ökonomischer Vorteil für die DDR?': Mosambikanische, angolansische und vietnamesische Arbeitskräfte im VEB Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei (1980–1989)," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*. 42 (2002): 191–210; Marianne Krüger-Potratz, *Anderssein gab es nicht: Ausländer und Minderheiten in der DDR* (Münster, New York: Waxmann, 1991); Uli

- Sextro, *Gestern gebraucht - heute abgeschoben: Die innenpolitische Kontroverse um die Vertragsarbeitnehmer der ehemaligen DDR* (Dresden: Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1996).
7. For an analysis of the geopolitical and economic background, see Jochen Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration to the Former German Democratic Republic: Serving Socialism and Struggling under Democracy." *Portuguese Studies Review* 12 (2004): 163–87; Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz.'
  8. Cooper, "African Labor History," 116.
  9. Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd ed., African Studies Series (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Julia O'Connell Davidson, *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
  10. See Philip D. Curtin, "Africa and Global Patterns of Migration," in *Global History and Migrations*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 63, 89; Jonathan Baker and Tade Akin Aina, *The Migration Experience in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995); Adam McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846–1940," *Journal of World History* 15 (2004): 155–89.
  11. While the Mozambican government likely saw contract labor migration to South Africa as a blueprint for the concept of temporal labor migration abroad, the East German government drew on its own tradition of contracts with foreign workers since its 1963 agreement with Poland. East Germany's foreign worker agreements included: 1963 Poland, 1969–1980 Hungary, 1973 Vietnam, 1974–1984 Algeria, 1975 Cuba, 1979 Mozambique, 1982 Mongolia, 1985 Angola, and 1986 China. See Berger, "Annäherungen," 36.
  12. LeFanu, *5 Is for Samora*, 14.
  13. Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration," 163; Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' 230–8.
  14. Döring, "Es geht um unsere Existenz," 231.
  15. Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration," 163.
  16. Deferred pay was used across socialist and capitalist labor migration systems, not least to entice workers to return home at the end of their contracts. As in the Mozambican migrations to South Africa and East Germany, it could also serve as an opportunity for states to benefit from the labor power of their citizens.
  17. Alves Gomes, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 16, 2014; Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' 232–9; Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration," 164. For a concise

- overview of the economic relationship between Mozambique and East Germany, see Franziska Rantzsch, “The Negotiations of the Contract Labour Accord between the GDR and Mozambique,” in *Socialist Encounters: Relations, Transfers and Exchanges between Africa and East Germany*, Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel R. Harisch, and Marcia C. Schenck, eds. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2021), 152, 149–50.
18. In the original agreement between the two governments, in article 12(7), it is noted that social security payments will be received by the workers after their final return, in accordance with Mozambican laws and regulations. This was a shortcut used by the East German government because no such social security system existed in Mozambique until 1988; see *Abkommen zwischen der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Volksrepublik Moçambique über die zeitweilige Beschäftigung moçambiquanischer Werktätiger in sozialistischen Betrieben der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, February 24, 1979 (Agreement between the Government of the GDR and the Government of the People’s Republic of Mozambique on the temporary employment of Mozambican workers in socialist enterprises in the GDR), PA AA, MfAA, ZR 970/87.
  19. Samora Machel, *Produzir é um acto de militância* (Maputo: Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da FRELIMO 1979), 7.
  20. *Ibid.*, 32.
  21. Contrary to this, on the South African Rand where Mozambican workers worked before independence, ethnic differences were consciously exploited as a divide-and-rule tactic in the hostels and mines, see T. Dunbar Moodie and Vivienne Ndatshe, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), Ch.1, 3, and 6; Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), Ch.18; Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, C.1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994), 222–5.
  22. For an explanation of the Mozambican flag, see Sarah Lefanu, *S Is for Samora: A Lexical Biography of Samora Machel and the Mozambican Dream* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 5.
  23. The economic, political, and educational links between Mozambique and East Germany received attention in reflective essays by former East German development specialists and government personnel, by emigrants who settled in Germany, and by scholars from a variety of disciplines; see Wolfgang Semmler, Ulrich van der Heyden, and Ralf Straßburg, eds., *Mosambikanische Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR-Wirtschaft: Hintergründe - Verlauf - Folgen* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2014); Matthias Voss, *Wir haben Spuren hinterlassen!: Die DDR in Mosambik: Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse aus drei Jahrzehnten* (Münster: Lit, 2005); Hans-Joachim

Döring and Uta Rüchel, eds., *Freundschaftsbande und Beziehungskisten: Die Afrikapolitik der DDR und der BRD gegenüber Mosambik* (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005). Ulrich von der Heyden, Ilona Schleicher, and Hans-Georg Schleicher, *Die DDR und Afrika: Zwischen Klassenkampf und neuem Denken* (Münster: Lit, 1993), *Engagiert Für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II* (Münster: Lit, 1994); Ilona Schleicher and Hans-Georg Schleicher, *Die DDR im südlichen Afrika: Solidarität und Kalter Krieg* (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1997). On the other hand, the relationship between Angola and Mozambique remains largely unexplored. The most useful accounts are by a former contract worker who settled in Germany and by a former German diplomat; see Paulino José Miguele, “Sobre o Mito da Solidariedade. Trabalhadores contratados moçambicanos e angolanos na RDA,” in *Projekt Migration* (Köln: DuMont, 2005); Hendrik Dane, “Gründung einer Erinnerungsgemeinschaft” in *Ostalgie International: Erinnerungen an die DDR von Nicaragua bis Vietnam*, ed. Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2010). An edited volume on East German–Angolan relations, organized by Ulrich van der Heyden, is currently being written, and recent publications by Immanuel Harisch and Paul Sprute have contributed toward a better understanding of these relations; see Immanuel R. Harisch, “East German Friendship Brigades and Specialists in Angola: A Socialist Globalization Project in the Global Cold War,” in *Transregional Connections in the History of East-Central Europe* ed. Katja Castryck-Naumann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 291–324; Immanuel R. Harisch, “Handel und Solidarität: Die Beziehungen der DDR mit Angola, São Tomé und Príncipe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Austauschs ‘Ware-gegen-Ware’ ca. 1975–1990” (Master of Arts, Vienna University, 2018); Paul Sprute, “Diaries of Solidarity in the Global Cold War: The East German Friendship Brigades and their Experience in ‘Modernizing’ Angola,” *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel R. Harisch, and Marcia C. Schenck, eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 293–318.

24. The German reads “ausgewählte und befreundete afrikanischen Staaten.” East Germany started an export offensive in 1977 with its three African priority partners Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, which reached its climax with the signing of the treaties on friendship and cooperation in 1979. Döring, “Es geht um unsere Existenz,” 10. These three countries were also seen in East Germany as countries with “socialist development” as opposed to other African states with “socialist orientation.” Thus, they were perceived as on the road to becoming what were known as real socialist governments—real as opposed to the ideal of communism.

- Hans-Georg Schleicher, "Vom Höhepunkt zum Ende der Afrikapolitik der DDR" (Lecture at the 12th Potsdam Colloquium of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Brandenburg and the Association for International Politics and International Law e. V. Berlin on Foreign and German Policy, Potsdam, Germany, November 11, 2008).
25. For an excellent study examining state-sponsored labor migration across Western Europe in comparison with East-Central Europe, detailing the evolution of the State-socialist labor migration schemes, see Alena K. Alamgir and Christina Schwenkel, "From Socialist Assistance to National Self-Interest: Vietnamese Labor Migration into CMEA Countries," in *Alternative Encounters*, James Mark, Steffi Marung, and Artemy Kalinovsky, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 100–14.
  26. To contextualize guest worker programs in Europe, see Dimitria Groutsis and Lina Venturas, "Guest Worker Schemes Yesterday and Today: Advantages and Liabilities," in *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 110–17.
  27. Sandra Gruner-Domic, "Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration in der DDR: Die bilateralen Verträge zur Beschäftigung ausländischer Arbeiter (1961–1989)," *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 32 (1996): 204–30.
  28. In a letter written in September 1978, addressed to Secretary of State for Labor and Wages Wolfgang Beyreuther, a foreign service official calculated that it would cost between 8000 and 9000 East German marks a year to train an unskilled worker. That same worker was expected to produce output between 12,000 and 15,000 marks. In another economic appraisal it was estimated that it would cost 15 million marks to train 2000 worker-trainees, whereas they would produce about 20 million marks yearly. We can see that expenditure and economic benefit more than balance each other out and East Germany stood to make a profit. BStU, MfS, HA II, Nr. 32490, sheet 32–44, Decision of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the GDR on the implementation of the Agreement (February 24, 1979) with the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique on the temporary employment of Mozambican working people in socialist enterprises in the GDR (May 31, 1979), cited in Rantzsch, "The Negotiations of the Contract Labour Accord," 152.
  29. The year 1985, when the first Angolan group of worker-trainees arrived in East Germany, saw an economic downturn in Angola in response to the war and a fall in petrol prices in a petrol-dependent economy. Stalinist notions of planning development through heavy industry were abandoned and there were no skilled workers to make light industry a viable option for

- economic diversification. A program of “economic purification” saw the country shifting toward some market principles; see David Birmingham, *A Short History of Modern Angola* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 101–2.
30. For students from the Portuguese colonies the *Casa do Império* in Lisbon was an important meeting place for anti-colonial resistance on which much has been published, for instance Cláudia Castelo, “A Casa dos Estudantes do Império: Lugar de Memória Anticolonial,” *7º Congresso Ibérico de Estudos Africanos* 9 (2010), 1–18; Pedro Almeida Ferreira, “Casa dos Estudantes do Império: Pelo Regime e Contra o Regime,” *Atas I Congresso De História Contemporânea* (2013): 459–69; Michaela Bennici, “Memorie Coloniali: La Casa Dos Estudantes Do Império,” *Iberoafrika. Tintas. Quaderni di letterature iberiche e iberoamericane* 2 (2012): 25–37; Alexandra Reza, “African Anti-Colonialism and the Ultramarinos of the Casa dos Estudantes do Império,” *Journal of Lusophone Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 37–56; Aida Freudenthal, Maria do Rosário Rosinha, *Mensagem Casa dos Estudantes do Império 1944–1994*, 2nd ed. (Lisboa: União das Cidades Capitais de Língua Portuguesa, 2015). The political elites were also internationally mobile and continue to be mobile; see Dalila Cabrita Mateus, *A Luta Pela Independência: A Formação das Elites Fundadoras da FRELIMO, MPLA e PAIGC* (Mem Martins, Portugal: Inquérito, 1999). The Angolan writer Pepetela touches upon these themes in two of his novels; see Pepetela, *A Geração da Utopia* (Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2004) and *O Planalto e a Estepe: Angola, dos Anos 60 aos nossos Dias. A História Real de um Amor Impossível* (Rongel: Dom Quixote, 2009). The wider literature about students migrating from the colonies to the metropolises includes Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), Chs. 8 and 9; Fernando Arenas, “Migrations and the Rise of African Lisbon: Time-Space of Portuguese (Post)Coloniality,” *Postcolonial Studies* 18, no. 4 (2015): 353–66.
  31. Examples for socialist immobility include the East German regime, which was notorious for the travel restrictions it imposed on its citizens, and Vietnam, which entered into a postwar isolation period under the socialist northern regime; see Schwenkel, “Post/Socialist Affect.”
  32. For an explanation of the differences, see Almgir and Schwenkel, “From Socialist Assistance,” 114–16. In both public and academic discourse, foreign laborers who arrived in Comecon countries are often mistakenly referred to as *Gastarbeiter* or guest workers. This is misleading because guest worker programs functioned under a somewhat different logic, whereby workers were invited to temporarily migrate on an individual



- and voluntary basis in response to calls by the host country. The receiving countries pursued a strategy of national economic growth through a supply of low-wage manual labor which served the double purpose of depressing wages through enlarging the workforce available for certain target industries and feeding workers into sectors that needed them.
33. Oppenheimer, “Mozambican Worker Migration”; Almut Zwengel, *Die ‘Gastarbeiter’ der DDR*; Jasper, “Ausländerbeschäftigung in der DDR”; Dagmara Jajesniak-Quast, “‘Proletarische Internationalität’ ohne Gleichheit: Ausländische Arbeitskräfte in ausgewählten sozialistischen Großbetrieben,” in *Ankunft - Alltag - Ausreise: Migration und itnerkulturelle Begegnung in der DDR-Gesellschaft*, ed. Christian Th. Müller and Patrice G. Poutrus (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2005); Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?”
  34. Eric Allina also discusses the importance of the vocational training component for the Mozambican labor and training program in East Germany; see Eric Allina, “‘Neue Menschen’ für Mosambik. Erwartungen an und Realität von Vertragsarbeit in der DDR der 1980er-Jahre,” *Arbeit, Bewegung, Geschichte: Zeitschrift für Historische Studien* 15, no. 3 (2016): 76. Of course the labor migration programs were not conceptualized as pure vocational training for apprentices but alongside using the labor power, many companies made an effort to send back skilled workers. This was met with success, especially in the early part of the programs’ existence. For a further differentiation between apprentices and worker-trainees in the Mozambican case, see Rantzsch, “The Negotiations of the Contract Labor Accord,” 150. For a similar differentiation for Vietnamese across Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and the USSR, see Almgir and Schwenkel, “From Socialist Assistance to National Self-Interest,” 107–13.
  35. I will discuss similar events in Chap. 4. See also Miriam Schulz, “Migrationspolitik der DDR: Bilaterale Anwerbungsverträge von Vertragsarbeitnehmern,” in *Transit | Transfer: Politik und Praxis der Einwanderung in der DDR 1945–1990*, ed. Kim Christian Priemel (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2011), 156.
  36. Labor programs in the socialist East had their roots in student scholarship programs that, starting in the 1950s, trained young people from the global South to become skilled technocrats and political cadres aiding their home country’s development. Beginning in the 1960s, eastern and central European states offered technical training opportunities to relatively modest numbers of apprentices from the global South who learned alongside national apprentices. Many apprentices transitioned into the workforce in Eastern and Central Europe and became de facto short-term

- labor migrants after their apprenticeship was over; see Alamgir and Schwenkel, “From Socialist Assistance to National Self-Interest,” 104–13.
37. Stephen Castles, “The Guest-Worker in Western Europe—an Obituary,” *The International Migration Review* 20 (1986): 761–78; Rita C K Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
  38. Döring, ‘*Es geht um unsere Existenz*,’ 230–2.
  39. Ilona Schleicher, “Berufsbildung und Wirtschaftsbeziehungen DDR-Mosambik,” in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona Schleicher, eds. (Münster: Lit, 1994), 179–95; Bettina Husemann and Annette Neumann, “DDR - VR Angola: Fakten und Zusammenhänge zur bildungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit von 1975–1989,” in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona Schleicher, eds. (Münster: Lit, 1994, 158–78).
  40. The Friendship School (*Schule der Freundschaft*) educated 900 Mozambican children with the aim of returning an elite group of skilled technicians and political cadres to Mozambique. They studied secondary school and underwent a two-year vocational training program; see Marcia C. Schenck and Francisca Ramposo “Socialist Encounters at the School of Friendship” in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis) Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton et al., eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenburg, 2021), 235–45; Tanja R. Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique* (Lexington Books, 2014); Lutz R. Reuter and Annette Scheunpflug, *Eine Fallstudie zur Bildungszusammenarbeit zwischen der DDR und Mosambik* (Münster/New York: Waxmann Verlag, 2006); Uta Rüchel, “...Auf Deutsch sozialistisch zu denken...” - *Mosambikaner in der Schule der Freundschaft* (Magdeburg: Die Landesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR in Sachsen-Anhalt, 2001); Annette Scheunpflug and Jürgen Krause, *Die Schule der Freundschaft: Ein Bildungsexperiment in der DDR* (Hamburg: Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg, 2000); Jason Verber, “True to the Politics of Frelimo? Teaching Socialism at the Schule der Freundschaft, 1981–1990”; in Quinn Slobodian, ed., *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 188–210. Paradoxically, some of these skilled workers returned to East Germany as unskilled workers on these labor migration contracts; see Marcia C. Schenck, “Small Strangers at the School of Friendship: Memories of Mozambican School Students to the German Democratic Republic,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 15 (2020): 41–59.

41. Even after the end of socialist migrations, using export labor in the name of state-building to reduce endemic poverty and development is a model still applied in “emerging nations” today, for instance in Vietnam. Schwenkel argues that “the Vietnamese government considers the exportation of labor vital to the project of viable and sustainable nation-building: generating new jobs, increasing both household income and flows of foreign currency, and strengthening relationships with cooperating countries,” Schwenkel, “Post/Socialist Affect,” 237. In the 1980s Vietnam sent close to 300,000 mostly unskilled workers abroad to communist bloc countries such as the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. The material remittances they acquired helped their families back home, and the income they gained through bilateral agreements supported national reconstruction and debt service, Schwenkel, “Post/Socialist Affect,” 239.
42. This was the case at least in Mozambique, Cuba, and Vietnam; see Oppenheimer, “Mozambican Worker Migration”; Jorge Perez-Lopez and Sergio Dias-Briquets, “Labor Migration and Offshore Assembly in the Socialist World: The Cuban Experience,” *Population and Development Review* 16 (1990): 273–99; Alamgir and Schwenkel, “From Socialist Assistance to National Self-Interest”.
43. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Odd Arne Westad, “Moscow and the Angolan Crisis 1974–1976: A New Pattern of Intervention,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 8–9 (Winter 1996/1997): 21–32; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); James Ciment, *Angola and Mozambique: Postcolonial Wars in Southern Africa*, (New York: Facts on File Inc, 1997); Vladimir Shubin and Andrei Tokarev, “War in Angola: A Soviet Dimension,” *Review of African Political Economy* 28 (2001): 607–18; Vladimir G. Shubin, *The Hot ‘Cold War’: The USSR in Southern Africa* (London; Scottsville, South Africa: Pluto Press; University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008); Telepneva, “Our Sacred Duty”; Gerald J. Bender, “The Eagle and the Bear in Angola,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 489 (1987): 123–32; Gerhard Seibert, “The Vagaries of Violence and Power in Post-Colonial Mozambique,” in *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*, Mirjam de Bruijn, Jon Abbink, and Klaas van Walraven, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2003): 254–76; Klaus Storkmann, “Fighting the Cold War in Southern Africa? East German Military Support to Frelimo,” *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 9 (2010): 151–64; Klaus Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die ‘Dritte Welt,’* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2012).

44. Dane, "Gründung einer Erinnerungsgemeinschaft," 69; Dietrich Frenzke, "Vertrag über Freundschaft und Zusammenarbeit zwischen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Volksrepublik Angola," *Die Friedens-Warte* 62 (1979): 171–4.
45. Julio Braga, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 13, 2014; Henny Matos, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 13, 2014; Ralf Straßburg, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 6, 2014.
46. Schleicher, "Berufsbildung und Wirtschaftsbeziehungen DDR-Mosambik," 184. The agreement referred to here is the *Abkommen zwischen der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Volksrepublik Moçambique über die zeitweilige Beschäftigung moçambiquanischer Werkträger in sozialistischen Betrieben der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 24.02.1979*. Subsequent protocols and directives (1984, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990) modified this agreement, MFAA.
47. Coal and copper mining, the production of trucks, the textile industry, and agriculture are listed as areas of application in article 1(4) of the agreement between Mozambique and East Germany; see February 24, 1979, MFAA.
48. Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' 163.
49. Because several contracts were often signed by the same person, the number of workers was likely smaller than the numbers stated above. The Mozambican labor ministry today estimates that approximately 17,000 workers migrated to East Germany. *Chefe do Departamento de Estatística, Ministério de Trabalho, Moçambique, Armino Mapasse*, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 15, 2014. The exact numbers of Mozambican workers who came to East Germany are probably lost because the original documents at the Mozambican Ministry of Labor are said to be destroyed and the East German bureaucracy counted every new contract, regardless of how many contracts were served by the same worker. Angolan numbers cited in secondary literature vary from as little as 174 workers cited in Almuth Zwengel, to as many as 2500 for the whole period of the bilateral labor agreement, cited in Paulino José Miguele, a number which was also corroborated by President Elvas of the AEX-TAA as discussed in Chap. 6; See Almuth Zwengel, "Kontrolle, Marginalität und Misstrauen? Zur DDR-Spezifität des Umgangs mit Arbeitsmigranten" in *Die "Gastarbeiter" der DDR. Politischer Kontext und Lebenswelt*, ed. Almuth Zwengel (Berlin: LIT, 2011), 4; Miguele, "Vom Mythos der Solidarität," 817. Table 2.2 accounts for 1654 workers between 1985 and 1989, a number cited elsewhere; see Schulz, "Migrationspolitik der DDR," 157 and also roughly corroborated by numbers of registered returned workers in Angola today; see Chap. 6.

50. See Chap. 6 for a discussion of this process.
51. See Article 3(1,2), *Abkommen*, February 24, 1979, MFAA.
52. Schulz, "Migrationspolitik der DDR," 155, 157.
53. Mense, "Ausländerkriminalität in der DDR," 214.
54. John, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, February 2, 2014.
55. Schulz, "Migrationspolitik der DDR," 157.
56. Eva Kollinsky, "Meanings of Migration in East Germany and the West German Model," in *United and Divided. Germany since 1900*, Mike Dennis and Eva Kollinsky, eds. (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 151.
57. Further research is necessary to fully understand the trade relations between Mozambique and Angola and East Germany. Döring argues that due to the trade deficit with Mozambique of more than 200 million Valuta-Mark, accumulated in 1978 and 1979, negotiators from both countries were looking for exports and settled on labor, Döring, *Es geht um unsere Existenz*, 233.
58. Schulz, "Migrationspolitik der DDR," 155. Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' 234–7.
59. Almuth Berger "Annäherungen - Bericht der Ausländerbeauftragten des Landes Brandenburg," (Potsdam: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Landes Brandenburg, 2006), 37.
60. East German statistics can be accessed at Statista. Source: Statistisches Amt der DDR. I calculated that number drawing on the following two tables: For a table illustrating the gross domestic product (GDP) of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1980 to 1989 (in billions of marks of the GDR), see <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/249230/umfrage/bruttoinlandsprodukt-bip-der-ddr/>; for a table illustrating the number of employed persons in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1949 to 1989 (in millions) see <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/249240/umfrage/berufstaetige-in-der-ddr/>, both accessed September 7, 2019.
61. Although it would be unwise to read too much into these specific numerical values, as at these levels of aggregation they are subject to large margins of error and methodological issues, they provide a general indication of the positive economic contribution of foreign workers.
62. Döring, 'Es geht um unsere Existenz,' 234.
63. Schulz, "Migrationspolitik der DDR," 152; Gruner-Domic, "Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration in der DDR," 212–13.
64. Regina from Maputo wrote the poem "Avidor Alemão," [sic], of which I cite the last stanza here, in 2007 as part of a creative writing class, almost twenty years after her stay in East Germany, original in Regina's possession.

65. The task of developing the *New Man* was central to socialist societies. President Samora Machel framed his understanding of the socialist New Man for Mozambique in his speech “Organize society to fight underdevelopment” thus: “Education is our principal instrument in forming the New Man; a man, liberated from old ideas, from a mentality that was contaminated by the colonial-capitalist mindset; a man educated by the ideas and practices of socialism” in Samora Machel, “Organizar a sociedade para vencer o subdesenvolvimento” in *Colecção estudos e orientações 14* (Maputo: Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da FRELIMO ed., 1982), 4. On the concept of the New Man in Angola see Delinda Collier, “A ‘New Man’ for Africa?”; Christine Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola: South-South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976–1991* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), Ch. 4.
66. Marieta, Nampula June 14, 2014, original is in Marieta’s possession.
67. “Avidor Alemão,” [sic], Regina, 2007, second stanza.
68. Fabião, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 13, 2014.
69. “*Neues Deutschland*, 4 March 1983” in Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1985* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 20.
70. Ibid.
71. José Antonio, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 8, 2015.
72. Eusébio João Demba in Ulf Dieter Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta: Vivências dos Moçambicanos antes, durante e depois de estadia na Alemanha* (Maputo: Instituto Cultural Mocambique—Alemanha, ICMA, 2005), 76.
73. Gilda, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 30, 2011.
74. Lino, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 13, 2014.
75. Adérito, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 23, 2015.
76. Armando, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 29, 2011.
77. Patrício, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 27, 2014.
78. For instance, Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter,” 13–15.
79. 22, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 16, 2014.
80. Pedro, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 7, 2014.

81. Bato, Maputo, January 27, 2014.
82. Irene, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 31, 2011.
83. Zeca, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 29, 2014.
84. East German records account for a total of 21,600 signed contracts, see Döring, *‘Es geht um unsere Existenz,’* 143.
85. Estevão, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015.
86. Cuba was the other country that trained Mozambican workers, see, for example, “Trabalhadores Moçambicanos em Cuba,” *Tempo*, No. 458, July 22, 1979, 4. This brief article speaks about 160 Mozambican workers who were sent by the Ministry of Public Works and Habitation to train in Cuba to construct prefabricated housing and to manage and maintain public works.
87. Schüle, “‘Proletarischer Internationalismus,’” 191; Gruner-Domic, “Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration in der DDR,” 4.
88. Both Angola and Mozambique relied on socialist countries to contribute toward educating and training a significant number of their population. For the Angolan-Cuban context, see Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola*. For the Mozambican-Cuban context, see Dorsch, “Rites of Passage Overseas?” For a general overview of East German socialist education, see Hans Mathias Müller, *Die Bildungshilfe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe XI Pädagogik, Vol. 626 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995). For an overview of East German-Angolan aid through education refer to Husemann and Neumann, “DDR - VR Angola.”
89. David, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 17, 2015.
90. Fabião, Maputo, March 13, 2014.
91. Guiro, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 21, 2015.
92. Lídia, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 7, 2011.
93. Müller, *Die Bildungshilfe*.
94. Bato, Maputo, January 27, 2014.
95. For the Cold War context see: Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom*; Westad, *The Global Cold War*; Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*; Shubin, “Unsung Heroes,” 251–62. For the Mozambican context consult: Stephen Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique* (Pinetown, South Africa: 30 degrees South, 2014); Seibert, “The Vagaries of Violence”; Storkmann, “Fighting the Cold War in Southern Africa?” 151–64; Finnegan, *A Complicated*

- War*. For the Angolan context look at: Bender, “The Eagle and the Bear,” 123–32; Saunders, “The South Africa-Angola Talks,” 104–19; Shubin and Tokarev, “War in Angola,” 607–18. Comparative works include Telepneva, “Our Sacred Duty,” and Rusk, “Warfare and Human Rights,” 33–42.
96. Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, “Introduction,” in *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, Samantha Christiansen and Zachary Scarlett, eds. (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2012), 1.
  97. Augusto, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 12, 2015.
  98. Inocêncio Domingos Honwana in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha*, 95.
  99. Zeca, Maputo, March 17, 2014.
  100. Ibid.
  101. Eric Allina, “‘Neue Menschen’ für Mosambik,” 77.
  102. Manuel Da Costa, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 26, 2015.
  103. Moisés João Maconha in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha*, 205.
  104. Ilídio, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015.
  105. For instance, Bato, Maputo, January 27, 2014; Dali, interview conducted by the author, Nacala, Mozambique, June 18, 2014; Januário, Ruth, Francisco, Manuel, Fernando, group interview conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 4, 2014.
  106. Armando, Maputo, August 29, 2011.
  107. Jacinto, interview conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 5, 2014.
  108. Alexander Betts, *Forced Migration and Global Politics* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 4–5. For the counter position, see Liza Schuster, “Unmixing Migrant and Refugee,” in *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 297–303.
  109. Lázaro, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 29, 2011.
  110. Nancy Rose Hunt, “The Affective, the Intellectual and Gender History,” *Journal of African History* 55 (2014): 331–45; Susan J. Matt, “Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the inside Out,” *Emotion Review* 3 (2011): 117–24; Barbara Rosenwein, “Worrying About Emotions in History,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 821–45; Nicole Eustace et al., “AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions,” *American Historical Review* 117 (2012): 1487–531.



111. Lúcia, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 5, 2011.
112. Separation compensation payments could be used as disciplinary measure because they were to be paid “in accordance with the work discipline,” see article 6(3,4) *Abkommen* February 24, 1979, MFAA.
113. Fernando, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 1, 2011.
114. Gaspar, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 24, 2015.
115. Luzia, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015.
116. Lázaro, Maputo, August 29, 2011.
117. 22, Maputo, January 16, 2014.
118. Regina, “Ida, 03 de Janeiro de 1988,” *Prosa*, Concurso de texto literário de Decreação [sic], Alemanha e Moçambique, 2007, 1.
119. Bozzoli and Nkotsoe, *Women of Phokeng*; Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).
120. “Avidor Alemão,” [sic], Regina, 2007, fourth stanza.
121. Zachary Kagan Guthrie, “Labor, Mobility and Coercion in Central Mozambique, 1942–1961” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014); Joel Mauricio das Neves, “Economy, Society and Labour Migration in Central Mozambique, 1930–C.1965: A Case Study of Manica Province” School of Oriental and African Studies (PhD diss., University of London, 1998); Lubkemann, “Migratory Coping in Wartime Mozambique”; Edward A. Alpers, “‘To Seek a Better Life:’ The Implications of Migration from Mozambique to Tanganyika for Class Formation and Political Behavior,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 18 (1984): 367–88; Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

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## CHAPTER 4

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# Socialist Workers and Socialist Consumers

### INTRODUCTION

For the Mozambican and Angolan worker-trainees who came to East Germany, their involvement in producing East German goods, and how they consumed what East Germany had to offer, was central to their experience and their understanding of their migration. Consumption and production are often discussed as two separate spheres, and consumption tends to be associated with consumer society, affluence, choice, and variety, all connected to market economies. However, if we look at the essential unity of people's lives, we see that this distinction is an artificial one. It is one of the many strengths of the oral histories that make up this book that we can see historical actors as both producers and consumers, often simultaneously. Communism held the promise of uniting production and consumption.<sup>1</sup> Companies—in East Germany the VEBs, Volkseigene Betriebe, publicly owned enterprises—were to be places not only of work but also of entertainment and education, consumption and production. Through their experience of both, the worker-trainees transcended stereotypical Cold War simplifications of Western consumption and Eastern production. The specifics of their experiences as producers and consumers were bound up with the status as foreigners and Africans, and their memories of both are heavily influenced by their experience after returning to Africa. This aspect of the dual experience of a socialist economy, and its contrast with economies of the global South both during and after the

Cold War, is an insight into the East German experience that can only be afforded by a transnational history approach.

The first part of this chapter is devoted to production. The design of the labor training program was intended to create model skilled socialist workers. During their stay in East Germany, worker-trainees formally became workers—that is, they passed from being unskilled workers to (ideally) being skilled workers. Regardless of their skills level, they also adopted an identity as workers that remained meaningful to them long after they ceased working in the industrial sector. Companies fashioned workers by integrating the new arrivals into their collectives and introducing them to training and work routines that bestowed soft skills such as language competence, punctuality, and reliability, as well as technical knowledge in various subject areas.<sup>2</sup> They were disciplined when their behavior ran counter to the demands and expectations of productive labor. The young worker-trainees, however, were not simply passive receptacles of knowledge; they also engaged with, and contributed to, their East German world. Oral histories reveal that far from being victims, many worker-trainees succeeded in negotiating the terms of their employment collectively and individually.

The second part of this chapter explores consumption.<sup>3</sup> Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees brought with them experiences of scarcity in their war-torn home countries. This informed the way in which they experienced the East German consumer landscape. While many others compared the goods on offer in East Germany to West Germany and found the consumer landscape wanting, Angolans and Mozambicans experienced it as a land of plenty.<sup>4</sup> This is certainly how many of them remember it. The worker-trainees made use of their wages and worked overtime to buy necessities and luxuries intended to lay the foundations for their own future households in Africa. They were willing to work hard to earn extra income: Rudi Grandtke, a master tradesman who worked with Mozambican laborers, stated in 1982 in a conversation with East German author Landolf Scherzer that some of his Mozambican workers worked about 160 hours overtime a month, something which was legally prohibited but accepted under the pressure to fulfill the production quota. They would start working eight hours in the morning shift and then do another eight-hour shift in the evening.<sup>5</sup> Other groups of foreign workers in East Germany were also industrious in supplementing their incomes to make the most of their consumption possibilities. Vietnamese workers tended to spend their time outside work hours invested in the East German parallel

economy, in tailoring imitated Western clothes or smuggling.<sup>6</sup> The decisions to use their time in East Germany for income maximation were made by the workers.

Not all the workers' attention was on buying goods to consume back home. Angolan and Mozambican workers also bought things to help maintain social networks in East Germany. The worker-trainees' consumption decisions were not only driven by their needs. They also focused on pleasure and status symbols. Consumption was an area of key importance to migrants' contributions to both home and host communities. Their oral histories provide insights into its pleasures that state and company archives do not readily reveal.

## PART I: DOING WORK, MAKING MEANING—THE WORKING LIFE OF SOCIALISM

Film Factory, My Great Model

Film factory, my great model  
Not selfish, from your ranks emerged  
Formed Mozambicans, in great models  
From your ranks emerged formed Cubans.

From your ranks emerged formed Poles  
From your ranks emerged formed Vietnamese  
In great models  
You tempered us with the force of your ideas  
For the great model's work

You built chemistry into our minds  
Great model  
You constructed a great laundry  
In our hands

You built Magnetron, great model  
You made endless cassettes  
Recorded cassettes, film factory, my great model  
You were my great pride.

Regina, February 27, 2007<sup>7</sup>

We celebrate the first of May because we are a people who grasped our independence. We are a people that grasped liberty. And this liberty demands sacrifices. This freedom and independence demand from all of us, old, young, men and women, sacrifices. A small drop of sweat, a small drop of blood, which, together enable this grand victory. ...We recaptured our dignity, we recaptured our personality, because the alliance between workers and peasants effectively governs our society.

During colonial times, I am sure we all remember very well, our workers were not considered human beings but simple pack animals. The class of workers was ignored and disdained. And not just disdained but also seduced into corruption, fought against, and destroyed, and therefore it was difficult for our worker and factory worker to become conscious of his own power. ...We were a dominated, oppressed, and enslaved people.

Samora Machel, May 1, 1979<sup>8</sup>

As Regina's poem demonstrates, work and training were matters of the heart for many young worker-trainees, who took pride in production. To some, Regina's work for six months in the company laundry and for two years rolling cassettes and magnetic tapes might not appear desirable, but to her the work provided meaning.<sup>9</sup> In the rhetoric of revolutionary Mozambique displayed in Samora Machel's quotation above, work was a means to free the country from its colonial past and build a prosperous Mozambique that guaranteed a decent life, devoid of exploitation, to everyone. Young Mozambican worker-trainees were to learn the value and culture of socialist work in East Germany, while being prepared—through vocational training and learning the work rhythms—for future employment in the envisioned industrialized Mozambique.<sup>10</sup> In the meantime, their temporary migration to East Germany got them out of the fragile labor and education market at home and gave them and their families access to remittances in the form of goods from Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from its pure economic value, work served a philosophical or moral and political function in socialist societies like Mozambique, Angola, and East Germany: every person was to derive meaning in life from being a productive worker. A policy of full employment was thus key. This was reflected in policy in most developed socialist countries, most famously the Soviet Union and East Germany. In Mozambique, policies like Operation Production, which targeted unemployed city dwellers, epitomized what could be a near-obsessive focus, sometimes verging on fetishization, of (not always) productive work.<sup>12</sup> The centrality of manual work to human dignity was symbolized by performances such as the national

latrine-digging day. Samora Machel participated personally.<sup>13</sup> In East German companies, many of the returned worker-trainees solidified their understanding of the “socialist work ethic.” The values taught in East Germany corresponded to the values Samora Machel strove to instill in his population. The worker-trainees’ attitudes to work were formed through an ideology of production and physical labor on the factory floor and in factory classrooms. They were also forged through interactions in the forced collective of the work brigades at the factories and with other colleagues, whether in the cafeteria or on company-sponsored field trips. These were often of a decidedly apolitical nature, such as having coffee and cake, going hiking or bowling, or enjoying a pub quiz.

The companies and governmental representatives governed the official framework in which the worker-trainees moved. The East German companies that took on foreign worker-trainees were responsible for language training, technical training, work environment and housing, and official leisure time programing.<sup>14</sup> The thinking behind the migration program, and indeed the thinking behind many of the ways in which socialist societies were organized, saw the company as an intersection of work, learning, and leisure. The more the worker-trainees’ lives were focused on the company, the easier they were to control. In East Germany, the VEBs were sites of material production, political socialization, and sociocultural reproduction for all workers.<sup>15</sup> But while other workers could still spend their free time in private homes, the foreign workers lived in dormitories under surveillance.<sup>16</sup>

Worker-trainees were monitored as much in their (not very) private space in the dormitories as they were in their professional lives on the factory floor and in language and technical training schools. Their group leader, the dormitory janitor, their translator, and their brigade leaders and supervisors on the job were all responsible for supervising the worker-trainees, as was the Ministry of State Security—the infamous Stasi. Worker-trainees were conscious of the control structures, but (perhaps partly because of the short leashes they were on) they did not always take their work routine seriously. As Gaspar admits:

We were also under surveillance. If we didn’t go to school or work, our group leader knocked on our doors and asked what happened. We were very irresponsible, not least because we had money. ...We had practically everything in Germany. We had food, lodging, work, clothes and we still had money for play.<sup>17</sup>

Control was in the interest of worker productivity and also to make sure that workers did not branch out too much on their own and potentially integrate too much, thereby jeopardizing their planned return.

The professional lives and experiences of foreign workers in East Germany depended on a variety of factors. A big factor shaping the experience migrants had was when they arrived. Those arriving in the late 1970s and early 1980s generally received better training because the numbers of worker-trainees were smaller.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the East German economy was not yet struggling to the same extent as in the late 1980s.<sup>19</sup> A second factor was where within Germany migrants lived. Those in urban centers had much better access to a social life and blended into a more cosmopolitan environment than those in more remote parts of the country. Thirdly, the company where a worker-trainee was placed mattered. On paper, all workers had the same rights and duties, though the agreements did not stipulate the specifics of the training.<sup>20</sup> In practice, however, experiences on the factory floor varied widely. Some received first-rate training and rose through the ranks, in rare cases even to the level of master craftsman while in Germany. Many others were exploited as unskilled laborers in hazardous and unattractive jobs.

*Creating Socialist Workers: Language Classes, Vocational School,  
and the Factory Floor*

At the same time that we had language lessons, we also had practical lessons in the company and after the language classes we had theory class related to our work in the company.<sup>21</sup>

The migration programs' structure was oriented toward shaping worker-trainees into socialist workers. The training consisted of language classes, technical classes, and practical labor during shift work. One of the most fundamental steps in constructing the new worker was the acquisition of German. Contrary to regional labor migrations within southern Africa, all worker-trainees to East Germany received language training, however of varying quality. This illustrates the fundamental difference of the scheme compared to, for example, previous Mozambican worker migrations to South Africa. There was indubitably an intrinsic intention running throughout the scheme to train the workers and encourage their—however, strictly limited, temporary, and circumscribed—integration into East German professional life. Worker-trainees themselves understood the



fundamental importance of learning to communicate in German. In Santana's words:

You know very well that if you arrive some place and you don't yet speak the language you are deaf and mute. I remember that was a real annoying headache...My boss spoke very fast and I thought I would return to Angola without ever learning German. But when I entered the school I saw that by studying you can learn anything.<sup>22</sup>

When first arriving in Germany, new groups of migrants had a translator through whom they could communicate with their new environment, whether on the job, with doctors, or going shopping. While facilitating the arrival process, this state of things rendered individual workers dependent upon translators. Worker-trainees received between 100 and 400 hours of language training over three to six months in company schools.<sup>23</sup> The lessons emphasized vocational vocabulary rather than writing or grammar, which meant the language abilities with which workers left East Germany varied significantly. Some worker-trainees, like eighteen-year-old Ilíbio, were highly motivated to absorb the foreign language quickly to facilitate their integration:

We had six months of theoretical German language classes where I quickly distinguished myself. It was my objective to stay in Germany as long as I could so that I could return after the military conflict here [Angola] was over. That is why I had to adapt as quickly as possible and learn that language. I succeeded within the framework of our classes; I was teacher's aide within two months.<sup>24</sup>

Ilíbio was from Huambo in Angola and had been to school in Namibe and Lubango, where he attended the Instituto Médio Friedrich Engels until ninth grade. In 1988, he went to East Germany, straight out of school, with no work or military experience. The prior education he had had allowed him to make the most of his training. Ilíbio was unusual, as learning German was for many of his fellow migrants a major challenge. This was even more so because some Mozambicans arrived with the bare minimum of a fourth-grade education—not an easy feat to achieve in Mozambique at the time. It was particularly these formally less educated migrants who struggled at times with basic reading and writing skills for which the training in East Germany made no provisions.

The process of acquiring new linguistic skills was fraught with misunderstandings. Elvas, who worked for Angolan groups as a translator in different factories across East Germany, remembers:

In reality all races, when they go to a new place, they have two major preoccupations: they want to know the offensive words and how a person is discriminated. You can easily misunderstand the pronunciation of *Schwarze* [blacks] and *Schweine* [pigs] and often people felt offended because they thought of those words as the same. That created problems, and here the translator was needed.<sup>25</sup>

His comment reveals the existence of everyday racism in the form of racist comments and tensions between East German and foreign workers that formed part of the worker-trainees' factory universe from the start.<sup>26</sup>

The training of foreign workers was not always a one-way street; while young Angolans and Mozambicans strove to learn German, some Germans working closely with them learned Portuguese and picked up a few words in African languages from across Angola and Mozambique. Pastor Almuth Berger, of Berlin's Bartholomäus parish, started a Portuguese course in her mission house. She recalls: "We wanted to show them that we were also interested in learning their language. ...on this basis we increased our understanding, that was a beautiful thing."<sup>27</sup> Regina, who wrote the poem about the film factory, remembers that her manager "liked to learn our language, *Changana*. Every time when a cassette broke, she would say 'That is broken, *tchucumeta*.'"<sup>28</sup> On a more formal level, some company brigades learned African revolutionary songs, or received Mozambican names, such as the "Kakomba" brigade at a motorcycle factory. This official engagement was often pretty shallow. It is not clear what "Kakomba" meant—it may have been a wrongly transcribed or spelled version of the name of Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, a Mozambican independence fighter—hardly a sign of deep engagement—and in any case, official events did not mean true meeting of minds.<sup>29</sup>

Technical know-how played an important role in transforming worker-trainees into skilled socialist laborers. They were taught the theory required for their certificates as skilled laborers. Like the language lessons, the company provided this training, which varied by company and by job description. For instance, it took Juma, from northern Mozambique, nineteen months to receive his diploma as a skilled milling cutter with an overall grade of "good," for which he had to pass theoretical and practical subjects (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). The theory behind technical training included



Fig. 4.1 Juma Madeira's certificate as skilled milling cutter, in Portuguese. Source: Juma Madeira

manufacturing techniques, machine engineering, material science, technical design, and length checking practice. Practical lessons included milling and planning (levels 1 and 2) and training under production conditions.<sup>30</sup> From the moment Juma received his certificate as cutter he was considered a skilled worker.<sup>31</sup> Throughout this endeavor it was clear who was learning from whom, a hierarchy juxtaposing North and South, uncomfortably mapping on colonial hierarchies. These asymmetries are also revealed in the paternalistic tone of Juma's report (see Figs. 4.3 and 4.4).



Fig. 4.2 The same certificate in German. Source: Juma Madeira

The text of the report in Fig. 4.4 reads:

J. Madeira worked in light metals production and was deployed on milling and drilling machines. He was interested in technical aspects and achieved good work results. Use of work time and thereby better meeting of expectations not always satisfactory. He fit in well in the work team.

He was very interested in theoretical lessons. Sometimes he missed lessons, otherwise his achievement levels would have been even better. He still needs to work more precisely on written work. He tried hard to contribute to the collective. Appearance and behavior praiseworthy.

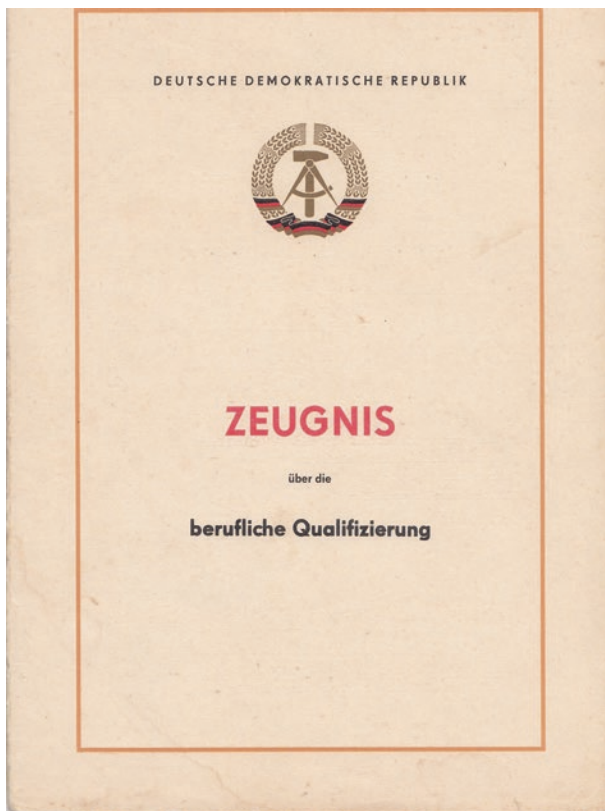


Fig. 4.3 Juma Madeira's report in German I. Source: Juma Madeira

Shift work on the factory floor further molded worker-trainees. Adaptation to new work rhythms was a key part of their training as socialist workers. Much of the learning on the job took place through the practice of soft skills. Punctuality, striving to achieve quality work, and meeting production quotas are examples of the sort of things that were emphasized. Moreover, all worker-trainees had to learn about work and safety regulations; it was the company's responsibility to furnish them with all necessary work equipment and knowledge. Some worker-trainees received certificates, honorable mentions in company newsletters, and promotions to brigade supervisors, and became model workers.

M a d e i r a , J u m a  
Name

hat während der beruflichen Qualifizierung in den einzelnen Fächern folgende Ergebnisse erreicht:

Theorie: Fertigungstechnik	gut
Maschinenkunde	gut
Werkstoffkunde	befriedigend
Technische Darstellung	genügend
Längenprüftechnik	gut
Praxis: Fräsen/Hobeln I	gut
Fräsen II	gut
Hobeln II	sehr gut
Ausbildung unter Produktionsbedingungen	gut
Deutsche Sprache	gut

Allgemeine Einschätzung:

J. Madeira arbeitete in der Leichtmetallbearbeitung und war an Fräse- und Bohrmaschinen eingesetzt. Er war technisch interessiert und leistete qualitativ gute Arbeit. Ausnutzung der Arbeitszeit und damit bessere Normerfüllung konnten nicht immer befriedigen. Ins Arbeitskollektiv fügte er sich gut ein. Am theoretischen Unterricht war er sehr interessiert. Mitunter versäumte er Lehrveranstaltungen, sonst wäre sein Leistungsstand noch besser. Bei der Lösung schriftlicher Arbeiten müßte er noch exakter arbeiten. Er bemühte sich um Kontakte im Kollektiv. Auftreten und Verhalten waren lobenswert.


  
*11. 4. 65*      *Prunk*  
 Leiter des Betriebes      Institut für Berufsbildung

Fig. 4.4 Juma Madeira's report in German II. Source: Juma Madeira

The training gave meaning to some worker-trainees, but not to others. Some struggled to adapt to the strict routine, the cold weather, and the difficult work. The system perceived them as troublemakers. There are several reasons why some worker-trainees expressed unhappiness with their training. Often, training began during the initial stages of their program, when many were still uncomfortable with the new language. Furthermore, schooling in their home countries did not always provide adequate preparation for the requirements of East German theory lessons, a problem with which the program organizers struggled repeatedly.<sup>32</sup> In

other cases, worker-trainees who had completed twelfth grade at home wanted to gain a university education in Germany and were not satisfied with the scope of the labor program. Other worker-trainees were not interested in theory and training but simply in an income. Lastly, the training on offer varied according to industry, company, and section. While some underwent an apprenticeship that saw them receive training across several sections in their industry, others received the bare minimum of safety instructions and learned to operate the machine they were to work.<sup>33</sup> The extent of exploitation of foreign labor in unpopular, unskilled positions also varied across industries and regions.

Some worker-trainees such as Regina, who worked in the film factory, remember enjoying learning both technical expertise and soft skills on the job. Regina recalls being eager to partake in the discussions at work where worker-trainees learned about “hygiene, respect, punctuality, and quality and effectiveness in the workplace.” During her two years at the factory in Wolfen, she was placed in different sectors. In addition to working in the laundry and as a roller of cassettes, she also worked with chemicals where she received additional training in “chemistry, which is the language of the Germans.” She learned “much about how work can be an exchange where you give and receive, how to join and transform products, and how to communicate with the language used at work.”<sup>34</sup> She also learned about German culture at work: Regina’s supervisor taught her “to value my birthday. Every time the 19th of August came around, I found a bunch of flowers and a present on top of my machine.”<sup>35</sup> During lunch break everybody went to the cafeteria to eat “*Wurst, Schmitzel, Broiler*—food of the gods!”<sup>36</sup> Regina sums up: “As luggage from Germany I brought back the German language, training in laundry, chemistry, and manufacturing of cassettes and magnetic tapes. This was my training, and I was a twenty-two-year-old, independent woman.”<sup>37</sup>

Despite Regina’s positive relationship with her work, the eclectic variety of her areas of operation suggests a prioritization of the needs of the factory rather than a concern for the skills that Regina might need upon her reintegration back home. Regina had no choice regarding the selection of her specializations; her placement at a movie factory does not suggest the prioritization of the needs of Mozambican industry. Nevertheless, Regina brought back with her more than skills which she never got to employ and a language that hardly anyone else spoke. She brought with her a sense of the importance of migration for her own development and of wage labor for her independence. Just like for Regina, for many young

Mozambican and Angolan women, going abroad and being able to earn their own income signified personal independence from family structures and the ability to independently provide for their children.<sup>38</sup>

Not all worker-trainees were as enthusiastic as Regina. Some challenged the conditions they found in their respective placements in ways that have been described elsewhere as “weapons of the weak,” “everyday resistance,” or the *Eigensinn*—self-willed-ness—of the workers.<sup>39</sup> Their responses ranged from abandoning their places of work temporarily to leaving permanently. Former Angolan worker-trainees, in the first Angolan group to be sent to East Germany in 1985, remember some of their colleagues voting with their feet. Reportedly, about forty people out of about 250 worker-trainees, sent to IFA (Industrieverband Fahrzeugbau—Industrial Association for Vehicle Construction), Ludwigsfelde, and to Leipzig, decided to return. They refused to partake in the program because they had been under the impression that they were signing up for academic training.<sup>40</sup> One group member recalls: “Soon after our arrival a meltdown happened. When we learned about the actual activities we were to carry out, discontentment spread. Many became demoralized. Some workers ended up conforming and others renounced the contract.”<sup>41</sup> The worker-trainees were expected to “integrate into the factories, to start working directly.”<sup>42</sup> New worker-trainees had to decide for themselves whether they wanted to accept the conditions they found on offer in East Germany or return back home.

Unforeseen events, such as strikes, work stoppages, or accidents, played a special role in the workers’ formation. Strikes in East Germany were officially prohibited. Nevertheless, this law did not stop foreign workers from threatening or going out on strike or refusing to show up for work.<sup>43</sup> In their memories, worker-trainees had had a say on the factory floor, however difficult to voice. Jacinto, a skilled textile worker specializing as a spinner and stretcher, remembers a strike in his pithily named textile company VEB Vereinigte Baumwollspinnereien und Zwirnereien Baumwollspinnerei Zwickau, Werk II Meerane (Zwickau United Cotton Spinning and Twisting Cotton Mill, Meerane factory no. II) over wages received during the training period.<sup>44</sup> Jacinto remembers:

We had a director who was from the same textile industry and we had workers from other sectors who already worked there for a long time. ...They told us we were being robbed and we needed to put on a strike. They had passed through the exact same situation, vindicated, and succeeded. ...the



next morning the 10 o' clock shift did not go to work, my colleague went to strike with three pre-decided mottoes, 'Pay us like workers,' 'We will return to Mozambique,' and 'We will work for another company!' That day there was a lot of tension in the company and the evening shift also did not go to work. ...In the presence of the Director General of the company we won our cause. ...He came, we had an interpreter who communicated to him what happened. He immediately said we were right and ordered that our salary was readjusted for the months during which we had been exploited. But, on the basis of the agreements, we also had to make up for that lost day, which we did on a Saturday. From then onwards things went well.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast, following a failed strike attempt in Mittweida, seven people were sent back, which Jacinto does not remember happening to his colleagues. "When we were threatened with being sent back to Mozambique, the others just said it didn't matter to them, that what mattered was that we were paid what was ours by law," explained Jacinto.<sup>46</sup> Whether the details of this strike occurred exactly as described to me on a hot afternoon in a café in Beira, more than a quarter century later, is of less importance than Jacinto's recollection of his agency and success in having collectively applied pressure on the company to rectify worker-trainees' grievances. Worker-trainees became workers conscious of their rights and knowledgeable about how to claim them. Not all East Germans behaved toward the migrants in accordance with the spirit of the program, but at least in some cases they were willing to correct exploitative tendencies.

Workplace accidents necessitated self-advocacy. In theory, worker-trainees were eligible for compensation and treatment but as the following example demonstrates, in practice it could be difficult to enforce these rights.<sup>47</sup>

I was told that a member of my family had passed away and I went to tell my supervisor that I had to leave on the same day, but he refused to let me go. As a result, I paid little attention to my work and that was how the accident occurred. I became angry and no longer wanted to work for that company. Not that I hold resentment against the company, but I was upset with that person who refused me the leave of absence to return to Mozambique. ...Afterwards my supervisor said I had no right to the indemnity payment because the accident was caused by my negligence. That left me outraged and with a lot of anger against him. When I returned for my second contract in February, I

was left without work for a long time because I no longer wanted to work for that company.<sup>48</sup>

Despite having experienced unfair and abusive workplace treatment, Jacinto was still able to negotiate the situation according to his wishes and switch companies. The East German labor shortage and the special political and economic relationship between East Germany, Angola, and Mozambique put the worker-trainees in a relatively good bargaining position. Furthermore, political embarrassment from the failures of the labor migration scheme gave German officials incentive to negotiate to make things work.

Workers were faced with policies that invaded their personal domain. Despite socialist rhetoric about women's importance in the workplace and as mothers, female worker-trainees had to make difficult decisions between production and reproduction. As Luzia, who worked in textiles in Gera from 1985 to 1989, remembers: "It was a strict rule and written in the contract that if a person became pregnant, they'd be sent away. They [men] had the possibility to father many children there without having to return."<sup>49</sup> Consequently many pregnant female worker-trainees were sent back to an unknown future while their male counterparts left offspring in Germany.<sup>50</sup> The implications could be dire. Those who were sent back prematurely often did not have the chance to bring many goods with them. Additionally, they often had to fight for themselves and their children in the civil wars to which they returned. Yet, quite a few women I interviewed also highlighted their choice to receive help from their own families back home in raising children and therefore wanting to return. Yet, it was the absence of the choice to remain which made this ruling highly problematic. Furthermore, not all women were able to rely on the help of their families but could be shamed for their behavior. Women therefore faced challenges that arose partly from their precarious position in their home society, and partly from East German society failing to live up to its own ideals of combining production with reproduction.<sup>51</sup>

The worker-trainees' East German and other international colleagues were expected to support their transformation into skilled socialist workers. Officially, workplaces were places of international cooperation and racism was illegal. Though many East German colleagues put on their best behavior while at work, this did not stop racists from making their intentions known outside of work. Pedro, who left for East Germany at the age of twenty in 1986, and worked at a textile company close to Dresden with

about 500 other Mozambicans, remembers this schism: “One of my colleagues, a young man, who also came to be auxiliary mechanic like me, we treated each other well in the company, but as soon as we were outside, he was already my enemy. We never reached the point of a physical fight though.”<sup>52</sup> However, others befriended their co-workers. A worker who was at VEB Glasseidenwerk Oschatz—Silk Glass Works Oschatz—from 1987 to 1991 remembered years later: “Even outside work we went on excursions together with our German colleagues, we even left our city and went to explore other cities, or we just played football. It was great.”<sup>53</sup> The integration experience within the workplace depended very much on the atmosphere of the company in which the trainee was placed. This atmosphere was in turn determined by the cities in which migrants were located, the attitudes of the local leadership, the size of the workplace, and whether there was any previous experience with foreign workers.

The labor and training program set out to create socialist skilled labor to support the East German economy in the short term and their home economies in the long term. It did so through knowledge transfer and soft skills training in the company classrooms and on the factory floor. The worker-trainees challenged those parts of the program that did not work for them; in return, the companies sought to discipline the worker-trainees into submission to the rules and regulations of the program.

### *Disciplining the Socialist Worker*

Controlling the labor force is an important theme in the history of industrial production. It certainly has a long history in southern Africa.<sup>54</sup> For the worker-trainees, infractions could lead to disciplinary talks, warning letters, being punished with a curfew or fines, or even expulsion from the program. Chief among forms of indiscipline at the workplace was the inability or unwillingness to perform according to expectations. Infractions that brought punishment included pregnancy, disease, religious convictions, excessive drinking, and criminal behavior. Pregnancy, long-term diseases, and religious beliefs were effectively criminalized, presumably because they interfered with the workers’ productivity.

Worker-trainees who fell sick for an extended period were to be sent back.<sup>55</sup> However, my collected oral histories do not speak of such cases. Speculatively, this may be because workers who had to return early identify less with the *madjerma* cause, so I did not get the opportunity to speak with them. Another possibility is that most of those who were sent home

early due to ill health are now dead. A happier explanation is that the threat to send the workers home in case of illness was rarely carried out. I did come across cases where workers were treated for serious illness in East Germany, sometimes over a period of months, and for various diseases ranging from tuberculosis to malaria.<sup>56</sup> Some worker-trainees became ill because of the shock of (not) adjusting to the sudden change in climate, cuisine, and work routine.<sup>57</sup> The medical eligibility of the worker-trainees was among the selection criteria and East German doctors were stationed in Mozambique.<sup>58</sup> Despite this, some worker-trainees arrived in ill health. This indicates the limitations of the in-country health screenings. One worker-trainee remembered: “Two days after we arrived, we underwent another medical inspection. Many of us left with diseases that we never even knew we had.”<sup>59</sup> The East German treatment options were often not available in Mozambique or Angola. Access to East German health care was therefore perceived as an advantage, and in some cases was even seen as the primary reason for migration.<sup>60</sup>

Worker-trainees faced consequences, including deportation, if they followed their religious beliefs in a way that companies considered a threat to maintaining work discipline. Christian ties helped to integrate worker-trainees into East German society as they found church support networks or were adopted by host families.<sup>61</sup> As throughout the Eastern Bloc, the parties in charge of Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany perceived religious networks as competition. A Mozambican migrant, a FRELIMO member, was also involved with the Cabana movement. Portuguese for ‘hut,’ this organization was originally started in 1988 in the Bartholomäus parish in Berlin by pastor Almuth Berger. It began as an informal meeting space for religious foreigners and East Germans and expanded to include students and workers from various nationalities. The Mozambican man was forced to choose between his involvement with the church and FRELIMO. When he chose the church, FRELIMO immediately sent him back to Mozambique.<sup>62</sup> Another worker-trainee belonging to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, whose faith forbade him working on Fridays, could not arrange his schedule to have Fridays off. When it became clear that the company showed no interest in accommodating his needs, he decided to withdraw from the contract and flew back home.<sup>63</sup> Worker-trainees were exposed to the tensions between secular state socialism and religious expression from both host and home governments.

It is important to highlight that religious expression was not always repressed, and in fact also sometimes opened possibilities for intercultural

learning. While Mozambican and Angolan worker-trainees learned from the East German Protestant and Catholic Churches, in turn German parishes learned about Christian diversity in Mozambique. Pastor Almuth Berger remembers that the Mozambicans “founded a real ecumenical congregation ... this was an exciting development, interesting from a theological point of view, usually in East Germany something like this did not exist.” She recalls having been interested in the plethora of Christian churches, ranging from churches which originated in missions from various countries, to Pentecostal denominations.<sup>64</sup>

Worker-trainees also faced disciplinary measures for their alcohol consumption when it interfered with performance at work or in vocational school. In Samora Machel’s Mozambique, drunkenness was one of the cardinal sins, interpreted as sabotage to the revolution.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, in East Germany, the young revolutionaries had ample access to alcohol. João, an Angolan worker-trainee, remembers:

I drank too much. I was very close to being sent back because of my drinking. During class, when the others drank juice, I drank alcohol. They caught me with a bottle of whisky, but I got away with it explaining that I drank to keep warm in the cold weather. To tell the truth, I really did drink because I could not deal with the low temperatures. I had a colleague with whom I used to drink but after they spoke to us, I quit drinking and he continued and when they discovered this he was sent back to Angola.<sup>66</sup>

João’s story illustrates some reasons migrants had for drinking, such as mitigating emotional and physical adjustments to the work routine, to the different culture or the inhospitable weather, and to homesickness.

Substance abuse was one expression of *Eigensinn*, a way in which workers were able to alleviate the pressure, escape the control of the work routine, and maintain a sense of independence. Drinking during work breaks can also be read as a form of passive resistance.<sup>67</sup> Drinking was in fact so pervasive that those who did not consume alcohol experienced group pressure. For instance, Bernardo grew up in a family in Lunda Sul province in which all the children completed secondary school because the father, a nurse, and the mother, a primary school teacher, valued education. He decided not to drink: “I had many problems with colleagues because of that decision. My decision had to do with my family, nobody smokes or drinks in my family. ...I am a Catholic and I don’t like alcohol and drugs.”<sup>68</sup> The pervasiveness of drinking was not only an annoyance to

peers who were excluded, it was also a problem which regularly confronted team leaders and companies. Often this led to conversations between company personnel and worker-trainees with the goal of making them understand their “misbehavior” to bring about a behavioral change.<sup>69</sup> Such a warning, in João’s case, worked. In the case of his friend, it did not.

Committing violent or petty crimes led to disciplinary measures ranging from serving a prison sentence in East German prisons to being returned home prematurely. Foreign worker-trainees were involved in disco brawls, but not all were as unlucky as Anselmo, who was deported. Anselmo encouraged a group of Mozambicans to start a fight with East Germans to exact revenge for the beating of one of his Mozambican friends. “Our Mozambican superiors reported the incident to our delegation saying that we started the trouble, and they requested our expulsion and consequently our return to Mozambique,” remembers Anselmo.<sup>70</sup> His comments underscore the role that home country representatives and delegations played; disciplining the worker was a matter of bilateral cooperation between home and host country. The Angolan and Mozambican groups were stratified according to hierarchies. The interests of groups within the national groupings were often at odds.

### *Becoming New Men and Women*

Creating the *New Man*, the *Homem Novo*, or the *Neue Mensch* in Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany was fundamental to socialist development.<sup>71</sup> Samora Machel framed his understanding of the New Man for Mozambique: “Education is our principal instrument in forming the New Man; a man, liberated from old ideas, from a mentality that was contaminated by the colonial-capitalist mind-set; a man educated by the ideas and practices of socialism.”<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, Agostinho Neto declared during Angola’s proclamation of independence: “The objective is...the construction of a just society and a New Man. ...The working masses shall exert complete power, the only guarantee to form the New Man and for the triumph of our revolution.”<sup>73</sup> The Angolan and Mozambican New Man was a top-down vision of the new modern, virtuous citizen who sacrificed private pleasure for political duty. The idea of the New Man also carried the tension between the promise of individual education and the chance for upward mobility in the name of the collective and the socialist revolution.

The creation of socialist workers who lived up to the standards of the New Men and Women was one of the key goals of the worker training migration program. Politically, the Angolan and Mozambican migrants were to help grow the nascent proletariat in Angola and Mozambique, thereby strengthening the base for the national socialist revolutions. Economically, they were to lend their labor power and expertise to their country's development after their return. While the worker-trainees were conscious of this mission, few of them came to embody the socialist worker at home. Most returned home to a post-socialist order where everything they had learned about socialism and most of their technical knowledge was obsolete. In some ways, the emphasis on large-scale state programs that managed labor with the idea of creating a modern human was reminiscent of the late colonial period in Africa. The colonial civilizing mission became the socialist civilizing mission. Scientific socialism replaced religion and socialist notions of development replaced capitalist ones. A belief in the dignity of labor and linear modernization survived, however. Above all, the hierarchy of who was learning from whom was unchallenged in the shift from colonialism to socialism.<sup>74</sup>

Worker-trainees went to Germany to become workers. That is, many adopted an identity as workers that remained meaningful to them long after they had ceased working in the industrial sector.<sup>75</sup> In the interviews, former worker-trainees create bridges between their past and present experiences that are important to understanding how a worker's identity can be formed and how it is independent from the work that people are actually doing. In East Germany, workers formed expectations about what a socialist welfare state should provide its citizens. This included health care, retirement benefits, subsidized housing, transportation, basic goods, and employment. They also hold the post-socialist countries in which they now live to this standard and find them deeply wanting. They understood, and understand, "real work" as wage labor in the formal economy. Lufaquenda, who was recruited for East Germany when she was in the ninth grade and worked there from 1988 to 1991, remembers: "I liked the work I was doing." She describes her work at the cotton mill in Zschopau as "dignified work." She associated dignity with the reliable receipt of a salary: "During the week we worked at night, we earned more. ... There never was a late payment, at the end of the month you had your salary, here in Angola there is a lot of delay."<sup>76</sup> Salaries were central to the worker-trainees during their time in East Germany. Receiving equal pay as compared to other workers served as a measuring rod of

exploitation. The secretive nature of the shifting deductions from their base salary led to rumors and the feeling of being exploited for political ends. Salaries varied according to industry and status (apprentice, skilled or unskilled worker) as well as individual output. Group leaders and translators had a higher income than worker-trainees. The link between work, dignity, and wages is a strong one in most former worker-trainees' present-day understanding of labor. Most worker-trainees come from a background in which they and their families experienced irregular payment during colonialism as well as in the postcolonial states they are now inhabiting. Uncertainty about one's compensation for work performed is thus a continuity that shapes workers' ambiguous relationships to their work. The connection between work, wages, and dignity is felt especially strongly by the many who are suffering economically and psychologically from the precarious and informal work and pay systems which characterize their post-return lives and continue to fuel present-day *madjerma* activism.<sup>77</sup>

Many worker-trainees remember their migrant labor experience more favorably than their post-return work experiences. Workers from Nacala, a port city in northern Mozambique where a small group of returnees found blue-collar wage labor, illustrate this: "In Germany work is organized and there is no exploitation of the worker. On the contrary, they are valued. Here there is a great devaluation of workers and the spirit of work is missing."<sup>78</sup> Like these workers, many portray their migrant work experience as better—more efficient, safer, more dignified, more organized—than their post-return experiences. Gaspar, from Luanda, would even send his children to East Germany: "There people care more about the workers, there are constantly reunions. That is marked in my heart and if I had the possibility to send my children to partake in a similar experience, I would."<sup>79</sup> As should be clear from the ground already covered in this chapter, work and training in East Germany was hardly a bed of roses. Enthusiasm for it nearly a quarter century later reflects even worse working conditions in contemporary and recent Mozambique and Angola, particularly as regards stability of income. Against this present, the past appears glowing by contrast.

Work and training reflected trade-offs between different imperatives. On a national level, the East German state wanted functional workers to satisfy its demand for labor power for its increasingly struggling economy. On a bilateral level it also increasingly wanted to see a return on the current account surplus with Mozambique which had developed in the barter trade system used in the socialist world. To that end voluntary "transfers"



of a portion of the workers' wages became mandatory. In reality, the transfers were fictional as the Germans simply paid a lower proportion of the wages and Mozambique and Angola were to make up the difference on the workers' return. From the German perspective, the difference between what workers produced and what they were paid could create a surplus. This was a way of offsetting the imbalance of trade. As an overarching international policy goal, East Germany supported fledgling socialist states in advancing toward socialist world revolution.

Angola and Mozambique sought to get some of their excess workers employed and trained for future use in their planned industries. The individuals who constituted the scheme wanted to gain an education and work experience and make money. Some of these goals emphasized work. The future-oriented developmental ones emphasized both, but with a far greater weight on training. What the migrants themselves were most interested in depended on their own personalities, circumstances, and short- and long-term goals.

## PART II: CONSUMPTION: THE MATERIAL LIFE OF SOCIALISM

Looking through the returned workers' photo collections, carefully saved in illustrated albums or simply scattered in boxes, it is hard to miss the centrality of materialism. A young man proudly posing with Pink Floyd's vinyl *Dark Side of the Moon*, another in an Adidas sports jacket and jeans posing with a white baby doll. A group of young women in high heels, animal prints, and shiny jewelry. A man in a suit playfully combined with sneakers, another in fine leather shoes with striped overalls and sunglasses. A woman posing in her room between a TV, a sound system, and shelves displaying Fanta, Sprite, Pepsi, and Coke cans like trophies. Two women smoking on a bed underneath walls covered in posters of Michael Jackson and pin-up girls from West Germany; a group of men smiling at the camera, holding guitars. Again and again, social snapshots with beer bottles. Such is the colorful life captured in black and white—and occasionally in color—that worker-trainees kept as memories and sent home from the Eastern Bloc.<sup>80</sup>

Ina Merkel points out that consumption in socialism has frequently been discussed in terms of a shortage of consumer goods and a lack of variety and aesthetics.<sup>81</sup> These portrayals of a limited consumer life under communism have led to a homogenized depiction of “the socialist way of life” as being dichotomously different to capitalist (over-)consumption.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, much of the traditional story of the Cold War is told through a dichotomous analysis which contrasts collectivism with individualism, homogenization with pluralism, norms with needs, and needs with wants. The memories of Angolan and Mozambican former worker-trainees pry open this schematic conceptualization and open up a space for another, more ambiguous—and because history is always ambiguous, more accurate—reading of East Germany. The migrants experienced East Germany as a place of riches and also as a means to access Western goods.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the memory of those who stayed on until after the fall of the Berlin Wall is colored by their shopping sprees in the West before returning home.

Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees' consumption habits are best thought of along two temporal axes and two relational axes. First, they consumed with an eye to their East German present and immediate future. They enjoyed fashionable clothes, music, alcohol, cigarettes, and much sought-after food items like bananas, rice, and garlic that were challenging to buy in East Germany. Moreover, they bought presents with which to maintain relationships with friends, colleagues, and partners in East Germany. Secondly, they invested in their return home.<sup>84</sup> They sent presents home to family and friends—we can see this as a way of cultivating their networks ahead of their return. Most importantly, they relished the autonomy their work abroad afforded them to buy goods to prepare for the establishment of their own households back home. These goods ranged from electronics to furniture and kitchen equipment. The migrants' consumption enabled them to acquire the personhood they desired by sustaining both their host and home social networks and collecting the material basis for their future life back home.

### *Going East to Shop*

From an ideological perspective it is ironic that young people, sent off to a socialist country to learn how to become New Men and Women and return as vanguard workers, remember material consumption as having played a central role in their migration experience. Material consumption remained an emotive issue for the migrants through all three stages of their migration. Before they left, they dreamed of the goods they would acquire and the lifestyle they would assume in East Germany; in East Germany, they focused on living and portraying a life they deemed worthwhile while also preparing for their return. After their return, they acquired social standing through the goods they brought to keep and to

redistribute. Once marginalized, they parted with many goods in a struggle for survival. The Mozambican and Angolan governments, familiar with the concept of labor migration to industrial centers as a result of their history with South Africa, likely factored remittances in the form of material goods into their vision of this labor and training program. The *Gayisa*, Mozambican men who returned from mine labor in South Africa, brought with them all sorts of consumer goods to maintain their networks and build their futures.<sup>85</sup> From the perspective of the migrants themselves, production was intricately linked to consumption.

Socialist economies like that of East Germany strove to satisfy the basic needs of their population while securing general well-being for everybody. The relationship of socialist governments to consumption changed over time from advocating austerity to a greater awareness of the importance of satisfying consumer demands. When the worker-trainees arrived in East Germany at the end of the 1970s, the government had developed “consumer socialism.” Many East Germans who compared their choices with those of family and friends in West Germany perceived consumer socialism as lacking.<sup>86</sup> However, East Germany was the most advanced socialist society in terms of consumption possibilities. It was a far cry from the scarcity to which worker-trainees had been exposed at home in the war economies of recently independent nations mired in ongoing wars.

The basic tenet of consumption in communism remained that nobody should enrich themselves at the expense of others, and that each citizen should contribute according to their ability and consume according to their needs. This expectation required rational consumption on the part of socialist consumers and a mutual understanding of which needs were genuine or false and which demands were appropriate or excessive. In practice, this proved an impossible balance even just among East Germans. The continued existence of social stratification in a purportedly classless society remained a sensitive topic. The same can be said for the stickiness of race and racial thinking in an ostensibly anti-racist society.<sup>87</sup> Tensions rose when foreign worker-trainees, with different ways of gauging basic needs and appropriate or excessive demands, encountered the planned economy.

Foreign worker-trainees generally bought into the socialist logic of pride in production, yet, to them, this did not preclude a simultaneous pride in consumption. Merkel reminds us that in East Germany: “Consumption over and above...real needs was interpreted as

compensation for an unsatisfying life. True satisfaction lay in being productive.”<sup>88</sup> For worker-trainees, consumption was the expression of a life they had desired back home. They did not see the contradiction between consumption and production that socialist ideology sought to establish. In any case, production and consumption were often linked. Some were involved in the production of the very things they came to consume whether indirectly or, sometimes, directly. For instance, Juma Madeira and Graciél Chumbe, whom we encountered in the prologue, worked in the production of the famous MZ motorbike brand. Many a worker was proud to export an MZ back home. While their labor aided the production of more goods, foreigners’ consumption put an additional burden on East Germany’s planned economy with its inflexible supply. Global redistribution of goods led to pressure on national supply. The politics of socialist consumption and the practices of consumption in socialist economies were not always compatible.

Among the things that the migrants sought in Germany for immediate and personal consumption were warm clothes, fashionable outfits, stereo equipment, music, food, alcohol, and train tickets. Worker-trainees often felt overwhelmed upon arrival in East Germany at the sheer quantity of available goods and food, and the affordability of rent and transport.

Our life was good in comparison to what we had before and what we had after. We did not have to pay much for housing, or water or electricity. Food did not cost very much so we had a lot of money to spend on drinking, partying, disco, and to buy things. We had 600,- marks every month. You could get a train ticket to Berlin for 20,- marks, so you see it was really a lot. We were young, that is the stupidity of youth.<sup>89</sup>

The Angolan and Mozambican migrants, as with East German citizens, benefited from price subsidies but had to pay extra for non-essential goods. The East German government intended to save its socialist citizens from their own consumption desires through price mechanisms. Goods and services the government deemed necessary for a dignified life were subsidized. Housing, tram tickets, and basic food items such as bread and potatoes were cheap. Non-essential items such as cars and coffee remained expensive. The East German consumer landscape catered to different income levels through introducing special stores such as *Exquisit* for high fashion, *Delikat* for luxury food products, and *Intershop*, a chain selling Western goods and rare items for hard currency.<sup>90</sup> These enclaves of luxury

aimed to satisfy consumers with more purchasing power, but foreign worker-trainees also occasionally frequented these stores in the hunt for Western goods or foodstuffs familiar from home.

Men and women generally bought similar items, but there were some differences. Some men bought food to prepare in the dormitory kitchens and some women invested in TVs and stereo equipment, but on the whole women report to have been drinking less frequently, investing less in going out to night clubs, and buying fewer motorbikes and cars. While men bought handbags, makeup, flowers, and chocolates for their partners, Mozambican women did not mention to me that they had bought gifts for their partners. Both men and women bought things for children left at home, but women talked more about this and it was often more central to their narrative. Women often made investment decisions that conformed to images of being responsible young women and mothers, but they were also young and enjoyed the freedom of spending their own wages. The female worker-trainees do not fit schematic depictions of female consumers focused on domesticity. Most importantly, they were directly involved in the production of goods; their domestic sphere was curtailed to life in a dormitory and the support of geographically distant family.<sup>91</sup> Not only were both men and women involved in producing sometimes the very goods they consumed but both men and women invested in necessities and luxuries for their future households, and men and women shared an interest in fashion, music, and good food as well as in providing both for their home networks and for their own futures.

While in capitalist systems migrants are often feared due to worries about competition for employment, they were feared in East Germany because they were seen to be competition for limited consumer goods.<sup>92</sup> Shopping brought foreign workers in close contact with the East German population. Introducing people with culturally different consumption habits into a planned economy struggling to keep its consumers satisfied aggravated local anxieties. An example of this was food purchases. Some worker-trainees found German food inedible or experienced digestion problems and thus continued cooking their own meals rather than eating in canteens.<sup>93</sup> Mozambicans typically understood rice, chicken, and garlic as the ingredients of a good meal, while from the perspective of an East German citizen, these staples were sources of envy since they were hard to find in local shops. Eusébio remembers that bananas were often available only once a week—and indeed bananas became a symbol for scarcity in East Germany readable until today.<sup>94</sup> When he, as the group leader, took

his group of worker-trainees out shopping, East Germans would make racially tinged comments such as: “Get out of the line, you have so many of these in Africa!”<sup>95</sup> Many East Germans saw the worker-trainees as competition for buying scarce luxury items. They saw the African consumption habits as reflecting privileged access to coveted goods. This attitude led to rumors, fueling jealousy and other tensions in East German supermarkets and beyond.<sup>96</sup>

Worker-trainees do not only talk about racist encounters in supermarkets. They also speak about how scarcity brought about informal help networks. Shortages in the East German economy led to parallel informal economies including bartering, a black market, and networks of people exchanging goods and services.<sup>97</sup> For worker-trainees, participating in such networks could pay off in unexpected ways. An example is Bato, who, from 1988 to 1990 worked as a cutter producing diesel motors at IFA Motorenwerk in Nordhausen, and remembers having established close connections with his girlfriend’s family, and indeed having found love because of sharing:

After two months there, I had a German girlfriend and went to see her every weekend. ... We got to know each other because her mother asked me for garlic, and I gave it to her. It was like this. Her mother cleaned in our dormitory and started talking to me. We talked and talked, and she had already shown me a photo of her girls. One day she asked me if I had garlic for her. I gave it to her, and she invited me to her house for that Saturday afternoon. When I got to the train station her daughter picked me up, and we went to her mother’s house. The whole family was there, the mother and the brothers and we ate a lot of cake and drank coffee. Later we danced and people drank and smoked. At that time, I did not yet do either, but I was soon to learn. Anyway, I had a whole German family, and I had a lot of contact with them.<sup>98</sup>

Worker-trainees sometimes confronted hostilities and at other times were integrated into networks of exchange which could be an entry into East German social life.

Many worker-trainees saw East Germany as a country where they could not only satisfy their needs but also invest in their dreams of a good life. As the privileged sections of East German society experienced socialist consumption through pleasures derived from luxury goods, many Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees also associated East Germany not with deprivation but with luxury. They bought records, TVs, stereo equipment,

and fashionable clothes, items we could classify as wants rather than needs. Young men also spent lavishly on their partners. An impressed nineteen-year-old female factory worker recalled in 1982 what her Mozambican colleague from the assembly line for SR 52 mopeds had given his partner:

We went to her birthday party. ...Well, what he gave her, we don't receive on Easter, Christmas, and Whitsun together. If you'd have added it up it would have been around 300,- marks for sure. He shopped in the Exquisite store: stockings, a bra, lingerie, then he bought a leather bag in the leather shop—the red one that she always carries—a purse, and five boxes of Cabinet [cigarettes], a nightgown, chocolate, and more of that kind of stuff. I don't think that you would spend this much money on a person whom you don't love at least a little.<sup>99</sup>

This list of gifts reveals that workers consumed luxury goods in significant quantities; 300 marks would be about half a month's income.<sup>100</sup> This example, of course, has a gendered aspect to it and demonstrates the cultural expectations of many Mozambican men of a partnership between a man and a woman, where material gifts can play a large role in wooing.<sup>101</sup>

The worker-trainees' positive memories of East German retail reveals that they construe luxury as the opposite of shortage. The more usual approach is to define luxury goods under socialism as those not addressing immediate needs. Worker-trainees go further in describing as luxury the relative availability of goods. Some of these goods might have seemed ordinary to the average East German, but their presence to the Africans denoted plenty.<sup>102</sup> Long lines of consumers were a common feature across the socialist East as well as in Mozambique and Angola but the shops were emptier in southern Africa than in East Germany.<sup>103</sup> Worker-trainees remember their home as a true economy of shortage: "At that time we had neither food nor clothes. So, when you arrived in the dormitory where you found a modern kitchen with sophisticated machines...that was a miracle."<sup>104</sup> Moreover, luxury included consumerist pleasure, which could include the satisfaction of long-unmet needs, or consumption which aspired to distinction and extravagance. Both of these aspects are visible in the workers' choices of fashionable clothes, many of them Western in style.<sup>105</sup>

Consumerism was an aspect of identity politics for the worker-trainees and East Germans alike. They lived in a world that sought to curtail

individual autonomy, and one result was that consuming goods became an expression of individuality and self-determination.<sup>106</sup> Both worker-trainees and East Germans wore home-made clothes that mixed West and East.<sup>107</sup> Listening to Michael Jackson or Pink Floyd records allowed worker-trainees to become part of an international world that transcended the Iron Curtain. Katherine Verdey illustrates that people invested in goods to distinguish an independent self, vis-à-vis an unpopular regime.<sup>108</sup> For the worker-trainees, coming from a context of deprivation, consumption was not meant as criticism of socialism, but rather they understood socialism as an enabler for the possibility to migrate abroad to consume. Consumption remained central to their sense of personhood as it had been for the many labor migrants in southern Africa before them. This generation of worker-trainees expanded the product range they remitted back to their home countries by being able to tap into both the East and West German consumer markets.

The West held a certain fascination for some worker-trainees who displayed Madonna posters and Fanta, Sprite, and Coca Cola cans in their dormitory rooms. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries measured their own living standards against American suburbia, but for East Germany the more important comparison was on the other side of the inner German border.<sup>109</sup> Worker-trainees also looked toward Black America. They were primarily interested in the West insofar as they had an active interest in obtaining better-quality goods from West Germany at cheaper prices. They could obtain Western goods in the Intershop at inflated prices. But it was more advantageous to use personal networks. To that end, worker-trainees ordered goods from African students, who were in many cases able to transcend the wall, contrary to the workers who were not supposed to leave East Germany. A worker-trainee remembers: "Whenever we wanted something from the other side we talked to students because those were [the people] free to go there. I had a nephew who studied there at the time."<sup>110</sup> Other workers had family members in the West who were able to send goods. These networks then facilitated access to Western goods even when it was impossible for worker-trainees to go there themselves.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, West Germany became an important location for many workers to spend the welcome money that foreign workers and East Germans alike received.<sup>111</sup> In addition, many workers spent their indemnity pay after the premature cancellation of their labor contracts in 1990 in the former West. The vast majority



of the 15,100 Mozambican and 1300 Angolan worker-trainees registered in 1989 went on a shopping pilgrimage to West Germany.<sup>112</sup> It seems safe to assume that these spending sprees subsequently colored the memory and perceptions of their entire stay in Germany.

Candido, who worked in East Germany from 1981 to 1990 at a textile company close to Dresden, remembers the fall of the Berlin Wall, like many worker-trainees, with mixed feelings:

When the wall came down, I was watching TV in the dormitory. There were many problems even before that day because the companies had ceased to work as they should have. Well, German unification was on the one hand beautiful because it allowed German families to reunite. But we were there without our families and we wanted to work. So, for us it was not such a good day. What was good though was that we could now buy Western products with West marks without having to change our money first. There were more goods now to take home and we could get them more easily.<sup>113</sup>

For those worker-trainees who had accepted returning, a final buying binge ensued. They were supposed to receive 3000,- marks indemnity payment and 70 percent of the monthly net wage for at least three months as makeup pay to compensate for the premature termination of their contracts.<sup>114</sup> This was money to spend on goods to take home. Some worker-trainees even returned with cars (Mercedes Benz, not Trabant), motorbikes (MZs), and other large and expensive items like refrigerators and stoves.<sup>115</sup> A colleague related to the Angolan ambassador to an Eastern European country remembers going to the West primarily for goods that were cheaper there: “Things were different over there, but it wasn’t a shock. We took advantage of the situation and bought lots of things there...clothes, electronics, sound systems, and more things.”<sup>116</sup> Worker-trainees were guided by both rational decisions and emotional longings for luxury. Fernando, who worked in East Germany from 1985 to 1991 as a weaver, remembers having bought his first bottle of champagne in West Berlin.<sup>117</sup>

The worker-trainees’ consumption patterns knew no national borders—many of the workers who were sent to East Germany also consumed West German goods, many of which were ultimately destined for Mozambique and Angola. This transnational scope led to tensions; while the planned economy operated on a national level, based on the needs of the East German market, worker-trainees’ needs were not encompassed by this. The goods transfer from North to South on the one hand conformed

to the East German foreign policy of helping a southern African communist state to mitigate its dire shortages of consumer goods. On the other hand, it led to a problem of internal policy as angry East Germans feared the competition of foreign workers in the supermarket.

We see, therefore, that the Mozambican and Angolan experience of socialist consumption was at odds with the usual view. The challenges facing the development of a socialist Angola and Mozambique were enormous. The development of the national economies was severely hindered by the triple challenge of a Portuguese brain drain after independence, the lack of skilled technical personnel due to the legacy of colonial politics, and an ongoing destabilization war that commanded resources and manpower and repeatedly targeted the economies through damaging transport and production hubs. Angolans and Mozambicans came from societies in which socialism was under construction and had relocated to a place with already-existing socialism. Their memories illustrate how different socialist spaces could look from different vantage points. Moreover, the worker-trainees came to East Germany and experienced internal German division and unification firsthand. Their memories show that they found ways around the restrictions on West German goods, even before the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the fall of the Wall, they took part in the sudden exposure to Western consumerism that happened to everyone in East Germany. For workers who lived through the changes in 1989–1990, the availability of cheaper Western goods, together with the welcome money from the West German government, and their indemnity payments, allowed for an unparalleled shopping spree. But even those workers who returned before also speak of East Germany as a consumer paradise when compared with their home. Overall, the feeling prevailed that the migration was worth it, in terms of the immediate material economic gains it brought with it: “When we left, we had nothing but the shoes on our feet and the clothes on our bodies, when we came back, we had everything and more than we could have dreamed of.”<sup>118</sup>

*Consumption and Becoming: Seeking Personhood Abroad  
and Staying in Contact with Home*

Worker-trainees migrated to become people who were taken seriously in their communities of origin as much as in the communities of their temporary diaspora. They believed one of the most important ways to achieve full personhood was through the acquisition of goods. This is why many

former worker-trainees, like other labor migrants in the region, remember consumption as a crucial aspect of their migratory experience.<sup>119</sup>

Worker-trainees' consumerism was to an important extent motivated by investment in the life they wanted to set up after their return. They sent home parcels filled with goods, some of which were intended for resale, and sometimes hard currency exchanged on the black market. They also brought back suitcases of goods destined to support their dependent networks at home during home vacations. Like Lino, many migrants were excited to lay the foundations for their own home: "The majority of things I bought, were to prepare for my own house."<sup>120</sup> Like Lufaquenda, they were also aware of supporting the wider family: "My salary was for me to buy clothes and things I brought back for my family. ...I brought dishes, and electrical appliances. I was one of the first girls who brought back a sound system. I brought it back when I returned to Angola on holidays."<sup>121</sup>

Every single worker-trainee perceived as an individual and as part of socialist collectives in East Germany was also a node in a system of relationships back home. These relationships had to be maintained through mutual assistance, often asymmetric in nature. Some still lived with their birth parents when they signed up, but many lived with relatives—uncles and aunts, older siblings, or cousins—in provincial capitals where they pursued further education or work opportunities. Through these experiences, worker-trainees grew up in systems of family relationships beyond the nuclear family. These extended family networks made demands on the fruits of the worker-trainees' labor.

The personhood of the worker-trainee developed to a large extent in tension between personal dreams and obligations to wider social networks.<sup>122</sup> Anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff speak of "being-as-becoming," explaining personhood as a process gradually occurring over time and in relations to others.<sup>123</sup> The migration to East Germany was for many migrants a far-reaching moment of personal growth.<sup>124</sup> Many Mozambicans lived outside of family support structures for the first time. Even those Angolans who had served in the military prior to their migration still needed to adjust to a very different climate, cuisine, and work routine. They often for the first time had a regular income at their disposal that allowed them to buy goods to which they previously had no access. To a certain extent the young migrants became autonomous, while still firmly located in a socialist collective. Men and women used access to goods to solidify their standing in East Germany as well as their future

standing after their return home; they at once enjoyed and felt constrained in the role of provider. A gendered dimension to this role becomes visible in the interviews. While many of the women who made the decision to return in the early 1990s justify their return with wanting to be closer to family, or returning to mother children they had left behind, quite a few men told their migration history from the point of view of an individual making choices best for himself. While men were traditionally perceived as providing access to goods and money through labor migration, for example, to the mines in South Africa, in this case women also became providers for their families through labor migration.<sup>125</sup> The relationships between migrants and home networks were thus ambivalent.

In a time before the internet and mostly before telephone access, migrants stayed in contact with those at home through postcards, letters, pictures, and reading the news about Mozambique and Angola. The postal service was also key for sending remittances: “I always sent something from Germany and with that I showed that even though I was far away I did not forget them [family in Mozambique]. ...It wasn’t easy to send money because that money from there [GDR] was useless here [Mozambique]. So, I bought goods to send to them for their consumption and to sell to get a little bit of money.”<sup>126</sup> Worker-trainees sent parcels to Mozambique and Angola filled with clothes, shoes, and non-perishable food items. Some of this was intended for personal consumption, some for resale. This activity put the sender in a powerful position vis-à-vis the expectant recipient at home. Yet, this power was relative as worker-trainees needed to appease those same relatives to ensure a successful stay abroad. While most gift-giving refers to East and West German goods making their way to Angola and Mozambique, it is important to remember that material gifts went both ways. Among the more commonly exchanged items were professional photos and family snapshots that fit into a letter. This practice was often the only way in which absent fathers or mothers could relate to the offspring they had left behind.

## CONCLUSION

For Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees, production and consumption were two sides of the same coin. By participating in the labor and training migration they became workers *and* consumers. The worker-trainees’ experiences thus transcended stereotypical Cold War simplifications of Western consumption and Eastern production. Following in the footsteps of generations of southern African labor migrants, they used the

work opportunity to invest in building a future life and sustain home networks. Unlike the generations before them, they were fashioned into skilled or semi-skilled laborers, meant to return with the skills and work experience to support production in their home economies. They operated in socialist environments where workers were heralded as the class that would advance socialism and build a new, prosperous society free from exploitation.<sup>127</sup>

Material acquisitions were important in giving meaning to the worker-trainees' migration. Worker-trainees did not make their consumer choices according to socialism's belief in rationality and abstinence. Their consumption patterns were complex: they consumed goods from East and West Germany; bought goods for their life in East Germany and back home; and spent money on items both for pleasure and for the satisfaction of basic needs. Through these practices of consumption, they not only transcended the Cold War divide but also merged the home country with the host country context. Viewing consumption in East Germany through the eyes of Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees brings a new facet to our usual conception of the victory of Western department store soft power. East Germany emerges as a developed country with a selection of desirable goods compared to the war-torn home context from which worker-trainees came.

Alongside containers of goods from East and West, filled with everything from cars to food, worker-trainees brought home with them an appreciation for the organization of work, and the prominent role of the worker experienced during their time in East Germany. As we will see in Chap. 6, the workers made use of their goods back home, albeit differently to how they might have foreseen. Upon returning home, they also drew on their ideas about dignified work, governmental responsibilities, and their experiences of agency through protest. They thus utilized their experiences with East German real socialism and its end to fashion their new lives in an Angolan and Mozambican post-socialist society.

The worker-trainees' memories of their East German experience remain colored by what they lived through before coming to East Germany and what they encountered after their return. Acknowledging these various temporal influences on the retold experiences indicates how ideas about life in a socialist society overlapped or clashed with the experiences of worker-trainees. In the following chapter we will turn away from the migrants' material and professional lives toward the social life of socialism. We will examine the worker-trainees' experiences of inclusion and exclusion as intimate strangers in East German society.

## NOTES

1. Frank Trentmann, "The Politics of Everyday Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 538.
2. East Germany sought to differentiate their foreign contract worker system from West German guest workers by emphasizing the training component; see Chap. 3. For a global treatment of guest workers, see Cindy Hahamovitch, "Creating Perfect Immigrants: Guestworkers of the World in Historical Perspective," *Labor History* 44 (2003): 69–94.
3. Consumption is a familiar theme from southern African labor history; see Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c.1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).
4. The issue of consumption thus became a crucial issue on the Cold War battleground right from the start of the separation of the two Germans; see Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand: The Politics of Consumerism in East Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). For an in-depth study of consumer culture in East Germany, see Ina Merkel, *Utopie und Bedürfnis: Die Geschichte der Konsumkultur in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1999).
5. Landolf Scherzer, *Die Fremden: Unerwünschte Begegnungen und verbotene Protokolle* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2002), 79.
6. See Christina Schwenkel, "Rethinking Asian Mobilities: Socialist Migration and Post-Socialist Repatriation of Vietnamese Contract Workers in East Germany," *Critical Asian Studies* 46 (2014): 250f. All of her interviewees were involved in the parallel economy whereas none of mine indicated that they were. That does not mean that such activities were absent from the lives of all Mozambican and Angolan workers, but it does mean that these activities did not primarily characterize the behavior of these groups.
7. In the poem, Regina is referring to her work at the film factory in Wolfen. Original in Portuguese. Translation by Pieter Cordwell.
8. Tempo No. 448—13.05.1979, 1º de Maio: Discurso do Presidente da FRELIMO e da República Popular de Moçambique, Samora Moisés Machel nas celebrações do dia internacional do trabalho, 26–7.
9. She worked as *Wicklerin* a position best described as the person who rolled the cassettes; see "Concurso de Texto Literário de Decreção (sic) Alemanha e Moçambique," 2, IMG\_7915.
10. Aside from the interviews the following literary works by and about Mozambican workers also describe the work experience in an autobio-

- graphic or fictionalized style: Ibraimo Alberto and Daniel Bachmann, *Ich wollte leben, wie die Götter: Was in Deutschland aus meinen afrikanischen Träumen wurde* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2014); Fernando Pedro, *Magermanes na RDA vida cotidiana* (Maputo: Ndjiura, 2003); Ulf Dieter Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta: Vivências dos moçambicanos antes, durante e depois de estadia na Alemanha* (Maputo: Instituto Cultural Mocambique - Alemanha (ICMA), 2005); Birgit Weyhe, *Madgermanes* (Berlin: Avant Verlag, 2016).
11. This was especially pressing since the South African reduction of Mozambican contract workers on the Rand left many unemployed and the Mozambican state without a significant source of income; see Hans-Joachim Döring, “*Es geht um unsere Existenz*” *Die Politik der DDR gegenüber der Dritten Welt am Beispiel von Mosambik und Äthiopien*, *Forschungen zur DDR-Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 1999); Héctor Guerra Hernández, “Do RAND à RDA? Modernização compulsória e práticas sociais e estratégias de mobilidade social,” *Revista d’antropologia i investigació social* 3 (2009): 61–83; Aníbal Fernando Lucas, “Mao-de-obra moçambicana emigrante na ex. Republica Democratica Alema, 1979–1990” (Licenciatura, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2002); Jochen Oppenheimer, “Magermanes - Os trabalhadores moçambicanos na antiga República Democrática Alemã,” in *VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais* (Coimbra, 2004).
  12. Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997). Work was also used in connection to what Benedito Luís Machava calls a “politics of punishment” and social control; see Benedito Luís Machava, “State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983),” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 593–609.
  13. Sarah LeFanu, *S Is for Samora: A Lexical Biography of Samora Machel and the Mozambican Dream* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 107–8.
  14. Take, for instance, the VEB Schlacht- und Verarbeitungskombinat Eberswalde/Britz (SVKE), which was among the most modern and biggest abattoir and meat processing plants in Europe at the time. There were about 3000 workers (60 percent women) and 300 vocational trainees whose practical and theoretical training took place in the factory complex and who lived there as well. The complex had its own walk-in clinic with doctors and nurses, a canteen catering to the entire shift system, vacation accommodation, and contractual agreements with unions. They sponsored the construction of a culture house in Eberswalde-Finow

which the residents were also welcome to use. They built a swimming pool and sponsored a first league handball team. In addition, 2000 apartments, 200 homes, and a hostel for 300 singles were constructed. Further, a *Kaufhalle* (general store) was constructed to guarantee access to basic goods. Thus, the factory-complex was much more than a workplace; Dr Helmut Koch, “Die Wirtschaftsgeschichte von Eberswalde 1945 bis 1990,” Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Förderung der Märkischen Eiszeitstraße e.V. <http://wirtschaftsgeschichte-eberswalde.de/agrarwirtschaft/veb-schlacht-und-verarbeitungskombinat-eberswaldebritz-svke/>, accessed March 27, 2017. For more on this, see Kott, *Communism Day-to-Day*, Ch. 2.

15. Thomas Lindenberger, “From Cold War Battleground to a Footnote to History? Labour History in Divided and Unified Germany,” *European Review of History* 25, no. 1 (2017): 68.
16. Bernd Bröskamp, “Vom Auswanderungs- zum Einwanderungsland: Die DDR, ihre Ausländer, die deutsche Wiedervereinigung und die Folgen,” in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews-Berichte-Analysen*, Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt, and Bernd Bröskamp, eds. (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 20–3.
17. Gaspar, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 24, 2015.
18. Andreas Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation,” ed. Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für die Belange der Ausländer (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996); Almut Zwengel, *Die ‘Gastarbeiter’ der DDR: Politischer Kontext und Lebenswelt* (Berlin: Lit, 2011); Helga Marburger, *Und wir haben unseren Beitrag zur Volkswirtschaft geleistet: Eine aktuelle Bestandsaufnahme der Situation der Vertragsarbeitnehmer der ehemaligen DDR vor und nach der Wende*, Werstatt-Berichte (Frankfurt: Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1993).
19. Jonathan R. Zaitlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
20. Instead, the agreements emphasized practical work with the simultaneous provision of in-company adult qualification training; see article 9(2), *Abkommen zwischen der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Volksrepublik Moçambique über die zeitweilige Beschäftigung moçambiquanischer Werktätiger in sozialistischen Betrieben der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, February 24, 1979. [Agreement between the Government of the GDR and the Government of the People’s Republic of Mozambique on the temporary employment



- of Mozambican workers in socialist enterprises in the GDR], PA AA, MfAA, ZR 970/87. Subsequent protocols and directives (1984, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990) modified this agreement. The description of the program as one that offered on-the-job work experience with vocational education and training within the framework of the company's adult qualification opportunities, however, persisted until the end; see preamble, *Abkommen zwischen der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Volksrepublik Mocambique über die zeitweilige Beschäftigung mocambiquanischer Werktätiger in Betrieben der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, May 28, 1990 [Agreement between the Government of the GDR and the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique on the temporary employment of Mozambican workers in enterprises in the GDR].
21. Ilíbio, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015.
  22. Santana, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015.
  23. Jürgen Mense, "Ausländerkriminalität in der DDR: Eine Untersuchung zu Kriminalität und Kriminalisierung von Mosambikanern 1979–1990," in *Transit | Transfer: Politik und Praxis der Einwanderung in der DDR 1945–1990*, ed. Kim Christian Priemel (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft verlag, 2011), 217. According to the agreement of 1979, article 9(1), the companies were only duty bound to offer one to three months of training prior to starting work. This training was to include German language classes as well as information about the work to be done, health, and fire and occupational safety training; see *Abkommen*, February 24, 1979.
  24. Ilíbio, Luanda, April 16, 2015.
  25. Elvas, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015. East German racist and derogatory terms employed toward Africans included "stove pipes" (*Ofenrohre*) or "briquette" (*Presskohle*); see Jonathan R. Zatin, "Scarcity and Resentment: Economic Sources of Xenophobia in the GDR, 1971–1989," *Central European History* 40 (2007): 717. If workers were caught or reported using these terms, they were to face disciplinary measures.
  26. The worker-trainees experience with racism and xenophobia is discussed in detail in Chap. 5.
  27. Amuth Berger, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 17, 2014.
  28. Regina, Life history, 2, IMG\_7915. *Tchucumeta* means to throw away in Changana.

29. The German brigade member Carmen stated that the name “referred to a Mozambican freedom fighter,” see Scherzer, *Die Fremden*, 115. The name might have been transcribed incorrectly and refers to Mozambican independence fighter Paulo Samuel Kankhomba, 1936–1968. These officially introduced measures barely scratched the surface of deeper intercultural relations. “We never had an event together with the Mozambicans,” remembered Carmen in 1982; see Scherzer, *Die Fremden*, 115.
30. See Figs. 4.3 and 4.4. *Zeugnis über die berufliche Qualifizierung*, original in Juma’s possession.
31. See Figs. 4.1 and 4.2. Juma, M. Urkunde, original in Juma’s possession. Between November 1981 and November 1985, Juma earned a gross income of 33,571.87 marks, averaging around 600,- marks per month, which seems to be representative, Bescheinigung VEB Motorradwerk Zschopau, original in Juma’s possession.
32. Ralf Straßburg, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 6, 2014.
33. As explained in Chap. 3, worker-trainees were not the same as apprentices. Foreign apprentices came on separate contracts under different agreements. The first group of Mozambican apprentices came to the GDR in 1975 to be trained for two years across disparate fields such as sugar and cement production and the transport sector. The 900 Mozambican children who went to school in Staßfurt also became apprentices for two years toward the end of their schooling. Ilona Schleicher, “Berufsbildung und Wirtschaftsbeziehungen DDR-Mosambik,” in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona Schleicher, eds. (Münster: Lit, 1994), 179–95; Bettina Husemann and Annette Neumann, “DDR—VR Angola: Fakten und Zusammenhänge zur bildungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit von 1975–1989,” in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona, eds. (Münster: Lit, 1994), 158–78.
34. Regina, Life history, 3, original in Regina’s possession.
35. *Ibid.*, 2, original in Regina’s possession.
36. “Sausage, cutlet and chicken.” This demonstrates not only her knowledge of the stereotypically German cuisine served in factory cafeterias, but she is also using the word *Broiler*, a term only used in East Germany.
37. Regina, Life history, 7, original in Regina’s possession.
38. Regina and the other female workers echo wider developments in Mozambique. Kathleen Sheldon maintains that access to wage labor had a strong influence on women’s choices regarding marriage and self-maintenance. The extension of female wage labor under socialism trans-

- formed Mozambican society as well as women's and family lives. Women claimed rights, fought for improvements in working conditions, and equality; see Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain : A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), Ch. 4, Ch. 5.
39. James Scott famously describes different forms of active and passive, personal and popular forms of resistance to exploitation as the "weapons of the weak," see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Subaltern studies shifted attention to everyday resistance; see David E. Ludden, "A Brief History of Subalternity," in *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalization of South Asia*, ed. David Ludden (London: Anthem, 2002), 13. Frederick Cooper rightly points out the danger of employing domination and resistance as dichotomous in African history which may end up replicating colonial (or postcolonial) categories of the dominated and the dominant rather than shedding light on the exact ways in which power is being negotiated and engaged, contested, or deflected; see Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," in *Reading Subaltern Studies*, ed. David Ludden, 257–8. *Eigensinn*, or self-willed-ness, for Alf Lüdke, overcomes the dichotomy of domination and resistance and evaluates worker behavior in and of itself, Alf Lüdtkke, "Geschichte und Eigensinn," in *Alltagskultur, Subjektivität und Geschichte. Zur Theorie und Praxis von Alltagsgeschichte*, ed. Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt (Münster 1994), 146f.
  40. This information is derived from conversations with the presidents of the two wings of the Angolan organization for returned laborers from East Germany, AEX-TAA, who both were part of that first group sent to IFA Ludwigsfelde. See Estevão, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015 and José António, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 11, 2015.
  41. José António, Luanda, March 11, 2015.
  42. Ibid.
  43. Strikes by foreign workers also occurred elsewhere in the East. For Vietnamese workers striking successfully in Czechoslovakia, see Alena K. Alamgir, "Race is Elsewhere: State-Socialist Ideology and the Racialisation of Vietnamese Workers in Czechoslovakia," *Race & Class* 54 (2013): 75–6; Alena K. Alamgir, "From the Field to the Factory Floor: Vietnamese Government's Defense of Migrant Workers' Interests in State-Socialist Czechoslovakia," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 12 (2017): 21–3. Eric Allina discusses a case of a group leader threatening to have his group strike if the company did not pay out what he perceived as

two months missing family allowance; see Eric Allina, “‘Neue Menschen’ für Mosambik. Erwartungen an und Realität von Vertragsarbeit in der DDR der 1980er-Jahre,” *Arbeit, Bewegung, Geschichte: Zeitschrift für Historische Studien* 15, no. 3 (2016): 79–84.

44. It is worth mentioning that this strike is not mentioned in any of Jacinto’s evaluations, nor is his role as a group leader or production manager. In his final evaluation, the factory manager and director of cadres and training evaluated his work discipline, approach to work and performance as “good” overall. He maintained good contact with his brigade colleagues and was open to suggestions from his superiors but, the report continues, “He maintains little contact with his group, he is almost a lone wolf.” East Germans often referred to those who failed to integrate adequately into the collective and who struggled with discipline as “lone wolves.” This behavior might therefore hint at the trouble he might have caused the company. Jacinto does not seem to have left a good impression in the dormitory either, where he, despite accomplishing the designated tasks, “reacted arrogantly to instructions from his supervisor,” *Abschlußbeurteilung Nantamigo, Jacinto, Meerane August 1987, VEB Vereinigte Baumwollspinnereien und Zwirnerien Baumwollspinnerei Zwickau, Werk II Meerane*, original in Jacinto’s possession. Therefore, Jacinto, despite having satisfactorily performed at work, seems not to have been a yes-man and have taken the liberty to shape his experience according to his needs, including being absent from work if necessary. As the current *madjerman* leader in Beira, having been a group leader in Germany, even if informally, would not have been uncharacteristic for Jacinto.
45. Jacinto, interview conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 3, 2014.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Article 12(2) stipulated that Mozambican workers had the same access to healthcare as East German workers and received sick leave pay for a shorter illness. If, however, the person could not work due to illness for longer than three months, they could be deported; see article 5(4c). Article 12(3) states that workers who had a work accident or an illness related to work of more than 20% body damage received an accident pension for the duration of their work contracts according to East German law. They also received a one-off severance pay at the end of their contracts; see 12(4). Further stipulations were made in case of accidents while traveling and in the event of the death of a worker 12(5,6), *Abkommen*, February 24, 1979.

48. Jacinto, Beira, June 3, 2014.
49. Luzia, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015; Dennis Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?” 275.
50. As further discussed in Chap. 5, the strict regulations were lifted toward the end of the workers’ stays and babies were born in East Germany; exceptionally, there were also ways around the regulations earlier on; for instance, the church took in female workers until after they had delivered; see Almuth Berger, Berlin, November 17, 2014.
51. Mozambican and Angolan women found ways to circumvent the chauvinistic practices, as discussed in Chap. 5.
52. Pedro, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 3, 2014.
53. 22, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 16, 2014.
54. Control of the workforce has been a central concern from slavery to colonial regimes of forced labor to wage labor. Keletso Atkins demonstrates the limits of control when she draws our attention to the role of culture and misunderstandings in the failure of white employers to understand the work ethic of their black laborers, which ultimately exacerbated the labor crisis in nineteenth-century Natal, despite an originally willing labor force; see Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon Is Dead! Give Us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth, NH; London: Heinemann; Currey, 1993).
55. The agreement stipulates that premature termination of the contract is possible, if workers are sick for more than three months; see article 5(4), *Abkommen*, February 24, 1979. Many oral histories speak of longer periods of sickness, which might reveal that this article was not strictly enforced, that the interviewees’ memory is uncertain regarding the time of illness, or that long periods of sickness included intermittent periods of work.
56. For instance, Jacinto remembers having been hospitalized for seven months; Jacinto, Beira, June 3, 2014.
57. For instance, Ibraimo refused to eat anything because he was afraid that everything in Germany contained pork until he collapsed and was sent to hospital, Alberto and Bachmann, *Ich wollte Leben*.
58. Staatssekretariat für Arbeit und Löhne, Abteilung Ausländische Arbeitskräfte: Aktennotiz über die Beratung mir der Vertretung des Staatssekretariats für Arbeit der VRM in der DDR, 29. 10. 1985, BArch DQ3/856 in Allina, “‘Neue Menschen’ für Mosambik,” 77; Article 3(2) *Abkommen*, February 24, 1979.

59. Augusto, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 12, 2015.
60. Interview with Lina, *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 44. Overall, a feeling of gratitude for the skills of East German doctors prevailed. Regina wrote another poem entitled “German God, German Angel” where she equates the physician to a German god and the nurse to her guardian angel, “Deus Alemão Anjo Alemão,” original in Regina’s possession.
61. These cases discuss Christian beliefs; some worker-trainees came from Muslim families but were usually non-practicing in East Germany. There were no special accommodations for religious practices in the companies.
62. Almuth Berger, Berlin, November 17, 2014.
63. José António (President), Marcos Fuca (Vice-President), Lopez Sebastião (Member) of one of the two wings of AEX-TAA, the association of Angolan returned workers, group interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 11, 2015.
64. Almuth Berger, Berlin, November 17, 2014.
65. LeFanu, *S Is for Samora*, 29.
66. João, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 21, 2015.
67. Jürgen Mense, “Ausländerkriminalität in der DDR,” 219–20; Damian Mac Con Uladh, “Die Alltagserfahrungen ausländischer Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR: Vietnamesen, Kubaner, Mozambikaner, Ungarn und Andere,” in *Erfolg in der Nische? Die Vietnamesen in der DDR und in Ostdeutschland*, Karin Weiss and Mike Dennis, eds. (Münster: LIT, 2005), 53. The character Basilio Fernando Matola in the graphic novel Madgermanes illustrates the use of breaks and drinking at work as techniques of passive resistance once he realized he will never be more than an unskilled worker. See Weyhe, *Madgermanes*, 129–32.
68. Bernardo, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 2, 2015.
69. These conversations served a dual purpose. They were as much a verbal warning to illustrate the unacceptability of the behavior as they were attempts to form the worker-trainee into becoming a better functioning individual in the collective. They were a part of the routine and the disciplining catalogue at VEBs for foreign and East German workers alike.
70. Anselmo, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 30, 2011.
71. Delinda Collier, “A ‘New Man’ for Africa? Some Particularities of the Marxist Homem Novo within Angolan Cultural Policy,” in *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, Jadwiga E. Piepper Mooney and Fabio Laza, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 187–206; José Luís Cabaço, “The New Man: Brief Itinerary of a Project,” in *Samora: Man of*

- the People*, ed. António Sopa (Maputo: Maguezo Editores, 2001), 103–11. Ironically, as central as the creation of the New Man was to socialism, the concept had already been employed by the Portuguese colonizer under the Estado Novo; see Michael Mahoney, “Estado Novo, Homem Novo (New State, New Man): Colonial and Anticolonial Development Ideologies in Mozambique, 1930–1977,” in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development and the Global Cold War*, David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haeefe, Michael E. Latham, eds. (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 165–97.
72. Samora Moisés Machel, *Organizar a Sociedade para Vencer o Subdesenvolvimento*, Coleção estudos e orientações 14 (Maputo: Departamento de Informação e Propaganda, 1982), 4.
  73. Discurso do Presidente Agostinho Neto na Proclamação da Independência de Angola, Fundação Dr António Agostinho Neto, [http://www.agostinhoneto.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&id=997:discurso-do-presidente-agostinho-neto-na-proclamacao-da-independencia-de-angola](http://www.agostinhoneto.org/index.php?option=com_content&id=997:discurso-do-presidente-agostinho-neto-na-proclamacao-da-independencia-de-angola), accessed June 19, 2017.
  74. The colonial concessions to stabilizing a small African working class after the Second World War came along with an expectation for the African worker to conform to European notions of the male breadwinner, of the nuclear family, work rhythms, and ideas about the dignity of labor; see James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society, Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). In much the same way, becoming a socialist worker entailed technical expertise and workplace discipline but also becoming the *New Man*.
  75. For instance, the organization’s names of the Angolan and Mozambican returnee organizations make reference to their identity as workers, see Chap. 6.
  76. Lufaquenda, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 22, 2015.
  77. The post-return relationship of former migrants to wage and compensation payments will be explored in Chap. 6.
  78. Nacala group interview (Anselmo, Antonio, Carlitos, and Juma); interview conducted by the author, Nacala, Mozambique, June 17, 2014.
  79. Gaspar, Luanda, April 24, 2015.
  80. With their eye for fashion and their desire to satisfy consumer demands, the young worker-trainees follow in a long African tradition. Jeremy Prestholdt has studied the history of consumption in Africa and argues that commodification, social distinction, and fashion have not only been

- part of African social relations but also have integrated the continent into global trading networks from the sixteenth century onwards; see Jeremy Prestholdt, "Africa and the Global Lives of Things," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 85–110. With their attention to hip Western styles and popular music of the 1980s, they arguably formed part of a global youth culture as much as they were influenced by the East German goods on more immediate offer; see Paolo Capuzzo, "Youth and Consumption," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 601–17.
81. Ina Merkel, "Luxury in Socialism: An Absurd Proposition?," in *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*, David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 63–7. Scholars have turned their attention away from scarcity toward leisure and luxury; see David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010).
  82. Much of the literature written prior to the new millennium portrays socialist countries between the Second World War and the demise of the Soviet Union as societies "of shortage" marked by a "dictatorship over needs" following the classic works of Ferenc Fehér, Ágnes Heller, and György Márkus, *Dictatorship over Needs* (New York: Blackwell, 1983) and János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1980). Historians have criticized this interpretation; see, for instance, Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Towards the Consumer Society in America, 1865–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).
  83. The supposed homogeneity of the East German consumer landscape is fictional at any rate because certain strata of society were privileged, such as party leaders, Stasi officers, and select artists; our understanding of how foreign workers remember their consumer experience is still rudimentary. Looking at East Germany through the subjective memories of the worker-trainees allows me to discuss aspects of pleasure under "real socialism," not "socialist pleasures" per se, that is, related to the states' ideology, but everyday pleasures related to personal and material consumption, a topic relevant not only to socialist elites. See also Crowley and Reid, "Introduction: Pleasures in socialism?" 2–51.
  84. Avner Offer discusses that contrary to standard economic theory where consumers are expected to rank their preferences between two goods, the choice is not only between milk and bread but also between the present and the future; see Avner Offer, "Consumption and Well-Being," in *The*



- Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 653–72.
85. Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, Ch. 4, 6, 7; Ruth First, *Black Gold*, Ch. 3.
  86. Paul Betts, “The Politics of Plenty: Consumerism in Communist Societies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 427.
  87. This will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 5.
  88. Merkel, “Luxury in Socialism,” 60.
  89. Patricio and Bato, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 27, 2014. Whether 600 marks was considered a lot or a little depended on the workers: “After transferring out 25 percent we had very little money, only 600 marks .... After 1986 we had to transfer 60 percent and nothing was left for us there.” Ilha de Moçambique group interview (Salimo, Abdussamimo, Abudo, Suatico, Musa), interview conducted by the author, Ilha de Moçambique, Mozambique, June 15, 2014.
  90. Paul Betts, “The Politics of Plenty,” 426. Special goods could be acquired in the enclaves of capitalism that existed through special stores such as *Intershop* or in special corners in the HO-shops (*Staatliche Handelsorganisation*; State Trade Organization). These shops served to siphon off the additional income of doctors, engineers, and other well-paid members of the East German society who paid inflated prices to balance out the overall economy in the spirit of social justice. In effect, this skewed pricing policy led to consumers losing a sense of the social and cultural value of products and services; see Merkel, “Luxury in Socialism,” 55–6; 63–7.
  91. The early literature on consumption and gender stressed the role of women as shoppers and therefore accorded them a specific place in the gendered consumer society, that of female consumers, as opposed to male producers. In productionist approaches female consumption was often seen as an un-productive or re-productive act. Emphasizing the productive nature of consumption, the next generation of scholars focused on agency and on places of public consumption (most emblematic, the department store) and private consumption defined as the commodification of the domestic space; see Enrica Asquer, “Domesticity and Beyond: Gender, Family, and Consumption in Modern Europe,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 568–84.
  92. Zatlin, “Scarcity and Resentment,” 696–7. Jonathan R. Zatlin explains xenophobia in East Germany through scarcity and the build-up of

- resentment. His materials allow for a detailed understanding of the interplay between East Germans' jealousy, rumors that spread about foreign workers, and bureaucrats' attempts to manage the situation.
93. Abednego, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, February 24, 2014.
  94. After reunification, East Germany became known as the "banana republic" because East Germans went shopping en masse for tropical fruits such as bananas; see Betts, "The Politics of Plenty," 424. The banana became the symbol for scarcity in East Germany and many jokes in both East and West Germany play on that; see Miriam Hollstein, "Symbol des Mangels: Wie die DDR zur Bananenrepublik wurde," *Die Welt*, September 11, 2009.
  95. Eusébio in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta*, 74.
  96. Consumer envy and hostile competition with foreigners was not a phenomenon restricted to East Germany but could also be found in other Eastern European countries with foreign workers. For Czechoslovakia, see Alamgir, "Race Is Elsewhere," 78.
  97. Betts, "The Politics of Plenty," 432.
  98. Bato, Maputo, January 27, 2014.
  99. Scherzer, *Die Fremden*, 114.
  100. The East German workers' conflation of material goods with the emotion of love clearly shows the limits of socialist propaganda that sought to link love to socialism and decouple it from capitalist consumption; see Josie McLellan, "Did Communists Have Better Sex? Sex and the Body in German Unification," in *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany*, ed. David Clarke and Ute Wölfel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 120; Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 194.
  101. Christian Groes discusses Mozambican women migrant's understanding of material goods as their right in exchange for sex; see Christian Groes, "Men Come and Go, Mothers Stay: Personhood and Resisting Marriage among Mozambican Women Migrating to Europe," in *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*, eds. Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 169–96.
  102. Crowley and Reid, "Introduction," 7.
  103. Mozambicans were not amused by having to stand in line at home; see, for instance *Tempo*, No. 458, July 22, 1979, 53, *Privilégios para os trabalhadores da Coop?* A. Mucavele, Maputo, letter to the editor. For an explanation of this phenomenon by Samora Machel during his 1<sup>st</sup> of May speech in 1979, see *Tempo* No. 448—13.05.1979, 29–30.

104. Juma, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 6, 2014.
105. Judd Stitzel's study traces the struggle of the GDR to create a fashion industry and satisfy consumer demands with products that were increasingly poor quality, expensive, and outdated. Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (New York, NY: Berg, 2005).
106. See Breda Luthar, "Remembering Socialism: On Desire, Consumption and Surveillance," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 6 (2006), 234f for a reflection on the culture of shortage as social experience and the construction of individual and social identities through personal autonomy in consumption.
107. Betts, "The Politics of Plenty," 433.
108. Katherine Verdey, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 433.
109. Crowley and Reid, "Introduction," 16.
110. 244, interview conducted by the author, April 17, 2015, Luanda, Angola; Marcia C. Schenck, "Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan Student Migration During the Cold War, 1976–1990," *Africa* 89, no. 1 (2019): 158–9.
111. Alberto, Bachmann, *Ich wollte leben, wie die Götter*; Betts, "The Politics of Plenty," 424.
112. Almuth Berger, "Annäherungen - Bericht der Ausländerbeauftragten des Landes Brandenburg," (Potsdam: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Landes Brandenburg, 2006), 38; Andreas Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter," 18.
113. Candido, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 28, 2014.
114. Ahmed Farah, "Internationale Solidrität oder Ausbeutung? Zur Lage der mosambikanischen VertragsarbeitnehmerInnen der ex-DDR vor und nach der Wende," in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. Ausländerinnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews- Berichte- Analysen.*, Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt, and Bernd Bröskamp, eds. (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 37; Ilha de Moçambique group interview, Ilha de Moçambique, June 15, 2014, Mozambique. Article 7, Abkommen vom Juni 1990 Protokoll vom May 28, 1990 (Maputo); Vereinbarung vom May 28, 1990 (Maputo); Protokoll, 1.6.1990, MFAA, Berlin.
115. In comparison, those who returned before the fall of the Wall were not able to bring quite as many goods home as those with easy access to cheaper goods in the former West, and the extra cash of the indemnity payment.

116. 244, Luanda, Angola, April 17, 2015.
117. Fernando, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 1, 2011.
118. Bato, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 27, 2014.
119. Harries argues that the Mozambican migrants' consumption of goods in South Africa spoke both to their new understanding of themselves as modern men and women and to their understanding of rural needs and desires. Migrants in the southern African context migrated specifically to invest in certain goods and returned home once they succeeded in meeting their targets. This approach is not the case with this labor and training migration, where people's motivations discussed in detail in Chap. 3 included training and escaping a war context as well as living in Europe. Consumption was important but did not determine the length of their stay abroad, which was regulated in advance by the contracts conforming to the programs' requirements. It could, however, motivate a return on a second contract. Consumption was linked to an idea of being modern both in the case of migration to East Germany and South Africa; see Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*.
120. Lino, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 13, 2014.
121. Lufaquenda, Luanda, April 22, 2015.
122. This field of tension is by no means unique to the migrants under discussion in this book; see *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*, Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
123. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa," *Social Identity* 7 (2001): 272.
124. I discuss migration as rite of passage in Chap. 3.
125. Today, the trend is even more reversed with many young Mozambican women being providers for their families through their affiliations with European men. The young women in Groes's study defined their personhood through the ability to provide for themselves and their family members and retain the liberty of decision-making about their own lives, Groes, "Men Come and Go."
126. Pedro, Maputo, March 3, 2014; group interview, Luanda, March 11, 2015.
127. Vu, "Workers under Communism," 479.

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## CHAPTER 5

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# The Social Life of Socialism: Intimacy and Racism

### INTRODUCTION

We feel at home because we are surrounded by warmth and friendship. ... We feel at home because we have more Mozambican students and trainees here than in any other European country. We feel at home because East Germany has always closely accompanied our revolutionary process. ... Ours is the difficult but also commendable task of building our socialist fatherlands in areas marked by heavy confrontation between the social systems. This is a meeting between brothers in arms, an exchange of experience. ... The people of the GDR under the leadership of the SED are roses of solidarity, hope and the future.<sup>1</sup>

Samora Machel, during a visit to East Germany in September 1980

The friendship between peoples is indeed the big star, the sun that rises on the horizon and overcomes the shackles of hatred, of division and war, created by oppression and exploitation. ... Through this big star of friendship between peoples the blood of the people of East Germany and Mozambique is united. Through this big star of peoples' friendship, the broad road leading the way to socialism has become even wider. The distance between the Peoples' Republic of Mozambique and the German Democratic Republic has been overcome.<sup>2</sup>

Erich Honecker, during the same visit

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Daphne Berdahl uses the phrase "social life of socialism" in "Good Bye, Lenin! Aufwiedersehen GDR: On the Social Life of Socialism," in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, eds. (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 177.

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M. C. Schenck, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World*, Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06776-1\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06776-1_5)

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While Machel and Honecker were praising their peoples' friendship, Mozambicans, Angolans, and East Germans were building interracial relationships and creating new families across divides of nations and cultures. The SED, FRELIMO, and the MPLA all forcefully espoused anti-racism and swore solidarity and friendship in the name of their shared socialist future. However, many worker-trainees in Germany were subjected to racism, overt and covert.<sup>3</sup> They were confronted with racist attitudes, were exposed to racist slurs, and even had to defend themselves and their partners from physical attacks.<sup>4</sup>

Neither the host country nor the sending countries desired the Mozambican and Angolan migrants' permanent integration into East German life. The labor and training programs were intended to be circular—otherwise what was the point of training the workers to lead the African socialist industrial revolution?<sup>5</sup> Worker-trainees instead became intimate strangers while in East Germany.<sup>6</sup> On one hand, these international workers were welcomed for political and economic reasons. They were showcases for East German solidarity and vectors that would carry the socialist revolution to the Third World.<sup>7</sup> They also made valuable contributions to supporting the East German economy during their stay. On the other hand, the worker-trainees were intended to live apart so as not to disturb the fragile political and social status quo in East Germany, although it was never conclusively specified exactly how they would cause this disturbance.

The exclusion of foreign worker-trainees worked on many levels. Worker-trainees were separated into national groups in dormitories. Their language training was often insufficient to guarantee independent functioning in East German society. Contact with East Germans was in theory limited to official functions and work and training experiences. Migrants were not allowed to bring their families from home, and creating formalized new ones was difficult as marriages were dependent upon the consent of home and host states. Representation was limited to state-sanctioned figures of control, mainly the team leader. On the other hand, worker-trainees, at least in theory, received equal pay for equal work and access to health care, language training, and vocational training in company schools, were invited along on company leisure time activities, and had access to company vacation homes. Many were included in nationally mixed

brigades, participated in company competitions, and received company honors.

Despite the migrants' separation in this way, they still became an intimate feature of daily life not only because they were an integral part of workplaces, but also because they were part of East German neighborhood bars, local shops, and family life. This chapter discusses two sides of the same coin: integration and exclusion. The first section of the chapter explores the migrants' integration and their intimate, cross-cultural relationships with Germans and others. The second part examines how migrants experienced exclusion. The grounds were, variously, sexism, racism, and xenophobia. Integration and exclusion reflect two contrasting ends on the scale of human affective relationships, but as will become clear, the central theme of this chapter is how love and hate, intimacy and exclusion, and friendship and racism are intricately bound up with one another.<sup>8</sup>

When we look at people's personal attachments in the context of migration studies, as we are doing here, we can quickly see how shallow the ability of the state is to determine the nature of people's experiences. Because the default way of looking at migrations such as those in this book is from the perspective of the state—geopolitical, economic, bureaucratic—most accounts miss this.<sup>9</sup> Yet the personal aspect is nearly always the decisive one in determining whether people's experiences are positive or negative. This chapter shows how personal encounters shaped migrants' lives as Africans in East Germany. Looking at East Germany from an African perspective enables us to understand how interwoven Angolan, Mozambican, and East German history became on the micro-level of daily lives. Migrants learned German over dinner or woke up next to Germans in the morning. They taught their German friends Portuguese and danced with them to American singers like Michael Jackson, Mozambican groups like Eyuphuro, or East German acts such as the singer Frank Schöbel. On many East German men saw young African men as a threat to their masculinity. African women were faced with the threat of being sent back home if they got pregnant. They were also threatened with a ruined reputation if they dated people of other nationalities.<sup>10</sup> Exclusion and inclusion did not work the same way for everyone.



## PART I: INTEGRATION—INTIMATE STRANGERS

Angel Lezewik<sup>11</sup>

You were the last and the first angel  
 The beginning of the end  
 The alpha and the omega  
 My soul always flies to you

I swear!...One day I will meet you  
 Do you remember...on top of that stage  
 Lubricated by the *Marrabenta*<sup>12</sup>  
 I taught you how to move your hips  
 And the legs, remember always the sounds

Of the Mozambican marimba  
 The sound of drumming  
 Wazimbo<sup>13</sup> singing  
 Fortifying through dance our unification...

I am thirsting for you  
 Because you were my strongest love  
 You were the heart of the great friendships  
 Angel Lezewik.

Regina, February 27, 2007

Regina migrated from Mozambique to work and receive vocational training on the factory floors of East Germany. She also developed intimate ties there. Her poem describes her love for an East German man, whom she met in 1989. In that choice of subject, the poem is both quotidian and exceptional. Quotidian, because it describes the age-old feeling of love. Exceptional, because generally female Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees in East Germany did not cross the color line with their romantic escapades.<sup>14</sup> Historically, interracial relationships between European men and African women (usually in the colonies) and between African men and European women (usually in European metropolises) had been subjected to governmental surveillance and sanctions.<sup>15</sup> Regina, as a woman away from her home, transgressed somewhat against this model in a way that not many did. Her love happened in a different time and place to the norm, but interracial intimacy remained a matter of state.

Intimate intercultural relationships were the sites of intercultural learning. Regina wrote in her poem about teaching her lover how to dance *marrabenta*. She was the active figure, the holder of cultural knowledge, who instructed an East German man. In most cases the roles were reversed, and Angolan and Mozambican men dated East German women, who, as holders of knowledge—language and cultural—served to help integrate the migrants into a foreign East German world.

When male former migrants spoke to me years later, they talked about consciously seeking out intercultural love. East German women were a key to unlocking otherwise inaccessible cultural capital:

I made my way in Germany with the help of my girlfriend. ...She was the daughter of the foreman. She was only there briefly when we arrived. I still did not know how to speak German and I asked a colleague from Eberswalde to write her a note for me that said I would like to get to know her. ...after school, I always went to the furniture store where she worked to ask her whether she could help me with the homework, and she did and that is how our friendship grew. ...she explained the lessons we had learned, even if I had already understood them. My objective was another one, one that really facilitated my life. The less contact I had with people from my origin, the faster I could obtain my goals. And so it was. ...What was of interest to me was to have a partner who could help me integrate as quickly as possible and to understand more.<sup>16</sup>

Seen in this light, the transactional nature of the relationship becomes visible. Many men, like the Angolan Ilíbio, entered relationships to seek cultural and linguistic knowledge alongside affection and intimacy. Ilíbio was interested in staying in Germany as long as war raged back home and saw East German women as a compass to help him move toward this difficult objective.

When mentioned in passing in the German academic literature, East German women dating African men are often depicted as searching for something in these relationships beyond mere romance. According to this telling, they were sometimes lured into the company of foreign worker-trainees through the pull of the unknown, seduced by presents from abroad and the prospect of escaping drab East German horizons. At other times they feigned love to escape East Germany with unsuspecting African men.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Angolan and Mozambican men—perceived as foreign and exotic—often represented a window onto a broader world for East German women, a world beyond the relatively closed society where they lived.

However, the reality was much more complicated than these clichés. The restricted East German socialist society was the stage for everyday interactions with Mozambican and Angolan colleagues, friends, and partners. Based on interviews with Angolan and Mozambican former migrants, I explore what East German women had to offer.

The vast majority of male workers from Angola and Mozambique had relationships with German women of various levels of commitment. These women came from a variety of family backgrounds, age groups, and education levels. Many migrants learned about life in East Germany from their partners and this was for them an essential element to a successful integration: “She was my best teacher,” Augusto recalled.<sup>18</sup> In this way, German women became sponsors of sorts for African men.<sup>19</sup> Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees who successfully stayed on in reunified Germany after the fall of the Wall were often able to do so only with the support of their East German partners and extended families.

East German women needed to consider the social costs of entering into relationships with African men. Other East Germans often yelled discriminatory slurs at women seen on the streets with African men. The disapproval of the woman’s family and circle of friends played a fundamental role in shaping relationships. Some relationships were clandestine, and others deteriorated rapidly under pressure. Bernardo, who was taken in by an older woman in Rostock during his first week in Germany, describes his racist experiences:

We didn’t have an easy life. When you arrive in a foreign place, everything is difficult, and we suffered from racism. ...This was really annoying. People insulted her when she was with me, but she told me not to engage and we continued like that and I got used to this way of life and finally I also had very close German friends. But in the beginning, it was a shock because I did not expect to hear these kinds of things.<sup>20</sup>

Many East Germans scorned the African visitors, about whom they knew little. In Bernardo’s words: “Later I started to see that the East German people were a closed society. They did not even know other socialist countries. Their lives were very complicated. They did not only have these problems with black Africans but also with the French, Italians and other people.”<sup>21</sup> As Bernardo alludes to, not all exclusion was racially motivated. Sentiments against those from outside East Germany’s borders were not uncommon. African migrants suffered from both xenophobia and racism and were thus doubly excluded.

German exoticization of African men emerged from a history of stereotyping. It was well established during the German colonial empire, reached new levels during Nazi rule, and recurred in West Germany during the postwar experience with American GIs.<sup>22</sup> Some male migrants acknowledged that their exoticism had a pull factor when they speak about how easy it was to meet and seduce East German women. An Angolan worker-trainee remembered in 2015:

Many East German women only went to bed with black men out of curiosity. There were rumors that they had tails in the back. But in the end, they discovered that the body parts were all similar, that people were the same, and...today many of those women are getting old with Angolans.<sup>23</sup>

He portrayed East German women as willing to believe colonial tropes but gives them the benefit of the doubt of being able to reverse their viewpoints. While some male migrants took advantage of that exoticization, others suffered from the relentless othering, being intimate yet forever remaining foreign. In 1982, a German female laborer working alongside Mozambicans discussed the relationship between a German and a Mozambican co-worker in terms of stereotypical depictions of African virility: "I don't know why Angela is attracted to a Mozambican. Some men say they have especially big genitals, that would attract the women, but we don't speak about sexual things."<sup>24</sup> The clichéd portrayal of black sexual potency revealed the prejudices prevalent and underscores how racialized stereotypes, ignorance, and rumor continued to live underneath the facade of internationalist rhetoric.

One worker framed a common understanding of the East German women thus:

We had a teacher who had already lived in Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya. One day she lifted the morale of all Angolans. She was talking about intercultural exchange. What she explained to us during that lesson was this: 'You are Africans, we are Europeans. Often people have inferiority complexes but, in these lessons, we will change your point of view. ...Today, after the end of the Second World War, we German women have the liberty to live together and sleep with men from anywhere. ...During the Second World War we lost many men, there were many more women who survived ...But all of you young Angolans are here now'...That meant we were lucky, we could marry a German woman, and have children. I am giving this testimony because I was inspired, too."<sup>25</sup>

In the eyes of African men like Augusto, East German women were sexually and socially free, “able to love whom they wanted. We never interfered [in the lives of our white female companions] because we did not have the right to do so.”<sup>26</sup> This attitude of respect contrasted with how many of the migrants felt about women from their own countries. Angolan and Mozambican men often did not like to see their female colleagues date men of other nationalities. It was a matter of male honor, in a similar way in which East German men tried to prevent East German women from dating African men. East German, Angolan, and Mozambican men had in common that they projected their masculinity onto the purity of “their” women.<sup>27</sup>

Many male worker-trainees were also influenced by racialized imaginations of female beauty, eager to date white women, which carried a taste of the transgressive in the colonial context in which that generation of workers had grown up. Some male worker-trainees saw their travel abroad as an opportunity to engage with diverse women through whom to engage with different worlds, like this Mozambican: “I had three official German girlfriends. ... I also passed some time with a Polish, a Cuban, and an Angolan woman. The Polish woman even took me to Poland for one night.”<sup>28</sup> Male worker-trainees were more able to choose from among the diverse romantic possibilities in the socialist cosmopolitan circles in which they moved than their female colleagues, who were more bound by female notions of honor based on chastity and fidelity.<sup>29</sup>

Angolan and Mozambican women occasionally dated white men or, more frequently, men from within the African Lusophone networks, but most dated within their national groups. For Lufaquenda this was a given: “I only had Angolan boyfriends. I had close German friends who took me out to spend the weekends together with them. I am not racist but at that time I had absolutely no interest in going out with people of white color.”<sup>30</sup> There are several reasons for this divergence in behavior of female and male worker-trainees. First, female worker-trainees were exposed to the threat of a forced deportation if they became pregnant. Moreover, they were conforming to societal norms whereby they were looking for a long-term partnership and, since most intended to return home, a partner from home was a better fit for these plans.<sup>31</sup> In addition, many female worker-trainees socialized mainly within their home networks, especially when posted in single-sex groups, for instance in textile companies. Lastly, male worker-trainees vastly outnumbered female worker-trainees. The African

women in East Germany had a far greater choice of African men than vice versa.

In communist ideology, both racism and sexism were rejected as divisive, reactionary ways of thinking. However, ideological rejection did not mean that these prejudices disappeared from society: quite the opposite, in fact. The fact that racism and sexism were not adequately discussed in the public sphere meant that they went unchallenged in the private sphere. They were particularly potent when they intersected. Black men and white women who displayed their affection in public received racist comments. Fights broke out over allegations of adultery and jealousies on the dance floors, particularly when white women were seen with African men. Black men were portrayed as unruly and violent, while East German women were seen as cultural brokers, integrating the foreign men into East German society. This stereotypical view of women had not changed much since the first colonization of Africa.<sup>32</sup> Now, however, the roles of explorer were reversed. Black cosmopolitan explorers encountered European local women. Santana from Angola summed up this way of seeing things: "You know, the most racist being in the world is a man. ...The best link between races are the women."<sup>33</sup> In his worldview (and that of many others) gender trumped race. It was women who were tasked with integrating foreign men.

Emotional and sexual needs were not part of the labor migration plans. The bilateral agreements governing the migrations envisioned worker-trainees as more akin to labor machines. In this light, the romantic and sexual experiences that the migrants had were a significant way of exercising their agency, their individuality, while they were living in a bureaucratic framework that did not provide for this. An atmosphere of relative sexual freedom in East Germany in the late 1970s and the 1980s stood in contrast to restrictive sexual attitudes held by officialdom toward the young African migrants.<sup>34</sup> The state saw the worker-trainees as without emotional attachments or reproductive desires. The organization of the worker-trainees' work and leisure time in East Germany was not intended to facilitate romantic relationships or other meaningful private contacts. It was, however, such contacts which fostered self-induced integration into East German society in the most meaningful ways. This suspicion of integration stood in interesting and revealing contrast to migration discourse today, in which people worry that migrants do not integrate enough.

*Alternative Intimate Attachments: German Families,  
Mozambican Families, Angolan Families*

Many worker-trainees fondly remember transcending their status as strangers and becoming part of East German families. One of the advantages for the worker-trainees was receiving guidance from surrogate parents. In most cases, these adoptive family relationships were informal affairs that developed spontaneously, because people knew each other from work or church, from living in the same neighborhood, or through random conversations. Some worker-trainees even moved in with these host families. Others visited over the weekend, and others shared meals several times a week. Some families supported the young worker-trainees financially, or with advice, and others took on the role of advocates for worker-trainees' rights.<sup>35</sup> Lúcia remembers: "A German couple were my parents over there. ... They were my professors and sympathized with me because I was a good student...and they came to pick me up on the weekends and became my second family." Lúcia lived a homely life with her second family and spent time in their country house, where she did much the same that she might have done in Mozambique: "I harvested cabbage, fruits, and other things on the farm."<sup>36</sup>

Another way of meeting people willing to open their homes to the worker-trainees was through religious networks.<sup>37</sup> One Angolan worker integrated into the family of a doctor with five children:

I was Catholic. I searched for a Catholic church, the first thing when I came to that country. I went to church even though I did not speak the language and I understood nothing. When I was at church a family appeared and they took me in. ... They welcomed me like their own son and before I got to know my girlfriend, I spent all my weekends at their house. ... It was in this family that I learned the German language through being part of their community. That was a family with whom I lived very well. Even on the day I left for Angola I did not have to leave by train, they organized a car and took me to the airport. ... That is why I cannot say that I had difficulties in Germany because I encountered people who helped me everywhere.<sup>38</sup>

Workers who had the good fortune of encountering host families or developing serious relationships with East Germans early on were able to learn the language and the local customs. Subsequently, they integrated more easily and could often establish deeper relationships, also with their East German co-workers. They did not experience the isolation from East

German life of those who struggled with the language and socialized predominantly in their own home networks.

Host families were often mutually beneficial arrangements where gifts were exchanged, meals were shared, and support was given:

I succeeded in getting to know and integrating into a family from there. This family also treated me as if I was a son of the house. ...When I came back from Karl Marx Stadt, I encountered a woman who was loaded with bags. At the time, it was very cold and so I helped her carry the bags right up to her house, which was close to my home. When we arrived at her house the woman whose name was Doris asked me whether I would like to come one day and spend a day with her and her husband Erich. I did that and was welcomed, and we developed a strong relationship. I was ultimately considered a son of the house. After a while I helped her get a job as receptionist in our dormitory and she worked there until I returned to Mozambique.<sup>39</sup>

In this example, the worker-trainee was able to find his host mother employment at his dormitory. These examples suggest that some East Germans were interested in befriending foreign nationals. These do not seem to have been cases of socialist worker solidarity, born of class consciousness or a shared place in the production process. These spontaneous friendships were beyond the stuff of ideology, happening neither despite nor because of official propaganda. At their best, they were manifestations of the intrinsic human search for connection with others.

Despite these emerging support networks in Germany, most of the migrants wanted to keep their ties to back home as close as possible. Angolans and Mozambicans abroad often waited impatiently for news from home. Given that civil wars raged in both countries, not hearing from loved ones was very stressful. Yet, the postal service was not always reliable, and news could be old by the time it arrived.<sup>40</sup> Often, migrants had different ways of getting information. In addition to reading the national news when they could, or depending on their group leader for information, they maintained pen pal relationships with compatriots. The Mozambican weekly news magazine *Tempo* printed announcements that introduced Mozambican worker-trainees abroad who were looking for pen pals at home. One such advertisement read: "I am a young Mozambican, 19 years old, and I am currently undertaking a professional training in the GDR. I would like to correspond with all young



Mozambicans of both sexes to avoid being passed by the various social, political, and economic transformations of our country.”<sup>41</sup> Sometimes, groups of several individuals from the same company dormitory were looking for pen pals, suggesting a need to keep abreast of developments at home but also some form of institutional political encouragement.

The worker-trainees’ life histories demonstrate that migrants’ attentions were always divided between their home and host countries. Letters and packages circulating among host and home countries serve as evidence of why it is important to bring both contexts into one narrative. Ewald Seiler, director for cadre and training at a company producing automobiles and hunting firearms, acknowledged as much in 1982: “One young friend started crying when he had opened a letter. It said in the letter that close family members were murdered by terrorists. For us it is our class duty to care for every individual Mozambican friend. This duty follows from proletarian and socialist internationalism.”<sup>42</sup> One can imagine that behind the stilted language and political signposting, typical of East German official communication, was genuine compassion. Seiler, at least, recognized that worker-trainees did not leave their homes behind when they showed up for work in the morning.

There were other avenues of immaterial exchange that were invisible to East German colleagues, including magic. Malignant and jealous family members at home were reported to send evil spirits to bring back lost sons or daughters. Former worker-trainees told me stories of migrants losing their minds in the first weeks in Germany, only to have their health restored upon return to Mozambique. Interviewees explained these mental states of temporary madness, perhaps reactions to the culture shock of finding oneself in a foreign land, with the presence of spirits. A group leader recalls: “We had one person who became mentally ill, and they said he was possessed by the spirits of the ancestors. He had to return home because they could not solve his problem in Europe because European medicine doesn’t cure these types of illnesses. When he returned to Mozambique he was cured immediately. He left the airplane without any problems, and nobody needed to support him.”<sup>43</sup>

In the interpretation of some worker-trainees, magic rendered a person defenseless, either through physical or mental illness, to reduce their productivity and to incapacitate their independent decision-making. To them, this was the opposite of a personal growth moment. The migrant was no longer becoming a more independent self, but rather stopped becoming and was reduced to responding to the influence of the family’s wishes

through witchcraft.<sup>44</sup> Another possible reading of cases of spirit possession is that becoming possessed was a means of exercising agency by leaving work and returning home, while outsourcing the causality for failure to persist with their German experience.<sup>45</sup> It is through such stories that we can guess at how tough it must have been for many of the migrants to go to East Germany. For some of them, it meant going from a small village in the Mozambican provinces straight into big German cities such as Berlin, Leipzig, or Dresden. They tended not to talk to me about it in these terms, but the culture shock must have been enormous. On top of the culture shock, things were made worse for some migrants by the disappointment they felt at their working conditions or the prejudice and racism they encountered. One suspects that had things been better in Mozambique and Angola at the time, many more would have left early.

Witchcraft accusations were not only related to illness. Migrants also accounted for their own decisions by claiming interference from higher powers. Paulo was seemingly well integrated in 1990. He had a job with his future in-laws, a place to live, and a pregnant East German fiancée. He fulfilled all the criteria allowing him to stay in East Germany, despite the early termination of his contract because of the economic upheavals of the collapse of East Germany.<sup>46</sup> He had decided to make his life in Germany: "I already had everything planned to marry and suddenly, the night before the wedding I started saying that I wanted to go home. And I came here [back to Mozambique] and I realize that these things were quite normal. These are situations that occur around here."<sup>47</sup> "These things" refers to magic applied by his family to call him back. This explanation was as real, if not more so, to Paulo as his increasing anxiety about staying behind as the only black person in his village suffering from an increasingly xenophobic climate. Migrants could face the threat of spiritual sanctions, the existence of which reveals the social tensions inherent in the migration dynamics.<sup>48</sup> In Paolo's case, even a new German family was not sufficient to prevent his return.

### *Inclusion and Exclusion: Dormitories and Discos*

Who loved whom was political in East Germany. This was especially the case for love between citizens and non-citizens.<sup>49</sup> Contrary to its rhetoric of international brotherhood, the East German state tried to limit personal connections between citizens and foreigners. The emphasis was on nation above socialism. Keeping socialist citizens in their respective national

boxes was not only on the agenda of the East German government. It was in the interests of all three states to make marriage difficult.<sup>50</sup> The workers had not been brought to Germany to stay; they had been brought there to train and work and then to leave. When police encountered East German women in the company of African men, they often asked the woman for her personal details.<sup>51</sup> Authorities of the three states feared what could happen outside of their control. With the control-freakery common to authoritarian states, their various organs tried to keep a close eye on the public and private lives of the foreign workers, and those with whom they interacted.<sup>52</sup>

The most powerful attempts at controlling the private lives of the migrants occurred in the worker dormitories. Worker-trainees were housed in company dormitories by nationality.<sup>53</sup> Ilfio remembers: “We were only Angolans in the dormitory. That really made it difficult to interact better with the German culture. That is why I fought to get out of the dormitory as soon as I could.”<sup>54</sup> It was mandatory for worker-trainees to live in company hostels with their group, a measure created to help the live-in group leaders exercise control.<sup>55</sup> The migrants, kept all in one place, were also more accessible to (and controllable by) state and company personnel. It became clear in the interviews with me decades later that there were varied levels of controlling zeal between companies. While some worker-trainees could move in with their East German partners, others had to report daily to the dormitory. Some were able to bring friends and romantic partners to attend parties or spend the night, while others had to find creative ways of smuggling visitors in, such as through windows or distracting the porter, to create a space for social gatherings or relationships.<sup>56</sup> In Augusto’s words:

In some dormitories we were not allowed to bring lovers. My girlfriend always had to enter without our group leader noticing. ...It was not the same in all dormitories though. In Dessau for instance, I was able to go in with my girlfriend without a problem. In other places, they would either send the woman away or sometimes even call the police to escort them away from the dormitory. ...This rule only applied to Angolans, not to Germans. They feared that somebody might steal something from our rooms. ...They said it was more a question of security but of course it was really a question of control.<sup>57</sup>

Confronted with socialist mobility, it was inevitable that the controlling tendencies prevalent in the state organs of all three countries tried to maintain boundaries. One of the main ways they did this was by limiting unsupervised contact between ordinary citizens. Nevertheless, pockets of East German society became socialist melting pots. An example of these was in hostels housing several nationalities, or discos in Berlin and other large cities where worker-trainees and students from all over the world met Germans and each other.<sup>58</sup>

Discos were places where some people crossed the color line while others upheld it, both sides of being an intimate stranger in nightclubs, resulting in thrilling and volatile situations. One minute one could be dancing closely with a date, the next minute attacked as a foreigner. As, for example, in the poem by Regina with which we began this chapter, the dance floor took on an important role in Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees' narratives of their East German leisure time when they spoke with me. In the memoryscape of the majority of male Angolan and Mozambican migrants, the disco was synonymous with being young: "When I lived in Germany, I spent my nights in discos, but today things have changed. ...It was a question of adolescence. When you are young, you have few responsibilities."<sup>59</sup> The disco is often referred to in the context of dancing, drinking, and meeting women: "Many people thought I was Michael Jackson. Especially the girls liked that. I met a lot of them at the disco."<sup>60</sup> In the stories told by the male interviewees the disco became a hyper-masculinized place, where they realized their manhood and demonstrated it through their popularity with women. In their telling, the Mozambican and Angolan migrants dominated the dance floor because many German women were drawn to the Africans for their dance moves, bodies, and stylish clothes. They were perceived as exotic and consciously toyed with that image, claiming inclusion by exclusion.<sup>61</sup>

Notions of proper behavior and gendered ways of spending one's leisure time were pronounced when it came to discos and bars. For many Angolan and Mozambican men, going to the disco and to bars was a prime leisure activity, alone or in groups. But these locations played less of a role in most women's narratives. Luzia, an Angolan female former worker-trainee, remembers: "I never entered a disco. I think that being afraid played a big role. The majority of women only left for their training and for work and if there was no program they just went home."<sup>62</sup> Many migrant women, especially if they worked in smaller villages rather than big cities, did not experience the freedom that many East German women

enjoyed. Some women were anxious because of the political instability of their home countries; leaving the house at night is a dangerous thing in a conflict society and that fear continued to stay with some women in East Germany. Not all women took the challenge of exploring a foreign and potentially dangerous place at night without protective structures. Another aspect was the moral compass many young women had brought with them. In parts of rural Angola and Mozambique women who went to nightclubs, smoked cigarettes, or drank hard alcohol were often associated with prostitution and immorality.

However, this did not mean that African women in East Germany had no fun. Context mattered, as Lina, a Mozambican worker-trainee in Berlin, recalled in the early 1990s:

discos It was great in Leipziger Street. Everybody went there, also alone. ...As a woman I never had problems with getting in. I also got to know many Berliners while dancing. We had a lot of fun. Nobody came home with me because my Mozambican girlfriends were there. But we went out together. But there were few Mozambicans who had real tight connections with German men. We all knew that we wouldn't want to stay for forever.<sup>63</sup>

The differences between Luzia's and Lina's memories illustrate that experiences varied according to location, relationship status, personality, and work and training environment. Luzia turned eighteen in East Germany, where she worked and trained at a cotton mill in Gera in an all-female Angolan group. She started dating her future husband, also from Angola, after her first year, and returned early due to her first pregnancy. Today she lives with her husband and their six children in Luanda. Lina, on the other hand, went to Germany twice, from 1980 to 1984 and 1988 until her interview in the early 1990s, and worked in Berlin, first as a warehouse keeper, then in cosmetics production, and ultimately as a translator. She already had a son whom she left with her mother during the first contract. She also had a daughter from another partner, whom she also left with her mother while serving the second contract. Luzia and Lina had in common that they, like many of their fellow female colleagues, saw their intended return as an impediment to romantic relationships with Germans.

Worker-trainees did not just go to the discos in the cities where they lived. They were mobile within East Germany, maintaining their networks of friends, family, and fellow nationals, all over the country:

After work, we were all together but mostly the time for friends was on the weekends when we went to the discos in Berlin, Erfurt, Gera; wherever there was a dormitory with Angolan girls. My colleagues had Angolan girlfriends, but I had a German girlfriend. I only met this girl towards the end of our stay. ...I met her in the disco. I was dancing and she liked me and gave me her address and asked me for mine. She always came looking for me.<sup>64</sup>

Many relationships started like this. Some ended in long-term partnerships while others had run their course after a night, a few weeks, or months. Stories were told to me of relationships of various age configurations, from similarly aged couples to the older East German women and the young worker-trainees, to East German teenagers and the more experienced worker-trainees.<sup>65</sup> Migrants' personal lives were often rather complex, marked by shifting partners, lovers, and substitute families, all the while balancing things between their home and host networks.<sup>66</sup>

Despite all this romance and excitement, the disco was also the site of exclusion. This shows us how intimately inclusion and exclusion coexisted in the daily lives of worker-trainees. In few other places was the mix of alcohol, hormones, and challenges to manhood so potent and intense. Nowhere else were the emotions of love and hate so close. Some worker-trainees remember alcohol consumption and sexual encounters as intertwined and a kind of rite of passage: "I came to Germany as a young Muslim boy neither drinking, nor smoking, nor making love to women. I came back a man."<sup>67</sup> As Juma's statement shows, drinking, smoking, and sexual activity all came to symbolize masculinity. In this, the young worker-trainees learned from their older colleagues. This mix of alcohol, hormones, and stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity rendered discos dangerous places.

There was frequent fighting between groups of Angolan, Mozambican, and East German young men. Bars and clubs and their surroundings were often the battlegrounds. In rare cases the fights escalated and turned deadly. Still today every former student of the School of Friendship can recount the story of the traumatic death of their fellow Mozambican pupil Carlos Conceição who was thrown into the river Bode and drowned on the night of September 19, 1987, after fighting had broken out between East German youth and Mozambican youth from the school during a dance at the local youth club in Staßfurt.<sup>68</sup> Another prominent case is the death of Amadeu Antonio. In 1990, during the night of November 24 to

25, Angolan worker Amadeu Antonio and two Mozambican workers became the victims of a mob of around fifty right-wing youth who walked through Eberswalde in search of victims.<sup>69</sup> These cases occurred toward the final years of East Germany and just after reunification, a period during which violent racism was on the rise.<sup>70</sup> We cannot claim direct links to the neo-Nazi skinhead scene for both of these cases, but it is important to be aware of a longer history of neo-Nazism in East Germany starting in the 1960s and 1970s. Once the SED could no longer ignore the problem following the October 17 1987 attack by skinheads on visitors to a punk concert in the East Berlin Zion Church, the East German Ministry of the Interior started an inquiry during which the criminal police uncovered a right-wing extremist network encompassing 5000 people, of which about 1000 were ready to use violence, accompanied by about 10,000 sympathizers. This formed a potent underbelly of East German society already toward the final years of the SED government to be mobilized for racist attacks.<sup>71</sup>

None of my interviewees reported being involved in fights on this extreme level of fatal violence, but quite a few remembered furious disco brawls. Anselmo's experience was typical in that it started as an innocent night out with a Mozambican friend. The two met two German women at a restaurant who then invited them to a club. The boys were having a good night, until Anselmo came back from the bathroom to find his friend lying on the floor:

I ran back to the hostel to ask our Mozambican colleagues for help. Outside in front of the bar there were Mozambicans and suddenly I saw my friend coming out of the bar limping and behind him some German youth. That is how the physical confrontation started between the Mozambicans and the Germans. Thank God nobody got killed.<sup>72</sup>

Anselmo portrayed his fight as one of just revenge for the physical injuries his friend incurred. According to Anselmo, the attack on his friend was unwarranted, motivated by racism and envy about his success with women. Although incidents like this occurred during the duration of the worker-trainees' stay in East Germany, a pervasive culture of fear emerged toward the late 1980s and during the *Wende*—as the transition period is known in Germany—when foreigners increasingly became the target of outright racist violence.

## PART II: EXCLUSION: INTIMATE STRANGERS

Cold Climate<sup>73</sup>

We work in forestry, the master is good,  
 he supports us like a father and gives everybody courage again.  
 But if we go to the cinema or sit in a Café,  
 we hear words from you that hurt.

If I was friends with a girl from Mord,  
 she'd be a 'n\* whore' or an even worse word.  
 If one of us calls the waiter in a restaurant in a friendly manner,  
 the waiter seems to be deaf because we are only air to him.

And our living barracks are called 'black spot' now in the locality.  
 If we enter a store, they say we buy everything and leave nothing.  
 First, I thought, this will pass, it is a bad joke,  
 But I feel clearly now this is hatred.

On the weekends many of us go out  
 I went to the disco close by with a few friends  
 A man poured his beer in my lap  
 That was the starting signal, we started to fight

The song "Kalttes Klima"—Cold Climate—by the well-known East German singer and songwriter Gerhard Schöne played with the double meaning of cold. Many African worker-trainees remembered debilitating cold temperatures in Germany but also the cold reception they received from those who sought to exclude African worker-trainees from their lives and by extension from East Germany. They suffered from both these coldnesses in East Germany and later in reunified Germany.

As African foreigners, Angolans and Mozambicans carried a double burden of being both non-citizens and black. This double burden of exclusion became heavier in the late 1980s and after the *Wende*. By the 1990s, there was a full-out culture of fear which greatly contributed to many Africans returning home. On the other hand, hostility accelerated the creation of Angolan or Mozambican group identities. They stood in solidarity with each other against East German attackers as they confronted societal racism. However, exclusionary practices did not just take



place between people read as white and black or between East German citizens and foreigners. There was also xenophobia and exclusion between Lusophone worker-trainees along national lines, or within national groups but between ethnicities. The worker-trainees' overlapping experiences of exclusion in East Germany were influenced by intersecting identities. In this next section of the chapter, we will examine how gender, national and regional origin, and race shaped migrants' experiences as intimate strangers.

*Gender Exclusion: Preventing Afro-German  
and African Families*

While ostensibly integrated to the same extent as male worker-trainees, Angolan and Mozambican women were mostly excluded from the family planning services available to East German women.<sup>74</sup> Thus, Angolan and Mozambican women's expression of their sexuality was fraught, not merely because of cultural factors but also because of restrictive policy. Usually, contraceptives were hard to come by. Pregnant female worker-trainees had to return home. This practice denied most female worker-trainees the possibility of determining how having children would fit into their life and career cycles, and how they could consciously combine their productive with their reproductive labor. The female worker-trainees' opinions differ about this unequal treatment. Some who returned home early due to pregnancy wanted to give birth to their children at home, close to family, and therefore did not challenge the practice.<sup>75</sup> Others, like Lufaquenda, agreed with the reasoning of the ruling:

I think this was a fair rule because if you sign up to work over there and you fall pregnant and then you cannot work that is not right. ...People who lacked discipline or who showed bad behavior or did not know how to read and write acceptably after a while were also sent back. I had a colleague who was sent back because he could neither read nor write enough.<sup>76</sup>

To her, becoming pregnant on the contract was a deficiency like being illiterate, something that happened because of a lack of self-discipline. With that comment, she echoed the states' position.

East Germany legalized abortion in 1972; termination of a pregnancy within the first three months was legal. Despite this, foreign worker-trainees inhabited a gray zone between East German laws and those of

their home country. Mozambican women, for instance, were not allowed to get an abortion in Mozambique as Samora Machel saw children as the “flowers of the revolution” and the youth as its “lifeblood.”<sup>77</sup> Getting an abortion while in East Germany required the permission of the embassy, which often proved hard to obtain.<sup>78</sup> Lina disagreed with the law and had a clandestine abortion:

My doctor was very good. Once he heard my story, what the conditions were at home and that I had to work for my family, he felt sorry for me. We then did it without the paper from the embassy. Afterwards I immediately received a contraceptive coil. I only got to know the pill in Germany. If I had had it in Mozambique, I would not have had my son but would have continued to study.<sup>79</sup>

Lina’s story reveals the restrictive policies toward African women and their effects on these women’s professional and private lives. For Lina, her career decisions were already impacted by the birth of her first child in Mozambique, prior to leaving for East Germany, and would have been curtailed yet again, had she not found a doctor willing to undertake an abortion while she was in East Germany. Both East German and African women decided against carrying to term the offspring fathered by worker-trainees. Their reasons for doing so varied, as did the legal policies; the situation for pregnant African worker-trainees was a precarious one, with women relying in some cases on homemade remedies to abort before seeking medical assistance.<sup>80</sup>

In Mozambique, just like in East Germany, the socialist revolution redefined labor according to communist notions of equality of the sexes, insisting that women and men could do the same jobs and aid the revolution. However, FRELIMO’s dismantling of gender roles stopped at the familial division of labor, leaving child raising in the domain of women.<sup>81</sup> FRELIMO accepted not only that pregnant worker-trainees were to be evicted, it actively prohibited the distribution of contraceptives among female worker-trainees and limited their access to safe abortion services.<sup>82</sup> This left female worker-trainees with few safe and accessible options to take charge of their reproductive lives.

To prevent a generation of socialist “friends” from elsewhere from permanently settling in East Germany and raising a second generation, the East German state decided against providing care for pregnant foreign worker-trainees and young mothers. This double standard illuminated the

**Fig. 5.1** Juma Junior celebrating his first birthday at the family's apartment in Zschopau. Source: Juma Madeira



limitations of the East German commitment to gender equality, and that of socialism more broadly. The restrictive policy finally changed only in 1989, when it became possible to choose between delivery in East Germany or back home, with a subsequent return to work.<sup>83</sup> Female worker-trainees were then also eligible to receive pregnancy benefits, brief maternity leave, and child benefits, and were able to take advantage of state childcare.<sup>84</sup> Juma and his wife Graciél were beneficiaries. Graciél gave birth to her son in East Germany and the family moved into an apartment provided by their company (Fig. 5.1).<sup>85</sup>

The contracts explicitly prevented worker-trainees from bringing a family with them or signing up as couples. This policy served to deter some female worker-trainees from migrating. Marieta shared her thoughts on weighing up whether to return to East Germany on a second contract:

My name came up a second time for me to return but then I no longer wanted to return. ...I had two months of holidays and I still wanted to stay with my family. And I still wanted to marry, and they said we could not go over there pregnant, and I had already entered a committed relationship here.<sup>86</sup>

Marietta decided to stay, took up employment at Texmoque, a textile company in Nampula, and devoted herself to her family. She eventually had seven children with three men; her first and her current partner also worked in East Germany.<sup>87</sup>

While many pregnant worker-trainees were forced to return, those with the necessary social capital sometimes succeeded in bending the rules.<sup>88</sup> One such case was when pastor Almuth Berger housed a pregnant Mozambican woman in her home to prevent the woman's company from repatriating her. Pastor Berger wrote to the East German State Ministry for Work and Wages responsible for the worker-trainees. Luckily, they proved cooperative. The woman received a flat on her own where she lived with the child and continued working. Pastor Berger baptized the little girl. In the end, however, the mother and child returned to Maputo in 1990 in response to the rise in xenophobic violence and openly expressed racism on formerly East German territory.<sup>89</sup>

### *Becoming Black in East Germany*

African immigrants living in East Germany underwent a racialization process whereby their identities shifted from primarily ethno-regional to national and racial. In a way, coming to East Germany for some young worker-trainees meant becoming first and foremost black.<sup>90</sup> In their previous lives in independent, black-majority societies their skin color reportedly played less of a role for many. In a slightly different way, it also meant that being Angolan or Mozambican became more important relative to being Makua, Makonde, Sena, Shona, Shangaan, Ovimbundu, Chokwe, Lunda, Ambundu, or any other of the ethnic and linguistic groups who make up the Mozambican and Angolan populations. In this respect, therefore, the scheme was rather successful at achieving the aims which FRELIMO and the MPLA had for fostering national identities at the expense of regional and ethnic ones.

Many worker-trainees share memories such as those held by Ilíbio, from Angola:

It was my first time in a white country, and I had never lived together with these people. We only saw these people and their cultures on TV. When I was born, there were still some Portuguese but when I was five years old the conflict started and when I was already grown, I only encountered empty houses and occasionally a Portuguese, but I never learned to live with this race. That is why everything for me was new.<sup>91</sup>

Many worker-trainees had, like Ilíbio, limited experience of living together with people read as being from another race prior to migrating. While to be black was the norm in Angola and Mozambique, to live in the overwhelmingly white East Germany, and to be constantly reminded of their difference but also to notice the difference of the non-black majority to themselves, brought for many of the migrants their blackness to the fore as an important aspect of their identities.<sup>92</sup>

Despite this, some Angolan worker-trainees showed the influence of Lusotropicalism in their memories.<sup>93</sup> This was the ideology that posited that Portuguese colonialism was racially egalitarian and that the Portuguese-speaking world consisted of harmonious, multiracial societies. For example: “Here [in Angola], we were already accustomed to an atmosphere where all races and colors lived together. In the Catholic church, we got to know all sorts of people...that is why we didn’t have to switch mentally when we left Angola.”<sup>94</sup> Recent scholarship has emphasized that Lusotropicalism was something of a fig leaf for exploitative colonialism, but its influence on the Lusophone world has been undeniable, including its influence on how some black Portuguese speakers conceptualized race.

These two opposing viewpoints—one emphasizing the strangeness of living with white people, one emphasizing its normality—illustrate that the experiences of worker-trainees from the same country could vary greatly. How migrants dealt with living in a majority-white country was a personal thing, resulting from a mix of background, experiences in (East) Germany, and individual character. Ilíbio, who found that living in such an environment required adjusting to, was born in Ukuma in Huambo and grew up in Namibe and Lubango, where he attended the Instituto Médio Friedrich Engels until ninth grade. He grew up in the Angolan provinces between 1970 and 1988, a time of intense fighting, as the MPLA with the help of the Cubans sought to fight back South African advances into Angola. Perhaps his unease reflected the experiences of his youth, where white South African soldiers were a source of danger. On the other hand, the group interview in which several participants voiced the opinion that

Angola was a place of interracial interaction included people from different parts of Angola, ranging from Luanda to Huila and Cabinda, and drew their experience of diversity either from schooling or religion.<sup>95</sup> Along with regional differences, the family and education backgrounds of the worker-trainees also had an influence on their previous exposure to people read as being from other races. Given that future worker-trainees were drawn both from rural areas with little exposure to Angola's multiracial and multi-ethnic social strata, and those from urban elites that had access to secondary schooling, both experiences were reflected in migrants' reactions to the difference they faced in (East) Germany.

Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees' experiences of East Germany were doubly foreign. First, they resided in a foreign land where they interacted with people from different nationalities and cultures that most had not met before, mainly East Germans, but also people from Poland, Vietnam, Cuba, and other, mainly socialist, countries. Second, they found themselves in mixed groups with people from all over their home country, speaking different mother tongues and following different cultural practices. Not only did they have to learn and use German, but for some this was the first time that they had used Portuguese as a *lingua franca* with their compatriots. As we have discussed elsewhere in this book, one notable success of the migration scheme was to foster national identity. However, this did not always work, as one former worker-trainee from Mozambique remembered:

President Samora Machel selected me. According to the president there was to be no tribalism, racism, or regionalism when it came to forming groups. What was very interesting is that he picked five people from every province. ...We put a group of 50 together. He said he didn't want to put 10 people from his province because he knew that people from the south aren't that good.<sup>96</sup>

Thus, tensions were revealed between official anti-tribalist and anti-regionalist doctrine and the enduring existence of prejudice against those from elsewhere in the country. As, for example, with some of my interviewees from Ilha de Moçambique, an island to the north which was the original base for Portuguese colonialism and gave its name to the country, many northerners remained wary of the south, and FRELIMO continued to be associated with a strong southern leadership base.

There was another paradox revealed in the above quotation: many of the worker-trainees I interviewed in the North—Nampula, Namialo, Ilha de Moçambique, and Pemba—revered Samora Machel as leader of the revolution and father of the nation, despite his southern origins. Their subsequent disillusionment with FRELIMO appears to be a result of their disappointing reintegration after returning from Europe, rather than an opposition to a southerner-led revolution per se. Socialist ideology in Mozambique sought to overcome internal divisions by imposing anti-racism, anti-regionalism, and anti-tribalism. But, as in East Germany, the new blanket of socialist morals, enforced with punitive measures, tended to cover up existing prejudices rather than eliminate them. However, the worker-trainees' experiences show that through living together abroad some of them came to appreciate their national identities and found a solidarity with their compatriots. This shift occurred in part because they continued to be exposed to violence, xenophobia, and racism in their daily experience in East Germany. As one response to this hostility, they formed what Eric Allina-Pisano and Jessica Allina-Pisano call "protective linguistic and cultural communities" based on nationality, or sometimes even broader communities based on racial solidarity.<sup>97</sup>

While the ethnically and regionally mixed national groups of worker-trainees did instill an appreciation for the diversity of their compatriots and encouraged their association with a national identity, this was not a seamless or harmonious process. As the memories of this Angolan worker-trainee demonstrated, ethnic violence existed alongside the xenophobic violence experienced outside of the group. For instance, the violent tensions over women that Africans encountered outside of the dormitory when interacting with East Germans and other foreign workers were replicated inside the dormitory along ethnic lines:

In my group [of 50 worker-trainees] we came from all over the country [Angola]. The problem of tribalism was obvious. We even had several fights among ourselves because we were envious of each other or because we got drunk and provoked one another. It got worse when someone brought a German lover and the others tried to conquer that lover.<sup>98</sup>

Far from assuming a natural affinity between Angolans and Mozambicans based on their shared experience of Portuguese colonialism and shared language, some worker-trainees held deep-seated ethno-national animosity toward one another:

Even among us Africans we had problems with racism. For instance, the Mozambicans had serious problems of envy when they saw a Mozambican woman go out with an Angolan man. I already had problems like that. A Mozambican intercepted us [him and his Mozambican date] and we had to have police intervention. That is one of the reasons why I am not a great friend of Mozambicans.<sup>99</sup>

These tensions illustrated the difficult nature of nation-building abroad. When presented with a common enemy, migrants framed their narratives along group thinking. When a compatriot was in danger the others came to fight for them; yet even as the outside world and social environment perceived the groups to be “the Angolans” or “the Mozambicans,” the internal group dynamics were more complex. Furthermore, this example shows that inter-ethnic tensions were multifaceted. There were several dimensions of difference in the lives of worker-trainees: that between East Germans and those from elsewhere, between those read as foreigners, and between compatriots. Racism toward Africans from East Germans, though an important story and one to which we will turn now, was not the only form of discrimination the worker-trainees experienced.

### *Real Racism in Real Socialism*<sup>100</sup>

The structural existence of racism as a system of thought in socialist societies was anathema for socialist parties.<sup>101</sup> From Angola to the Soviet Union, socialist countries united under an anti-racist banner. Official East German ideology was no exception and claimed anti-fascist, anti-imperial, and anti-racist politics in solidarity with brother nations in the global South.<sup>102</sup> East German foreign policy sought to project an engaged socialist state supporting African liberation movements and opposing South African apartheid.

Consequently, it was illegal to make racist comments, physically attack people, or engage in any other form of racist expression. If such expressions were reported and interpreted as racism, the perpetrator was punished.<sup>103</sup> However, racist acts were seen as singular rather than systemic occurrences. Either they were ascribed to attitudes imported from the West, or to a few uneducated and rebellious citizens, often labeled antisocial.<sup>104</sup> Notwithstanding anti-racist intentions, the cosmopolitan lives depicted by some worker-trainees existed only in small pockets of East German society.



For East Germans who did not interact with the foreign guests in unscripted, deeper ways, depictions of racial diversity in the form of “racial rainbows” remained pretty propaganda.<sup>105</sup> As Quinn Slobodian demonstrates, the racial rainbow was based on essentializing notions of cultural and ethnic difference tied to specific locations around the globe. An East German “was to denounce the practice of racism even while preserving the utility of the category of race itself,” which meant that “[o]n both sides of the Cold War border in the post-war years, the larger world remained divided into three primary phenotypic groups: white, black, and yellow.” East German ideology did not purport color-blindness, but rather it pushed the notion of a horizontal, pluralistic community of peoples, connected through socialist ideals.

Racism in East Germany affected African worker-trainees neither because of nor despite socialist state anti-racism politics. Rather, racism in Germany had (and has) a long, complex, and much debated history stretching back to German imperialism and before. A reflective discourse about this was generally not possible, not least due to the externalization of imperialism to the class enemy. There were few attempts in East Germany to root out racism through enhancing mutual understanding by reflecting on exclusion and inclusion, hurdles and privileges. Instead, racist behavior was relegated to the private realm. It could not exist as part of the state structures. According to historian Jonathan R. Zatlin, the SED portrayed “racism as a form of false consciousness” and thereby “removed the grounds for any theoretical understanding that might have guided party officials when confronting hostility toward foreigners.”<sup>106</sup> The result was the perpetuation of racialized thinking from colonial to Nazi times and into East German administration, restaurants, and workspaces. At best, this situation resulted in thoughtlessness. At worst, there was intentional discrimination and even open violence. Not confronting the racism in East German society perpetuated the very thing the law sought to eradicate: the racism of state officials and citizens alike.

The only country across the East with a direct colonial past, East Germany failed to address this colonial history. One result was that the history of black (East) Germans was silenced.<sup>107</sup> Instead, an ideology of racial hierarchy continued after Germany was stripped of its colonies in 1918. It reached its tragic apex in the Nazi era and the Holocaust.<sup>108</sup> East German official anti-racism was not only a moral ordering device, it was a political tool to work toward the creation of a socialist utopia, united by class consciousness, and not divided by race, gender, or generation.<sup>109</sup>

More cynically, it was an easy, no-cost way for the East German government to demonstrate why they were not the inheritors of the guilt of the Nazi era and why they were morally superior to West Germany.<sup>110</sup>

All those registered as foreigners only made up about 1 percent of the East German population.<sup>111</sup> Of these, a statistically negligible number came from outside Europe. They nevertheless held sway over many East German imaginations. A hierarchy of foreignness existed, where race trumped mere foreignness. Thus, the ever-increasing xenophobic expressions had very distinct racist undertones.<sup>112</sup> No matter how intimate some relationships between African worker-trainees and East Germans became, migrants were reminded daily of their status as strangers; at best as invited socialist friends or at least as tolerated temporary guests, at worst as foreign threat and competition for scarce resources. Mark Fenemore contends that the East German state's emphasis on solidarity with the global South resulted in many people seeing foreigners as "symbols of socialist domination" and "puppets of the state." People who were perceived as "foreign" could thus become "easy targets for venting frustration with the regime."<sup>113</sup>

State control through surveillance and law enforcement succeeded to some degree in protecting the worker-trainees from the potent mix of racism, xenophobia, and individual prejudices that increasingly erupted as the East German state institutions weakened toward the late 1980s, and when they finally ceased to exist on October 3, 1990. During the East German dictatorship, a certain compliance with the official discourse of friendship and brotherhood among socialist countries had incentivized the suppression of overt violent racist expressions by individuals. This ceased to be the case.

In accordance with the East German anti-racist stance, many interviewees discussed their relative freedom from violent racist encounters, and their freedom to move about easily in public as individuals during the late 1970s and most of the 1980s. As one worker remembers: "In public places the German state was in control. And where the German state was in control, people from any and all races could circulate. Those who didn't want to deal with that had to stay at home."<sup>114</sup> This control, albeit never perfect, also extended to the workplace where workers accused of racism tended to face sanctions: "The communist policies were rigorous. No German could demonstrate racist expressions in the workspace. If that happened, he was immediately punished. [However], we encountered racism walking around in our free time."<sup>115</sup> As Gerhard Schöne's song at the

beginning of this chapter section depicted, most worker-trainees encountered hostility outside policed and official spaces. Bigotry manifested itself during everyday activities such as finding a seat in a restaurant, dancing with an East German woman at the disco, grocery shopping, or taking public transport.

Quite a few worker-trainees, especially those posted to more remote areas, framed their initial appearance as novelty. They describe being a target of curiosity, but also prejudice, which they explain through the ignorance and personal preconceptions of the members of the East German population with whom they interacted. Augusto remembers being the object of physical transgressions: “Sometimes people appeared to touch our skin to see whether we were really people. One time a child came up to me to touch me for this reason, but I thought this was a normal thing. The child was curious and had never seen a person of my color.”<sup>116</sup> José explained how it felt to be a novelty:

When we arrived in Germany, interestingly we found that we walked around in cities which practically did not know black people. ...It was the first time they saw them walk around and they were...scared. How do you relate with a race you have never seen? It was difficult. So, there were these prejudices that people had. ...For instance, some white people did not want to share the same train wagon as the black people. But I do think these were personal prejudices; some people interacted, and others didn't.<sup>117</sup>

Echoing the SED's logic, worker-trainees often externalized racism to a few individuals rather than seeing it as systemic. In this context, interviewees often mention right-wing skinheads, whom they describe as a group of people with a propensity for violent acts, and racist, and neo-Nazi tendencies. In Santana's words:

The German people are a loving people. They know how to receive people. Discrimination exists everywhere in the world, mostly among the elderly and the young people. But there were also those more radical, whom we called skinheads, '*cabeças rapadas*.' Except for those we interacted with everybody.<sup>118</sup>

The East German skinhead scene was established in the early 1980s and members committed a series of anti-immigrant attacks in the mid-1980s.<sup>119</sup> Faced with these groups, the SED continued to maintain that right-wing neo-Nazi and xenophobic attitudes were imported from the West and

refused to acknowledge racism as an inherent problem in East Germany. Some, such as Ilíbio, who referred to racism as “the ugly part” of his East German experience, tried to grasp the violent behavior of neo-Nazi-skinheads, framing their behavior within the context of living in an immobile and unfree society:

When we had these conflicts with the skinheads, we understood that, from their point of view, we invaded their territory. ... I understood because I started to comprehend the history of the German division and about the peoples' imprisonment. And clearly, if I had not been able to travel for the last 40 years, I would also be angry.<sup>120</sup>

While an anti-migrant mood in capitalist societies often centers on fears about access to employment, in the socialist East where full employment was the norm, these fears shifted to access to goods and privileges. The SED government brought foreign worker-trainees into the country but failed to adequately inform the public about their role, their numbers, and their history, which might have helped to limit rumors and misunderstandings.<sup>121</sup> Many East Germans participated in solidarity campaigns with countries, but they often knew little else about the specificities of the strangers arriving in their midst.<sup>122</sup> It is easier to preach solidarity than it is to practice it. Furthermore, since the arrival of workers or students or other sojourners from other countries was usually not discussed with residents of the areas in which the migrants were concentrated, animosity often resulted in misunderstandings. Reports in company newspapers and initiatives to introduce foreign worker-trainees on a local level often parroted the party line and celebrated East German solidarity, rather than dealing with the specific impacts on areas which saw migration. Some wrongly believed that the worker-trainees' foreign status meant they were being given systemic access to the mythical and unreachable West. This could be money, goods, or trips.<sup>123</sup> The lack of information also stoked worries about violent foreigners. Rumors, fears, and misinformation contributed to laying the ground for violence against foreigners during the last period of the East German regime and afterwards.<sup>124</sup> Bernd Bröskamp aptly describes the paradox thus: “Racism, apartheid, and xenophobia were all at once (officially) prohibited and (covertly) institutionally legitimized by the state.”<sup>125</sup>

The Angolans and Mozambicans were likewise ill equipped for their intercultural encounters. While worker-trainees did not often perceive

East Germany as a country with a relevant colonial past, the colonial memories and experiences of the worker-trainees were immediate and influenced the way they approached going to “Europe.” Thus, it should not be surprising that rumors about East Germans among the worker-trainees were also rampant and that racialized personal prejudices existed, too:

Not only people of the white race are racists against blacks, but it can also be the other way around. But people can distinguish whether a person speaks with the intent to insult or not and that is the same in Europe and Africa. Even in Germany we had incidences where the [German] women started learning our languages, mostly the most racist terms, and whenever we spoke these kinds of things they intervened and that caused problems. That is why you always have to be very careful when you are in the presence of people from other races not to speak insulting things.<sup>126</sup>

On an interpersonal level, racialized stereotypes continued to thrive as East Germans and Angolans and Mozambicans alike entered relationships carrying the intellectual baggage of colonialism, despite their governments’ espousal of anticolonialism.

### *The Fall of the Wall, the Rise of Violent Racism*

“With German reunification, racism started in Germany!”<sup>127</sup> Statements like this were common among worker-trainees from Angola and Mozambique. While the fall of the Wall and the following transition period is ordinarily told following an emancipatory script, looking through the eyes of Angolan and Mozambican migrants at these historic events reveals that this script is ignorant of what happened to non-white people and people without an (East) German passport.<sup>128</sup> Racism was the primary lens through which African migrants understood the rise in right-wing attacks on foreigners in the fall of 1989, and the subsequent violent xenophobia and racism in what had become the new states (*Bundesländer*) of the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>129</sup> Migrants experienced racism throughout their stay in East Germany, but almost all interviewees acknowledged a dramatic worsening as their daily tasks became determined by keeping themselves safe from attack, as a culture of fear took hold.<sup>130</sup>

Memories of everyday harassment and violence suggest a worsening of the situation over time. Racist violence as spectacle, such as murder and arson, has been, as in Russia and several other post-communist countries,

a feature of the post-socialist space. Such violence is rarely triggered by a single cause. Rather, it is incited by political processes. As an expression of racism, violence predated the end of the GDR, but as a classic anti-immigrant stance spurred by economic crisis and recession, it intensified during the era of the *Wende*.<sup>131</sup>

The expansion of the far-right scene in East Germany coincided with a phase of economic and political stagnation that finally led to the collapse of the old state institutions and value systems under the pressure of the pro-democracy movement.<sup>132</sup> People had to adjust from life in a welfare dictatorship to a pluralistic free-market society.<sup>133</sup> The transition to capitalism meant that for the first time in decades there was competition between firms for business and between workers for jobs. Much of East German society was not equipped for this new reality and so the change went hand in hand with mass unemployment and interruptions to professional careers. Only about one third of the population managed to fully integrate into the new labor market.<sup>134</sup> These political and economic adjustments were greeted by some with joy and as opportunities, but also led to experiences of loss and social anxiety for many others. As regards racism, these conditions of turmoil existed on top of significant continuities of thinking about race, which had been inherited from colonial and Nazi times. The official East German ideology of outsourcing the blame for the Nazi era also meant that there had been little reckoning with racism in the personal sphere as there had been (to an extent) in West Germany.<sup>135</sup> The increase of xenophobic and racist attacks experienced by migrants, especially those read as non-white, therefore had a long and complicated historical background.

Those Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees who lived through the upheaval alongside their East German colleagues found that neighbors and even friends increasingly turned against them. In April 1991 Jorge Gomondai, a young Mozambican, died after being thrown out of a moving train returning from a disco night with his white partner.<sup>136</sup> On September 17 and 18, 1991, a group of skinheads and youths attacked a contract worker hostel in Hoyerswerda.<sup>137</sup> During the night of August 24 to 25, 1992, extremists attacked an apartment block in Lichtenhagen, a district of Rostock, home to Vietnamese contract workers and asylum seekers. The rioters threw petrol bombs while locals applauded, and millions watched on live TV.<sup>138</sup> In the memories of the former worker-trainees these deathly and destructive events were beacons, and together with their personal experiences undergirded the culture of fear that came to

dominate their lives. Even if not experienced personally, these events played a powerful role in shaping migrants' conceptions and fearful feelings about (East) Germany. Nowhere seemed safe as migrants were attacked in their homes:

When we arrived in [East] Germany, we had a lot of fun, we went out to discos and all that but from one moment to the other we found ourselves confined to the dorm. It was a very racist time when Germans came to the dormitories in the early mornings and set fire to some to show that they did not want any foreigners on their land.<sup>139</sup>

Neither did Angolan and Mozambican workers feel secure on the streets or on public transport:

There wasn't always a lot of racism. It is true that not everybody was peaceful but before the German reunification it was normal to walk around without being called names but afterwards, we couldn't walk alone anymore. It was also no longer possible to take the train because if they found you, they would throw you out of the window while the train was running.<sup>140</sup>

Worker-trainees increasingly sought security in numbers; they no longer felt safe going out alone. In this hostile climate, the vast majority of worker-trainees decided to return home. Those who stayed had either found true love in East Germany and wanted to remain with their new families or sought to stay away from home until the end of the civil wars. Even workers who had the opportunity to stay, such as Abilio, decided to return:

I was the group leader and the directorate of that company told me...that I was already practically a citizen of Germany and I could stay...and be integrated into a work area. My passport was already valid until 1998. But I started to see that I would be very isolated in Germany. ...The people started to make claims and wreaked havoc, I saw that I had to first and foremost think about my security and for that reasons I refused to accept the offer. ...These groups [rightwing extremists] always existed but they did not manifest in East Germany when we lived to some extent in security but after the reunification things changed and they were already free to act as they pleased. They received support from the residents in former West Germany and it got really, really bad. ...I feared for my life and so I resolved to return home.<sup>141</sup>

What had started as a socialist cosmopolitan adventure turned into a nightmare for the worker-trainees who lived through the fall of the Wall and German reunification.<sup>142</sup> Paradoxically, many of the ex-migrants remembered that East German dictatorship had offered relative personal security and freedom from racist attacks, while the transition to democracy brought with it increased risks for African migrants, and greater restrictions in their daily lives. It shows that political liberation was, as always, more complex than at first glance. Living under a socialist dictatorship was much more multifaceted than simplistic “evil empire” conceptions allow for.<sup>143</sup>

### CONCLUSION

I learned a lot in Germany. I learned how to be a man, what racism and tribalism are, and that all of us, independently of skin color and other things, we are all the same.<sup>144</sup>

Worker-trainees brought with them notions about gender equality, anti-racism, anti-tribalism, and anti-regionalism from the socialist revolutions at home. These were political formulas which were intended to unify but were rather layered upon a divisive colonial heritage. While the familiarity with the Angolan and Mozambican exegeses of these concepts varied among worker-trainees, all deepened their understanding of East German socialist ideology during their stay abroad. Coming to East Germany for many worker-trainees meant encountering a small socialist cosmopolitan world, one in which they expanded their horizons through intimate interactions with people from other races, regions, and ethnic groups, and learned about different cultures, languages, and ways of being in the world. They took home an appreciation of cultural diversity and gender equality, of leisure time and traveling, but also an understanding of the limits of life under real socialism and the gaps between socialist rhetoric and reality.

Much of the secondary literature on this topic rightly points to the limits of integration of foreign workers in East Germany but often treats integration as a one-way street.<sup>145</sup> The interviews in this chapter are testimonies to how young men and women carved out social spaces in a restricted environment. To them integration was a two-way street, a coming together, creating new spaces for social interactions, rather than one party simply adapting to the demands of the other. Worker-trainees drew



their own social maps of East Germany along axes of affective home and host networks.<sup>146</sup> Many were fiercely fashion-conscious and enjoyed listening to music, cooking, and partying in the dormitories with compatriots and a *mélange* of other people who wanted to join in the fun; they were eager to take to the disco and pub scene, places of involvement with both alcohol and women. Often, biracial relationships served to integrate the worker-trainees into East German culture while moving the white women to the margins; as a result couples created their own spaces. Oral histories provide testimonies of the limits imposed by integration by exclusion on the experience of the intimate strangers from southern Africa. They also show how worker-trainees overcame restrictive rules and created niches to fashion what many remembered as livable, even desirable, lives.

We have seen that the human relationships the worker-trainees formed in their leisure time were crucial to influencing their thinking about East German society, about themselves as African migrants, and about socialism in the long term. These intimate strangers shaped the experiences of those East Germans with whom they interacted: a neighbor who invited the newcomers over for a shared meal, a host family who shared their vacation home with a migrant, or a lover, fiancé(e), or wife who became intimately acquainted with the way that her partner thought, acted, and dreamed. In turn, the migrants' experiences were influenced by what they got to know outside of the vocational training centers and company gates. They improved their German language skills, cooked German recipes, and celebrated Christmas with their German friends. However, they were also refused seating in restaurants, confronted with racist insults, or physically assaulted due to the color of their skin and the rumors about perceived privileges of foreign workers. These diverging and contradictory experiences were part of the migrants' lives in East Germany and shaped the way they told the story of their migration twenty-five years later.

The gap between anti-racist theory and racist practice became apparent to worker-trainees all over East Germany. The degree of their exclusion varied depending on when they came to East Germany, where they were posted, and what kind of social support networks they built. The dramatic increase of xenophobic and racist crimes after the late 1980s demonstrated the limited ability of the East German police state to protect Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees, and called into question whether they even had the will to do so. However, this was not simply a matter of a strong police state enforcing behavior according to the laws of the country, followed by a weakening state that lost that ability. The new unified state

introduced sweeping new economic, political, and social changes that fostered insecurity and anxiety among many East Germans, and which resulted in increasingly xenophobic and racist reactions. As those who hailed from elsewhere never made up more than 1 percent of the East German population, many East Germans lacked personal contacts that could have helped them overcome stereotypes of those who remained silhouettes, othered as “foreigners” and misunderstood as enemies of their well-being. Moreover, the fall of the Wall further facilitated communication between East and West, including the extreme right.<sup>147</sup> In that context, violence increased, and made Angolans and Mozambicans fear for their lives. Names such as Rostock Lichtenhagen and Hoyerswerda became infamous in Germany overnight. Many worker-trainees thus found themselves reacting to a dire situation in Germany while facing the difficult decision to return to Africa. We will explore this decision and its aftermath in detail in Chap. 6.

## NOTES

1. Tape C. 56.80, “*Visita Presidencial a RDA 30.09.80*,” 1. Samora Machel: discurso no banquete de estado (25 minutes), Rádio Moçambique, Maputo, Mozambique.
2. *Ibid.*, 2. Erich Honecker: condecoração de S. Machel, medalha “Grande Estrela da Unidade entre os Povos,” Rádio Moçambique.
3. Bruce Hall defines racism as “representation of human difference that posits a direct connection between physical and mental qualities that are constant and unalterable by human will, based on hereditary factors or external influences such as climate or geography.” Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11. While acknowledging race as a construct, this definition allows for the “realness” of racism in political, social, and cultural discourse. It is further important in this chapter to keep in mind that the cultural construction of “black” and “white” as historically created racial identities is relational.
4. Racist encounters were not limited to the leisure time of worker-trainees; they pervaded every aspect of their East German experience. Yet, due to the official realm of state and company control, racist expressions occurred much more frequently beyond the factory floor, which was the subject of the last chapter.
5. While the rotational principle makes the East German foreign worker program similar to the early West German guest worker program, the

timing, the political framing and the implications were different. West Germany's migration can be divided into three phases, (a) mass immigration (1955–1973), (b) family reunification (1970–1980), and (c) settlement and building of new ethnic minorities. Phases b and c did not happen in East Germany; see Bernd Bröskamp, "Vom Auswanderungszum Einwanderungsland: Die DDR, ihre Ausländer, die deutsche Wiedervereinigung und die Folgen," in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews- Berichte- Analysen.*, Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt, and Bernd Bröskamp, eds. (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 17; Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, trans. William Templer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 193–257.

6. I draw on the title of Francis B. Nyamnjoh's novel *Intimate Strangers* (Mankon, Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2010).
7. The East German government portrayed itself as a champion of liberation movements and young independent socialist states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1985* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 20.
8. I use affective to delineate emotional relationships, whether connoted positively (a romantic or friendly relationship) or negatively (a racist encounter) and regardless of the intensity of emotions. Often scholars distinguish between affect and emotion whereby affect also embraces less well-defined states including feelings, moods, and sensations; see Nancy Rose Hunt, "The Affective, the Intellectual, and Gender History," *Journal of African History* 55 (2014): 337.
9. See, for instance, Jochen Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration to the Former German Democratic Republic: Serving Socialism and Struggling under Democracy," *Portuguese Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2004): 163–87; Sandra Gruner-Domic, "Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration in der DDR: Die bilateralen Verträge zur Beschäftigung ausländischer Arbeiter (1961–1989)," *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* 32 (1996): 204–30.
10. Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003); John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chs. 15;16.
11. "Anjo Lezewik" by Regina Vera Cruz, February 27, 2007, original in Regina's possession. Regina from Maputo wrote the poem in 2007

- as part of a creative writing class. Almost twenty years elapsed between her experience and her processing of the memory in this poem.
12. *Marrabenta* refers to a style of dance music developed in Maputo during the 1930s and still enjoying great popularity today. It is a *mélange* of traditional Mozambican and Portuguese folk elements.
  13. A famous Mozambican Marrabenta singer, Humberto Carlos Benfica, is known as Wazimbo.
  14. Today some young Mozambican women from the lower classes specifically seek out relations with European men to gain access to social and spatial mobility and wealth with which to satisfy their own desires and give back to their families; see Christian Groes, "Men Come and Go, Mothers Stay: Personhood and Resisting Marriage among Mozambican Women Migrating to Europe," in *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*, Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). The fact that transactional relationships of this kind were not common during the labor migration underscores the importance of the female migrants' relative independence with regular access to their own incomes.
  15. Carina Ray and Ann Laura Stoler examine the power dynamics in interracial intimate relations as key sites for consolidating but also contesting colonial rule in Ghana and Indonesia respectively. They demonstrate the intricate ways in which thinking about race, gender, and sexuality are intertwined, illustrating how administrative racism interfered with strong bonds of affection from below and created social colonial categories. See Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*; Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
  16. Ilfbio, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015.
  17. Andreas Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation," ed. Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für die Belange der Ausländer (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996), 18f; Ulrich van der Heyden, "Zu den Hintergründen und dem Verlauf des Einsatzes mosambikanischer Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR-Wirtschaft," in *Mosambikanische Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR-Wirtschaft: Hintergründe - Verlauf - Folgen*, ed. Wolfgang Schwanitz Ulrich van der Heyden (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2014), 52f. East German women who were meeting male foreigners were often followed by police and Stasi; see Bröskamp, "Vom Auswanderungs- zum Einwanderungsland," 23. Annegret Schüle's studies situate

- Mozambican workers in specific companies and provide telling material of East German opinions on their Mozambican colleagues and East Germans who were engaged in biracial relationships; see Annegret Schüle, “‘Proletarischer Internationalismus’ oder ‘ökonomischer Vorteil für die DDR?’: Mosambikanische, angolansische und vietnamesische Arbeitskräfte im VEB Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei (1980–1989),” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 42 (2002): 191–210; Annegret Schüle, “‘Die ham se sozusagen aus dem Busch geholt’ - Die Wahrnehmung der Vertragsarbeitskräfte aus Schwarzafrika und Vietnam durch Deutsche im VEB Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei,” in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland*, Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus, eds. (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 309–24.
18. Augusto, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 12, 2015.
  19. The role of European and African women as enabler for African men is also discussed in Hélène Neveu Kringelbach, “The Paradox of Parallel Lives: Immigration Policy and Transnational Polygyny between Senegal and France,” in *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration*, Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 146–68. Hélène Neveu Kringelbach’s study shows how Senegalese men see polygamy with a French and a Senegalese wife as a legitimate way of obtaining spatial mobility while also retaining claims to their possessions in their region of origin. Just like in the migration system under study, some of the older migrants interviewed by Neveu Kringelbach had already established families back home, but the vast majority I interviewed were single upon leaving, albeit in the case of female migrants, often single with children. Despite living in committed long-term relationships, many of the returned workers never formally married and therefore continue to describe their marital status as single.
  20. Bernardo, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 2, 2015.
  21. Ibid.
  22. Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Larry A. Greene and Anke Ortlepp, *Germans and African Americans: Two Centuries of Exchange* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011); Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama, *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). To understand the longer trajectory of racism in (East) Germany, refer to Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism*

- and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998); Britta Schillig, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
23. José Antonio, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 8, 2015.
  24. Scherzer, *Die Fremden*, p. 114–15.
  25. Group interview, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 11, 2015.
  26. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
  27. For an exploration of how this behavior ties in with gendered notions of honor, see Iliffe, *Honour in African History*, 263, 270.
  28. Alfredo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2014.
  29. This is also true for other foreign workers; see Gertrud Hüwelmeier, “Socialist Cosmopolitanism Meets Global Pentecostalism: Charismatic Christianity among Vietnamese Migrants after the Fall of the Berlin Wall,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (2011): 331–45.
  30. Lufaquenda, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 22, 2015.
  31. Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, “The Role of Women in the Liberation of Mozambique,” *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 13 (1984): 128–85; Isabel Maria Casimiro, “Rethinking the Relations between Woman and Man During the Time of Samora,” in *Samora: Man of the People*, ed. António Sopa (Maputo: Maguezo Editores, 2001).
  32. Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*, especially Part II.
  33. Santana, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015.
  34. The sexual revolution that changed the relationship to sexuality in the 1960s in West Germany did not occur in East Germany. Instead, there was a gradual opening of sexual mores as gender roles changed and the regime increasingly desperately tried to bind citizens, especially the youth, to the party. By the time the workers came to East Germany in the late 1970s, socialist morality in East Germany had opened up. Premarital, youthful heterosexuality was ubiquitous and even promoted by the regime, and unwed motherhood was a frequent occurrence; all legal discrimination of children born out of wedlock was abolished as early as 1950 and one in three children were born out of matrimony, Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 215. A high divorce rate among young marriages was the norm and often interpreted as the absence of economic imperatives to stay together. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 187, 192, 193, 209. This was the atmosphere in which the predominately male migrant laborers inte-

- grated. Knowing this general background lets the prevalence of uncommitted relationships and the frequency of children born out of wedlock in relationships with foreign workers appear in a less exceptional light. It also shines a different light on the premature end of most young interracial families of worker-trainees.
35. See, for instance, the interview with Frau R.F. from Bautzen and Frau K. from Hoyerswerda, “Für Hoyerswerda ist das wichtig” in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 63.
  36. Lúcia, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 5, 2011.
  37. For example, pastor Almuth Berger set up the *Cabana* movement as a space for worship and socializing across nationalities which spread throughout churches in East Germany; see Almuth Berger, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 17, 2014 and Berger, “Vertragsarbeiter.”
  38. 244, Interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 17, 2015.
  39. Jacinto, interview conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 3, 2014, names of host parents changed.
  40. *Tempo* illustrated a letter to the editor discussing the problematic communication with learners abroad with a cartoon of a turtle working as post-man, wearing a cap that reads “express” and losing letters from a bag slung over its shell along the way. This illustration goes a long way toward describing the postal service at the time in Mozambique. See, for instance, the letter to the editor written by Etelvina Adelina José and Lopes Muhambe in Maputo who lament that the letters from students in Cuba to Maputo took six months in 1978 when initially they only took two months. Resposta aos Alunos que estudam em Cuba, *Tempo* No. 440, 1979-03-18, 7 <https://www.aluka.org/stable/10.5555/al.sff.document.ahmtem19790318>.
  41. Pedido de Correspondência, *Tempo* No. 439, 1979-03-04, 7.
  42. Interview with Ewald Seiler, Direktor für Kader und Ausbildung im VEB Fahrzeug- und Jagdwaffenwerk [Director for cadres and training in a publicly owned company for vehicles and hunting arms], cited in Landolf Scherzer, *Die Fremden*, 37.
  43. Jacinto, Beira June 05, 2014.
  44. This mirrors how witchcraft was used among the Southern Tswana peoples of South Africa during the late colonial period; see Comaroff and Comaroff, “On Personhood,” 272.
  45. This interpretation is inspired by Leroy Vail and Landeg White’s reading of Vimbuza spirit possession among Tumbuka speakers whereby one important form of being possessed is that it allows women a public voice, to speak truth to power and voice their grievances in a safe way through

- the spirit. See Leroy Vail, Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Oxford: James Currey, 1992), Chapter 7.
46. Article 10(6) states that the Mozambican workers who wanted to transform their status from a work contract under the agreement to an independent work contract and stay on could do so provided they could demonstrate proof of employment and proof of place of residence, Agreement between the Government of the GDR and the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique on the temporary employment of Mozambican workers in enterprises in the GDR, 28.05.1990, PA AA MFAA.
  47. Paulo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 11, 2014.
  48. For a discussion of the role of magic and spirit possession in the migration of Africans, see Cole and Groes eds., *Affective Circuits*.
  49. For an examination of how Angolan and Mozambican workers and their East German descendants navigate bi-national relationships in a politically charged environment see Johanna Wetzel and Marcia C. Schenck, "Love in Times of Socialist Solidarity: Racism, Knowledge and Mixed-Race Relationships in East Germany" *Peripherie*, 165/166, no. 42 (2022): 31–55.
  50. Marriages between contract workers and East Germans needed the approval of both states, Dennis Kuck, "Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat? Ausländische Vertragsarbeitskräfte in der DDR," in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland*, Jan C Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus, eds. (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 278. Interestingly in the absence of visas for unskilled labor today, marriage migration and family reunion are one of the only legal ways for unskilled Africans to migrate to Europe; see Cole and Groes, *Affective Circuits*, "Introduction," 4.
  51. Group interview Luanda, March 8, 2015; Catrin, interview conducted by the author, Hamburg, Germany, November 20, 2014; Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter," 24.
  52. By "public life" I am referring to the worker-trainees' life within the company gates including work, training, and company related leisure time activities. I am referring to their "private life" as the life they carved out for themselves away from the official realm, such as on self-organized outings to visit friends or spending time with romantic partners or host families.
  53. These buildings were often on or in the proximity of the company territory and either housed just one or multiple nationalities in segregated



- sections; rent was heavily subsidized, but worker-trainees were subject to regulations governing visitors and the maintenance of their rooms and their common spaces. Conditions varied but most interviewees shared a room with at least one roommate.
54. Ilíbio, Luanda, April 16, 2015.
  55. For a historical ethnography on the material and social aspects of how spaces that Mozambican workers used in East Germany shaped their lives and practices of placemaking featuring prominently the company dormitory, see Lea Marie Nienhoff, *We Are Workers, Not Inmates!?: The Politics of Space in Mozambican Workers' Company Dormitories in East Germany (1979–1990)* (MA Diss., Department of Urban Studies, University Basel, 2019).
  56. To the chagrin of East German neighbors, dormitories were often the site of parties; worker-trainees cooked Angolan and Mozambican meals and invited colleagues and friends; they celebrated birthdays and national holidays, they tested their new sound systems to the fullest, danced, and drank to let off steam on the weekends. In many ways, dormitories became akin to safe spaces where workers felt at ease to talk freely among themselves; see, for instance, Pedro, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 7, 2014.
  57. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
  58. By implicitly discouraging interracial offspring, a homogenous East German identity, however fictional, remained unchallenged. If East German officials had promoted interracial youth sexuality—as Herzog argues was done for relationships between East German youth—East Germany would have been forced to confront a visibly diverse society. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 188, 195–6. This would have run counter to the notions of racial rainbows (discussed later in this chapter) whereby each archetype belonged to a certain cultural and geographic realm and to a socialist brother state in which each was to contribute to the advancement of socialism.
  59. Gaspar, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 24, 2015.
  60. Ançelmo, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 30, 2011.
  61. This tension of inclusion by exclusion, or “exclusionary incorporation” persisted in Berlin discos after the fall of the wall, as Damani James Partridge shows in his article “We were dancing in the club, not on the Berlin Wall: Black Bodies, Street Bureaucrats, and Exclusionary Incorporation into the New Europe,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 23, no. 4 (2008), 660–87.
  62. Luzia, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 16, 2015.

63. Interview with Lina, by Eva Engelhardt, in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 48. Damian Mac Con Uladh, “Die Alltagserfahrungen ausländischer Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR: Vietnamesen, Kubaner, Mozambikaner, Ungarn und Andere,” in *Erfolg in der Nische? Die Vietnamesen in der DDR und in Ostdeutschland*, Karin Weiss and Mike Dennis, eds. (Münster: LIT, 2005), 57.
64. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
65. Paulo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 14, 2014, and Bernardo, Luanda, April 2, 2015, were in relationships with older women; Luís David’s girlfriend became pregnant by him at age fourteen. They lived together as a family and he still maintains contact with his son today. Group interview (with Rosa, David, Inocêncio, Isaías), interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 2, 2011.
66. Looking at this variety of intimate ties, I do not intend to naturalize stable, continuous, monogamous heterosexual relationships as the a priori outcome of interactions between Angolan and Mozambican migrants and East Germans, even if my examples in this section primarily engage such relationships. Moreover, this chapter tells a heterosexual story because I have no evidence for same-sex encounters. The only case is found in Jens Vilela Neumann, “Identity a bloody romance.” Neumann’s theater piece and exhibition presents a story of a female worker-trainee having been romantically approached by a close female friend in East Germany, Catalogue, 38–9. [https://issuu.com/paradisegardenproduction/docs/140130\\_katalog\\_einzelseiten\\_kl](https://issuu.com/paradisegardenproduction/docs/140130_katalog_einzelseiten_kl). However, the same worker has distanced herself from the story in a personal conversation with me. The silence around same-sex romantic encounters in this labor migration contrasts with the experiences recorded about migrant laborers in South Africa; see Dunbar T. Moodie and Vivienne Ndatshe, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), Ch. 4.
67. Juma, Fieldnotes, Maputo, Mozambique, March 6, 2014.
68. Tanja Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2014), 86–8. Müller argues that the death of Carlos Conceição was a turning point for many Mozambican students at the Friendship School. The event is collectively remembered as a traumatically violent racist act that instilled fear in the student body from then onwards.
69. “Der Mord an Amadeu Antonio vor Gericht,” by Antirassistische Initiative e.v., Berlin, in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 95–101. This death has received attention, not least due to the establishment of an eponymous foundation, dedicated to anti-racism, anti-right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism work.

70. Jürgen Mense, “Ausländerkriminalität in der DDR: Eine Untersuchung zu Kriminalität und Kriminalisierung von Mosambikanern 1979–1990,” in *Transit | Transfer: Politik und Praxis der Einwanderung in der DDR 1945–1990*, ed. Kim Christian Priemel (Berlin: be.bra Wissenschaft Verlag, 2011), 220.
71. Petra Weber, “Die Gesellschaft der DDR im Widerstreit. Offene Fragen und Forschungspotenziale,” *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 69, no.2 (2021): 316.
72. Ançelmo, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 30, 2011.
73. The following are excerpts from a song called “Kaltes Klima” about a Mozambican worker in East Germany. It is written and sung by Gerhard Schöne and featured on his CD *Lebenszeichen*, signs of life, 1994. Schöne grew up in a vicarage, remained close to the church, published songs critical of East German society, was politically active during the unification process, and remained involved with development and social projects.
74. This section examines the role of Mozambican and African women in family creation. Their male counterparts were free to father children with East German women, which led to the birth of a whole generation of black (East) Germans discussed in Chap. 6. For an overview of existing material regarding the gendered experience of female foreign workers in East Germany, see Leonie Klüssendorf, *Migration und Geschlecht in der DDR: Die Migrationserfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiterinnen im Bereich der Produktion und Reproduktion aus geschlechtsspezifischer Perspektive*, History BA Thesis (Potsdam: University of Potsdam, 2021).
75. Lucía, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2016. Field Notes, Namaacha, Mozambique, February 26, 2014; Graciél, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, April 19, 2014.
76. Lufaquenda, Luanda, April 22, 2015.
77. Samora Machel, “Uma revolução que não se sabe defender morre de hemorragia,” *Notícias*, 13 May; Samora Machel “A Study of Mozambican Youth—A Speech given in Maputo on 15 December 1976,” in *Samora Machel, an African Revolutionary: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Barry Munslow, trans. Michael Wolfers (London: Zed Books, 1985), 179–84.
78. Kuck, ““Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?”” 275. Jason Verber explored the pregnancies of female Mozambican teenagers at the School of Friendship and argues that FRELIMO preferred that pregnant students return early, rather than working to prevent pregnancies through methods other than advocating politically motivated abstinence. This approach underscores the high value FRELIMO placed on motherhood, Jason Verber, “True to the Politics of Frelimo? Teaching Socialism at the Schule der Freundschaft, 1981–1990,” in *Comrades of Color: East*

- Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 198–9.
79. Interview with Lina, by Eva Engelhardt, in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 46.
  80. Fernando Pedro, *Magermanes na RDA vida cotidiana* (Maputo: Ndjiura, 2003), 66–72. In the short story “*A Agulha*” Pedro writes about an illicit abortion that received medical attention just before it was too late for the patient.
  81. Jennifer Disney, “Incomplete Revolutions: Gendered Participation in Productive and Reproductive Labor in Mozambique and Nicaragua,” *Socialism and Democracy* 18 (2010): 7–42; Isaacman and Isaacman, “The Role of Women.”
  82. Jürgen Schröder, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, January 09, 2015.
  83. See Helga Marburger, Gisela Helbig, Eckhard Kienast, Günter Zorn, “Situation der Vertragsarbeitnehmer der ehemaligen DDR vor und nach der Wende” in “Und wir haben unseren Beitrag zur Volkswirtschaft geleistet” ed. Helga Marburger (Frankfurt: Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1993), 29; Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?” 275.
  84. Zatlin, “Scarcity and Resentment,” 714; Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter,” 18.
  85. Juma, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, February 01, 2014; Gracieli, Maputo, April 19, 2014.
  86. Marieta, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 14, 2014.
  87. Committed relationships between former worker-trainees was not uncommon at the time of my fieldwork, which testified to the shared social circles and experiences of former worker-trainees.
  88. Fatima Selemane introduced me to her son born in Germany in 1982. Fatima stated that she knew several women who gave birth and raised their children in East Germany, Field Notes, Reunion in Pemba, Pemba, Mozambique, June 21, 2014.
  89. Almuth Berger, Berlin, November 17, 2014. While for some women coming home pregnant brought negative social repercussions, others, especially those who expected to live with the father of the child upon his return, were welcomed joyously. Yet, an early return could represent the failed opportunity to complete the training and to make the most of the migration opportunity to Europe in terms of goods transfer.
  90. As we will see below, their journey to East Germany was for quite a few worker-trainees the first time that they lived in a context in which the majority of the people encountered looked different from themselves. I

am not aware of white Angolans or Mozambicans having participated in the labor migration programs.

91. Ilfio, Luanda, April 16, 2015.
92. While East Germany's population of foreigners was negligible (about 1 percent) many worker-trainees were integrated in factories which drew on a diverse workforce or had access to cities like Berlin, Dresden, and Karl-Marx Stadt where higher concentrations of foreign workers and students contributed to a socialist cosmopolitanism in the circles in which they moved, Gruner-Domic, "Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration," 227.
93. Gerald Bender argues that it is a myth that served to legitimize the Portuguese presence overseas. For proponents of the myth, most famously, Gilberto Freyre, the existence of *mestiços* from Bahia to Luanda to Maputo is seen as proof of freedom regarding social and sexual relationships. Finally, that Portugal never resorted to segregation politics on the basis of race as in South Africa or the United States, was treated as proof of its non-racism. Bender demonstrates the extent to which this myth was wishful thinking for the Angolan context, revealing the exploitative nature of Portuguese colonialism, something that Malyn Newitt and Allen and Barbara Isaacman do for Mozambique. Gerald J. Bender, *Angola under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 3, 4; Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995); Allen F. Isaacman, *Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: The Zambesi Valley, 1850–1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983).
94. Group interview, Luanda, March 11, 2015.
95. This claim for Angola as a multiracial society was stronger in the interviews that I conducted with Angolans who studied at institutes of higher learning in East Germany. This has to do with the fact that many of these students came from families of *assimilado* background or drawing on creole elites in coastal cities. They were thus conversant with racial diversity either through their schooling—many reported having had Cuban, East German, and Portuguese teachers and some white fellow students—and/or through their family backgrounds—including mixed social circles of the parent generation and experiences of same generation family members who studied abroad. Furthermore, this claim supports MPLA policy.
96. Group interview (Salimo, Abdussamimo, Abudo, Suatico, Musa), interview conducted by the author, Ilha de Moçambique, Mozambique, June 15, 2014.

97. Allina-Pisano and Allina-Pisano make an analogous argument for African students developing a pan-African and black identity in post-Soviet Russia, Jessica Allina-Pisano and Eric Allina-Pisano, "'Friendship of Peoples' after the Fall: Violence and Pan-African Community in Post-Soviet Moscow," in *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: 300 Years of Encounters*, ed. Maxim Matusevich (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007), 188f. While the students live in a university environment that facilitates the formation of wider pan-African solidarity networks, the worker-trainees are more likely to seek comfort in their own national group or other foreign worker groups at their workplaces.
98. Bernardo, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
99. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015; see also Bernardo, Luanda, April 2, 2015.
100. Socialism as practiced in East Germany and other eastern states is often referred to as "real" or "really existing" or "actually existing socialism" to distinguish reality from ideology. The ideology of anti-racism was part of the Soviet Union and East Germany alike and this heading plays with the contradiction of concepts in socialist ideology. Soviet thinkers had an ambiguous relationship to racism. On the one hand, the Soviet Union served as ideological counterweight to segregation in the United States. Subsequently it drew Afro-Americans, already under Tsarist Russia, but in larger numbers during the 1920s and 1930s, to help build a society founded on equality. On the other hand, the racism experienced by black students in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia was severe. The lived experience of discrimination on the basis of skin color, prejudices connected to African origins and culture, and the perception that students received preferential treatment rendered the Soviet Union a difficult place for Africans; see Allison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1986); Joy Gleason Carew, *Blacks, Reds, and Russians: Sojourners in Search of the Soviet Promise* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Maxim Matusevich, "Journeys of Hope: African Diaspora and the Soviet Society," *African Diaspora* 1 (2008): 53–85; Maxim Matusevich, *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007); Allina-Pisano, Allina-Pisano, "'Friendship of Peoples.'"
101. Concepts like xenophobia and far-right extremism dominate the study of racism in East Germany, which can have the effect of externalizing racism rather than tracing a historically grown (East) German racism from within. This is beginning to change with a body of literature that discusses racism as integral to life in (East) Germany from the perspectives of, among others, East German POCs; see Peggy Piesche, ed., *Labor 89*:

- Intersektionale Bewegungsgeschichte\*n aus West und Ost* (Berlin: Yilmaz-Güney, 2020); Katharina Warda, “Der Ort, aus dem ich komme, heißt Dunkeldeutschland,” *Krautreporter* (October 1, 2020) <https://krautreporter.de/3521-der-ort-aus-dem-ich-komme-heisst-dunkeldeutschland>, accessed September 2, 2021 and Lydia Lierke, Jessica Massochua, Cynthia Zimmermann, “Ossis of Color: Vom Erzählen (p)ostmigrantischer Geschichten” in *Erinnern Stören: Der Mauerfall aus migrantischer und jüdischer Perspektive*, Lydia Lierke und Massimo Perinelli, eds. (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020), 451–67.
102. In their approach to racism East German thinkers were strongly influenced by Soviet ideology. To understand the Leninist argument that class struggle in Europe was tied to the “toiling masses of the East” and its implication for the Soviet policy of Soviet Internationalism, refer to Maxim Matusevich, “An Exotic Subversive: Africa, Africans and the Soviet Everyday,” *Race & Class* 49 (2008): 57–81.
  103. Sara Pugach, “African Students and the Politics of Race and Gender in the German Democratic Republic, 1957–1990,” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 131–56. Pugach further demonstrates that there was some willingness of the East German state to respond to the demands the Union of African Students and Workers in East Germany voiced in a letter written in 1965 regarding racial bias and the lack of anti-racist education for East Germans, Sara Pugach, “Agents of Dissent: African Student Organizations in the German Democratic Republic,” *Africa* 89 (2019): 90–108. Yet, as the interviews with Frau K. and Frau F. conducted by Barbara Honnert and Bernd Bröskamp and with David Macau and David Zacharias conducted by Eva Engelhardt and Ahmed Farah demonstrate, it was not easy to have the Mozambican side of the story adequately represented in company reports. Often victims were blamed for the commotion, for instance, through accusations of drunkenness. See Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 55, 57–8, 67–7.
  104. For a more detailed engagement see Pugach “Agents of Dissent,” 101.
  105. Quinn Slobodian, “Socialist Chromatism: Race, Racism and the Racial Rainbow in East Germany,” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 28.
  106. Zatlin, “Scarcity and Resentment,” 717.
  107. When I speak about silencing here, I refer to the mainstream consciousness of white East Germans and the othering of black East Germans. The literature about black German history is growing fast, among the writings Robbie Aitken and Eve Rosenhaft *Black Germany: The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black*

- Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Mischa Honeck, Martin Klimke, and Anne Kuhlmann, eds., *Germany and the Black Diaspora: Points of Contact, 1250–1914* (New York: Berghahn, 2013); Sara Lennox, ed., *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) and the renowned Katharina Oguntoye, May Ayim, and Dagmar Schultz, eds., *Farbe bekennen: afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (Berlin: Orlanda, 1986).
108. Langbehn and Salama, *German Colonialism*; Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds., *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War (1904–1908) in Namibia and Its Aftermath*, trans. Edward Neather (Monmouth, Wales: Merlin Press, 2008); Campt, *Other Germans*.
  109. Slobodian, “Socialist Chromatism,” 28.
  110. As Raina Zimmering discusses, anti-fascism was at the heart of the foundational myth of East Germany; see Raina Zimmering, “Der Antifaschismus—Gründungsmythos der DDR,” in *Mythen in der Politik der DDR* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2000), 37–168.
  111. In 1989, 190,000 “foreigners” were counted in East Germany out of a population of 16.7 million, Zatlin, “Scarcity and Resentment,” 703, 708. There were 24,098 foreign workers in 1981; by 1989 their numbers had grown to 93,562 equalling 1.4 percent of all production workers. All foreigners together never amassed to more than 1 percent of the East German population. Sandra Gruner-Domic, “Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration,” 227.
  112. See Alamgir, “Race is Elsewhere,” 81.
  113. Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs and Rock ‘N’ Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), 229.
  114. Group interview, Luanda, March 11, 2015.
  115. José, Luanda, March 8, 2015.
  116. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
  117. Group interview, Luanda, March 11, 2015.
  118. Santana, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
  119. In the early 1980s, the skinhead community was inspired by the British scene centered around soccer and working-class culture, an influence that spread via West Germany. Even before neo-Nazism became important, violence directed against foreigners was integral to the scene; see Jürgen Danyel, “Spätfolgen? Der ostdeutsche Rechtsextremismus als Hypothek der DDR-Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungskultur,” in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 27–8; Verber, “True to the Politics of Frelimo?” 200. Not all skinheads adopted the politics of the



- radical right, but this differentiation plays no role for my interviewees. In the East German context as perceived through Angolan and Mozambican eyes skinheads could be equated with neo-Nazis.
120. Ilfbio, Luanda, April 16, 2015. Ilfbio married an East German woman and stayed in Germany until after the civil war in Angola had ended.
  121. Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?” 273–4; van der Heyden, “Zu Den Hintergründen,” 70–1.
  122. East Germans donated parts of their salaries to solidarity campaigns organized by the Solidarity Committee, the churches, and official mass organizations, in the process creating subjectivity in their endeavor to aid others, Gregory Witkowski, “Between Fighters and Beggars: Socialist Philanthropy and the Imagery of Solidarity in East Germany,” in *Comrades of Color*, ed. Slobodian. These attempts did not stop at monetary aid. Postcards written by East German school children arrived at the prison holding Angela Davis by the thousands. As Katrina Hagen demonstrates, Angela Davis on the one hand became an ambassador for the anti-racist cause while on the other hand challenging the SED’s politics through her continued emphasis on race and her engagement with the Black Panthers, Katrina Hagen, “Ambivalence and Desire in the East German ‘Free Angela Davis’ Campaign,” in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Slobodian (New York, Oxford: Berghan), 157–87.
  123. W. Thierse, “Deutsch-Deutsche Gewalt. Vereint in die Barbarei?” in *Angst vor den Deutschen. Terror gegen Ausländer und der Zerfall des Rechtsstaats*, ed. Bahman Nirumand (Reinbeck, 1992), 70. I speak here of systemic access because rumor had it that foreign workers were paid in hard currency or allowed to travel to the West officially. Unofficially, through their home country networks, quite a few worker-trainees indeed had access to Western goods and sometimes money and travel possibilities.
  124. Patrick R. Ireland, “Socialism, Unification Policy and the Rise of Racism in Eastern Germany,” *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 541–68; Zatlin, “Scarcity and Resentment”; Irene Runge, *Ausland DDR*.
  125. Bröskamp, “Vom Auswanderungs- zum Einwanderungsland,” 24.
  126. Santana, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
  127. 22, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 16, 2014.
  128. German reunification is now starting to be told as transnational history; see, for instance, Annette Weinke, “Ost, West, und der Rest. Die deutsche Einheit als transnationale Verflechtungsgeschichte,” in *Jahrbuch Deutsche Einheit*, edited by Marcus Böick, Constantin Goschler, Ralph Jessen (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2020), 120–44 and from the perspective of POC and Jewish participants; see Lydia Lierke and Massimo Perinelli, eds.,

*Erinnern Stören: Der Mauerfall aus migrantischer und jüdischer Perspektive* (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020).

129. See Norman LaPorte, "Skinhead and Right Extremisms in an Anti-Fascist State," in *State and Minorities in Communist East Germany*, Mike Dennis, and Norman Laporte, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 170–94; Jürgen Danyel, "Spätfolgen?"; Jan C. Behrends, Dennis Kuck, and Patrice G. Poutrus, "Thesenpapier: Historische Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in den Neuen Bundesländern," in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland*, Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus, eds. (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 327–33; Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 23–30.
130. Allina-Pisano and Allina-Pisano observe a similar phenomenon in their study of the pan-African student community in post-Soviet Moscow, "Friendship of Peoples," 181.
131. Allina-Pisano and Allina-Pisano develop a typology of violence for the context of African students in post-Soviet Russia. While official acts of violence by the police play a major role in the interviews with African students in Russia, my interviewees are mostly silent on that point, Allina-Pisano and Allina-Pisano, "Friendship of Peoples," for example 186.
132. Danyel, "Spätfolgen?" 35.
133. Konrad H. Jarausch, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 47–69.
134. Berthold Vogel, "Arbeitslosigkeit in Ostdeutschland: Konsequenzen für das Sozialgefüge und für die Wahrnehmung des gesellschaftlichen Wandels," *SOFI-Mitteilungen* 27 (1999), 16. According to political scientist Thorsten Faas, a maximum of 50 percent of East Germans between 31 and 65 experienced unemployment, compared to a maximum of 25 percent of West Germans, between 1991 and 2008, Thorsten Faas, "Jeder zweite Ostdeutsche war schon arbeitslos" October 23, 2010, <https://p.dw.com/p/M5gs>, accessed July 2, 2019.
135. Danyel, "Spätfolgen?" 29, 39–40. It was not only the family heritage and individual memories which made continuity possible but the SED itself. It externalized the NS past in the 1950s and focused on its anti-fascist identity to the detriment of a critical examination of the role of the average East German during the Third Reich. In addition, a closed-society ideal of a nation continued to assume a central reference point of SED ideology. This resulted in a balancing act between nationalism, patriotism, and international solidarity that was difficult to comprehend. In fact, as stated above, the ritualistic "friendship" expressions of official

- party protocol were not necessarily congruent with the experiences that East Germans had with migrants; see Behrends, Kuck, and Poutrus, “Thesenpapier,” 327–31.
136. *Tempo* 21/04/91 cited in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 142.
  137. A first-person account from a Mozambican who was in the hostel during the attacks on September 17–18, 1991, can be found in “Sie haben uns geschlagen. Wir gehen nach Hause, o.k. Aber warte ab, ob es denen dann besser geht,” recorded by Eva Engelhardt and Ahmed Farah in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 51–6.
  138. Robert Leicht, “Anschlag auf die Republik,” *Die Zeit*, August 28, 1992, <https://www.zeit.de/1992/36/anschlag-auf-die-republik>, accessed April 13, 2017; Bernd Bröskamp, “Epilog: Notizen zu Rostock,” in Farah, Engelhardt, and Bröskamp, eds., *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 153.
  139. Azarias, Maputo, March 20, 2014.
  140. 22, Maputo, January 16, 2014.
  141. Abilio, interview conducted by the author, Quelimane, Mozambique, June 7, 2014.
  142. For another firsthand account, see Paulino Miguel (2020), “Paulinos Tagebuch. Ein mosambikanischer Vertragsarbeiter erinnert sich” in *Erinnern Stören: Der Mauerfall aus migrantischer und jüdischer Perspektive*, Lydia Lierke and Massimo Perinelli, eds. (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2020), 299–319. For a discussion about the *Wende* and the struggle for the rights of the former contract workers to East Germany, see Christiane Mende, “Lebensrealitäten der DDR-Arbeitsmigrant\_innen nach 1989—Zwischen Hochkonjunktur des Rassismus und dem Kampf um Rechte,” *Telegraph. Ostdeutsche Zeitschrift* 120/121 (2010): 103–22.
  143. A group project at the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam investigated everyday life in East Germany; see, for instance, Thomas Lindenberger, “Projektskizze: Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte in Berlin-Brandenburg, 1945–1990,” in *Potsdamer Bulletin für Zeithistorische Studien* 5 (December 1995): 37–52. This discussion was received controversially in unified Germany because East German history was at that point told through the prism of totalitarianism and a view from below focusing on the everyday was accused of ignoring power structures. For more on the politics of contemporary history; see Klaur Schroeder and Jochen Staadt, “Zeitgeschichte in Deutschland vor und nach der 1989,” *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B26 (1997):15–29.
  144. Bernardo, Luanda, April 2, 2015.
  145. For instance, Mense, “Ausländerkriminalität in der DDR”; Hernández, “Ma(d)jermanes”; Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter.”

146. Home networks refer to people who migrants knew from back home, like family members, people from the same village or school, or intimate partners. Host networks refer to the people with whom migrants established ties while in East Germany such as colleagues, friends, neighbors, host families, and romantic partners.
147. Gideon Botsch studies the heterogeneous origins of xenophobia in East Germany, the rise of a radically nationalist outlook with the *Wende*, and the pan-German national opposition after unification, while Patrick Ireland examines the ethnic conflict that challenges Germany from a policy perspective; see Gideon Botsch, “From Skinhead-Subculture to Radical Right Movement: The Development of a ‘National Opposition’ in East Germany,” *Contemporary European History* 21, no. 4 (2012): 553–73; Patrick R. Ireland, “Socialism, Unification Policy and the Rise of Racism in Eastern Germany,” *International Migration Review* 31 (1997): 553–73.

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## CHAPTER 6

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# Return, Fall, and Rise of the *Madjerman*: The Afterlives of Socialist Migration

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter follows the experiences of the Mozambican and Angolan workers who returned home from East Germany in the early 1990s. By this time, the era of socialism had passed, and all three countries were transitioning into market economies. Initially many of the worker-trainees, now returnees, were hopeful and excited about their homecoming. Many expected lives as wage laborers in industry, allowing them to build their own houses and families while contributing to the economic development of their home countries. Unfortunately, ongoing civil wars and a painful transition from planned economy to free market made this a pipe dream.<sup>1</sup> Returnees found themselves catapulted into conflict and post-conflict economies that were unable to provide anywhere near the number of secure blue-collar employment opportunities that were required. In addition, returnees faced governments that had neither the interest nor the ability to take care of them.

The homecoming of many workers was euphoric as they and their families and friends celebrated their reunions. The returnees came back as an elite (albeit temporary, as it would turn out) who brought otherwise unattainable goods from Europe and had a network of support between themselves. This distinguished them from those around them and acquired them clients and customers. To use Jean-Pascal Daloz's terminology, they were big men and big women, though on a small scale.<sup>2</sup> Despite the

turmoil of the time, they collectively clung onto the dream of a bright future with formal employment. In this early stage, workers participated in the economy as providers of goods and services and gained social standing via the goods they brought. But disappointment quickly took over as returnees struggled to find their feet economically, socially, and politically. As most could not secure formalized or regular employment, to survive they had to slowly part with their migration hauls. This resulted in an injection of European goods into the local markets. These material vestiges of socialism contributed to the transformations of the Angolan and Mozambican economies to the consumer-oriented free market.

The profound experience of loss that most returnees experienced during the 1990s was understandably prevalent in the minds of many of my interviewees. Returnees lost the future they had imagined as reward for their migration. For some life turned out well, but for many it was worse than they had imagined. Many returnees lost their goods, their social standing, their job security, and the wages which they had thought they had been transferring home, but which in fact were simply unkept promises by their governments to make good the wages unpaid by the East Germans. They also suffered the loss of their affective ties to East Germany. Many left children and romantic partners behind, with whom they frequently lost contact. Finally, many had lost the ability to get on at home without being reminded of how profoundly their migration experience had changed their attitudes, for instance regarding gender roles and sexuality. In a way that will be familiar to many travelers who return home after a long time abroad, their different perspective changed the way they saw their home and made them permanent outsiders.

The returnees navigated the ruins of socialism with a mindset that had been shaped by socialisms at home and abroad. The legacies of this remained alive in their thoughts and practices long after their governments had abandoned the ideology. The memories of their experiences in East Germany impacted their daily interactions with the world around them and provided returnees with the ideas and tools to fight their marginalization and keep alive their memory in the Angolan and Mozambican governments' consciousness.

The two themes that drive this chapter, loss and gain, reflect the two frames of mind that coexisted in the perception of the returnees. Once again, the chapter explores the duality of experience which so often seems to characterize the migrants' experience. It shows that while many of the returnees' experiences were negative, the overall trajectory of their lives

cannot be described as only negative. In hardship they have found agency, in their abandonment they have forged solidarity with each other, in their difference they have formed an identity. They have shown the infinite complexity and unpredictability of historical reverberations and the cussedness and resilience of the human spirit.

The chapter opens with the mass return of workers in 1990 and the circumstances under which they returned, whether voluntarily or not. Next, it features the workers' multiple experiences of the loss of their goods, their ties to Germany, their status, their wages, and their aspirations. The second part of the chapter highlights how workers were transformed by their migration abroad and shows what they gained in the process; some came to hold different viewpoints on gender equality or sexuality, while others took to the streets to fight for the repayment of outstanding wages and benefits. These losses and gains were two sides of the same coin.

## PART I: LOSS

### *The End of Socialism: Returning from East Germany*

The sweeping changes of 1989 reverberated around the globe.<sup>3</sup> In East Germany, it was the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall. By the time that the inner-German barrier finally came down, some East German citizens had already voted with their feet and emigrated to the West via Hungary. Within East Germany, the democratic movement had become a political force.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev was tolerating for the first time remarkable policy shifts in Poland and Hungary and signaled its respect for the sovereignty of its allies. For the first time, the East German socialist leadership had to deal with its problems independently of Soviet protection.<sup>5</sup> As it would turn out, this did not last very long.

Angola and Mozambique were still engulfed in military conflicts.<sup>6</sup> In June the President of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, invited the MPLA's José Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi for peace talks at his palace in Gbadolite. Sadly, the agreements that they negotiated did not last.<sup>7</sup> In Mozambique, fighting continued until 1992.<sup>8</sup> At FRELIMO's Fifth Congress, in July 1989, the party—and therefore the state—affirmed its interest in accommodating the private sector and free markets, at least as a privilege for party members.<sup>9</sup> In Angola, influential economic enclaves separate from socialism had always existed. For instance, the oil sector

operated according to market principles. From 1985, the Angolan economy had started to shift away from a Stalinist model of industrialization through heavy industry.<sup>10</sup> The world of the worker-trainees was in flux, with both home and host countries undergoing fundamental reorganizations.

At the end of 1989, 90,600 foreigners were working and training in East Germany. This number had dropped to a mere 28,000 one year later. Roughly two thirds of foreign workers left within a few months. Of the 15,100 Mozambican and 1300 Angolan worker-trainees who were registered in 1989, only 2800 Mozambicans and 200 Angolans showed in the statistics at the end of 1990.<sup>11</sup> On June 30, 1994, an estimated 19,036 former contract workers still resided in Germany, the majority of whom were Vietnamese. This number also included 2018 Mozambicans and 383 Angolans who made Germany their new home.<sup>12</sup>

In the Mozambican case, workers had returned throughout the 1980s but many of those who had returned eventually signed up for a second contract due to the combined dangers of the civil war, military service, and unsatisfactory employment conditions in Mozambique. In the Angolan case, the first cohort of workers was due to complete their contracts in 1989. Most of the workers featuring in this chapter returned home in 1990. This prevalence illustrates what the last delegate from the Mozambican Labor Ministry in East Germany, Pedro Taimo, called a “hasty return.”<sup>13</sup> That term was a euphemism for a messy and unforeseen mass exodus.

Renegotiations of the agreements governing the labor and training programs became necessary as many East German companies struggled in the new market conditions. They foresaw significant reductions in their labor forces, and in many cases faced an uncertain future. To this end, the new Secretary of State and Representative for Foreigners, Almuth Berger, whom we saw in previous chapters as a pastor actively engaged in helping and working with worker-trainees, led a delegation to Mozambique from May 22 to 28, 1990.<sup>14</sup> Key points for the East German delegation were that East German companies gain the right to terminate individual contracts, that no new migrants were to be taken on, and that the rights of those currently in East Germany were to be redefined.<sup>15</sup> The question that most interested the Mozambican government was the renegotiation of their debt payment, now that this would no longer be possible through the workers’ wage transfers.<sup>16</sup> In Angola, there were no meaningful negotiations as the Angolans simply signed the new contract proposed by the



Germans without further questions.<sup>17</sup> This process demonstrated that reintegration or the well-being of the returning worker-trainees was not on the agenda either in Angola or in Mozambique, where governments were faced with more pressing issues.<sup>18</sup>

Not all migrants who returned had chosen to return. Due to the chaotic circumstances of 1989–1990 in many East German companies, not all workers were informed of the possibilities of staying on. Some companies even took the law into their own hands, chartered airplanes, and flew workers back. The Mozambican news magazine *Tempo* reported that on September 17, 1990, an airplane full of returning workers landed without the authorities of the airport or any other Mozambican authorities having been informed.<sup>19</sup> The repatriation process was uneven:

My return was forced. From my point of view there were two kinds of situations. One saw everybody returned forcibly because the government pulled out of the contracts with the companies and they no longer wanted anything to do with Mozambican workers. But there were also other companies where people could stay even outside of the government contract with Mozambique.<sup>20</sup>

Those who made an active choice to leave did so despite the ongoing civil wars in Angola and Mozambique. In East Germany foreign workers were especially exposed to the insecurity of the political, economic, and social shifts of the *Wende*.<sup>21</sup> They were foreigners with only vague rights of residence and were frequent targets for racist and xenophobic violence. Despite certain supports, employment had become a challenge and the legal rights of foreigners were subject to fundamental changes.<sup>22</sup> To understand why some workers decided to return despite fulfilling the criteria to stay on—basically having a job offer and a place to stay—we not only need to look at the circumstances in East Germany favoring a return but also need to examine the factors that drew migrants toward their countries of origin.<sup>23</sup>

Many migrants looked forward to self-actualization upon return. They wanted to enjoy the economic goods of their own labor and build their own household. They sought to nurture family ties or felt obliged to take up family responsibilities. Many workers clung to a vision of employment that would allow them to continue living their lives with similar rights and responsibilities to those they had in East Germany. Jacinto's reasoning echoes these many motives that played a role in his decision to return home:

It was the spirit of poverty. When we received that money of 3,000 marks and I looked at the money that I had saved—that was about US\$14,000—I went...on a shopping spree. ...I wanted to return to enjoy the new things and the rest of the money here in Mozambique. ...President Chissano said that...the situation in the country wasn't the best but that work was guaranteed to all who had accomplished their vocational training because there were open positions. Seeing that I had graduated and had received my diploma, and also taking into account the political situation that I was living [in] over there, I decided to return.<sup>24</sup>

After the renegotiation of the agreements in May and June 1990, workers who decided to return before the end of their contract were entitled to an indemnity payment of 3000 marks and 70 percent of their net wage for three months. Moreover, the workers were guaranteed accommodation in the dormitory at first, and it was the companies' responsibility to organize and pay for the trip home. If foreign workers were let go by the company to which they were assigned, they had the right to stay on in East Germany at least until the end of their contract period, the right to receive a work or a business permit, support for further vocational training, and help with procuring new employment. In theory, workers had options for organizing their stay in East Germany independently. In practice, these rights were often not respected. For some who did try to stay, a seven-year fight over their resident permit status ensued.<sup>25</sup>

Quite a few workers told me that they had initially envisioned their return as temporary. In those cases, returnees planned on using the compensation payment to invest in goods for their extended family at home but ultimately expected to return to their East German families. This new return to Germany frequently did not occur for many reasons, including economic, social, and legal issues. Over the course of the 1990s, many returnees gradually lost contact with their East German families. The workers often explained this to me as having resulted from external circumstances outside of their control. For example, homes might be flooded or burned, goods were stolen, or documents deposited with family members for safekeeping during mobile periods disappeared and along with them the letters and addresses of loved ones in Germany. Initially, some German women sent money regularly to support their struggling partners and sent them invitation letters and even plane tickets to return, but not everybody who got a return invite decided to return to Germany.

The intended temporary return turned into a permanent one. Unforeseen obstacles to navigating the bureaucracy and financial aspects of returning to Germany emerged, ranging from visa and money hurdles to scheming relatives. For example, Pedro had a jealous sister who received letters from his German partner at her work address and simply pretended that none arrived to avoid losing her brother and only son of the family to a life in Germany.<sup>26</sup> A common theme in these narratives was loss of agency, a certain powerlessness. Circumstances, events, and fate conspired against the returnees. In many ways this fatalism reflected the loss of agency that affected many people in the global post-socialist world, from Mozambique to the former Soviet Union. Stuck between two homes but no longer able to assume a cosmopolitan lifestyle, many sojourners had slipped into a permanent homecoming. The promise of socialist globalization that opened new migration routes for Angolans and Mozambicans had run its course.

### *Homecoming: From Big Men and Women to Lost Men and Women*

In retrospect, the returnees told me the stories of their homecoming as narratives of loss. After an initial period of euphoria, disappointment began to dominate. Yet immediately after their return in the early 1990s, many returnees shared Adevaldo Banze's positive attitude:

The astonishment was great. Everybody wanted to see the '*madjermanes*,' as we were affectionately called. We were people who possessed economic respect, who faced the future. At the first chance I left my poor, crooked reed hut behind. ...The new house was already made of stone and the first electric appliances arrived from Germany: TVs, fridges, radios, video recorders and much more; the famous MZ [motorbike], the German figurehead in Mozambique. It was an ambassador for economic interests and represented so much for a returnee. Family members and friends celebrated. There were so many of them, some entirely unknown, who visited me to share in the joy that the marks created.<sup>27</sup>

The term *madjerman* derived from the Changana language, spoken in the south of Mozambique, although it became common currency in the national language, Portuguese. It can roughly be translated as "those from Germany," and, as we will see, can have both positive and negative connotations.<sup>28</sup> Adevaldo felt the connotations to be positive, reflecting his

general good feeling about his return. As a member of the new economic elite in his social environment, he relished the social standing the goods and money from Germany brought to his life. The stone house and the appliances marked his upward social mobility. He enjoyed homemaking and was hopeful for a prosperous future. Through the experience of his reintegration, he had grown into personhood as a small-scale big man, sharing his relative riches with his family members, friends, and other people who in turn looked to him for financial support and help with decision-making.<sup>29</sup> The migration had turned Adelvado into the backbone of economic and social redistribution for his personal networks. In the context of the general poverty in Mozambique, Adelvado's acquired wealth and goods were a lavish display. His influence looked set to grow. But then:

The days became darker, day after day even darker, no compensation money, nothing. The time had already arrived to look for work, but not even work appeared. I still recall those sad moments when I separated from the goods, day after day, piece after piece. The TV, the radio, until the much-esteemed MZ, I had to say goodbye because I had to live...<sup>30</sup>

With that, Adevaldo's story is one of initial prosperity followed by decline, a narrative echoed by most returnees, especially those who took part in the mass return in 1990. A contemporary study, conducted by Elke Ahrens and Sigrid Müller, who spoke with returnees in Maputo in the early 1990s, concluded that "they cannot really identify with their home country, they do not feel capable of proactively taking initiative and they place high expectations in help from the outside."<sup>31</sup>

The 12,300 returnees that descended upon Maputo changed the city.<sup>32</sup> Returnees arrived at Maputo airport. Many stayed in the capital with the expectation of hearing more from the government regarding their job placement and payment of their remitted wages and enjoying its relative security. Others went straight back to their home provinces. Those who stayed in Maputo became the center of attention for local women. *Madjerman* from outside Maputo who had no friends or family stayed in a hostel near the central railway station, and one man who lived close by observed, "there were many women who got involved with the *madjerman* all around that hostel. They thought they could stand out a little in life like that. Those were people who came from Europe and they [the women] thought they had a lot of money."<sup>33</sup> This faded as quickly as the wealth of the returnees. A cartoon, published in the early 1990s, depicted

two Mozambican women in European business clothes talking to each other while a man on an MZ motorbike wearing a jacket imprinted with “DDR” drives away. One woman asks the other: “Why are you no longer going out with him?” The reply: “Ha, the guy only owned 3,000 contos and already burned it all.”<sup>34</sup>

The *madjerman* shared their goods with family, friends, and neighbors, but this could also lead to tensions. Alfredo Mandlate and Carlos Cossa, two residents of Ferroviário, a *bairro* (district) of Maputo, recalled:

When they arrived here many things changed. The whole world went to the house of one of them, who was more welcoming to let people watch TV at his house. He was the only one with a TV around here. They were practically the first who brought sound equipment here, very noisy, and they often played that music totally different from those that we were accustomed to hearing...sometimes we couldn't sleep because of all the noise they made when they partied.<sup>35</sup>

The list of goods the *madjerman* imported was usually long. Jacinto, for instance, imported:

one fridge, two ovens, a mattress and bed frame, dishes, clothes, tools, food and detergents; a wheelbarrow, a carpet, leather, two welding machines, twelve cut-off wheels of iron, two packages of electrodes. ...I brought back two TVs, two video recorders, 26 videos, mostly pornographic films, 54 disks, a state-of-the art photo camera...I brought some books, mostly vocabulary books...I didn't bring back much memorabilia, like photos. I could have brought a car...but...I saw how complicated it was to import a car and so I left it behind.<sup>36</sup>

In Jacinto's case, all this was meant to support around twelve people from his family and circle of friends. He had four brothers and two sisters, and he lived with his aunt and her family; his parents had died by the time he went to East Germany. He later claims to have sold the oven for next to nothing, seventy meticaís, and the fridge for 2500 meticaís. Some of his goods were also stolen. Others he was still using in 2014.<sup>37</sup>

This type of strategic shopping, to prepare for post-migration life, is a well-known theme in southern African labor migration. Previous generations—in some cases the fathers and grandfathers of returnees—invested their earnings in blankets, pots, clothing, shoes, suits, sewing machines, bikes, and later cars and other consumer goods. It had also been common

to invest in things useful for farming, such as plows or donkeys.<sup>38</sup> Earlier generations had focused on returning to a rural homestead, while most of those who had been in East Germany envisioned urban life and thus focused on bringing things such as household consumer items, clothing, and machines which they could use professionally. The focus shifted from farming to work machines connected to their newly acquired skills such as welding and metal work.

One thing that remained the same, or was even more the case, was that the goods the migrants invested in were as much status symbols as they were practically useful. This mirrored the value attached to Western commodities in Eastern Europe.<sup>39</sup> In Mozambique, for example, an MZ motorbike marked its owner as a successful returnee. It also provided personal or professional transport services for themselves and their communities. In other words, the owners could use it to generate income or to provide favors. Spare parts for the MZ could be found in informal markets along with returnees who knew how to repair it, guaranteeing the bikes a relatively long life.<sup>40</sup> An investment in an MZ granted status, setting the returnees apart from their community; at the same time, it helped to integrate them socially and economically.

Returnees initially became an important part of the Mozambican informal economy. Abdou Maliq Simone's notion of people as infrastructure is a useful framework to conceptualize the role of the returnees. There was an economic collaboration between returnees and residents in their neighborhoods, which expanded types of economic and cultural activity available to residents with limited means. A good example would be a returnee who allowed people in his neighborhood to watch his television, opening a new horizon to those around him. People who had rarely watched a TV before were exposed to the area outside their own neighborhood, but also to the possibility of owning a TV themselves. An MZ motorbike would have had a similar effect on the people around its owner. The returnees brought the wider world into their home patches.<sup>41</sup>

At first, many goods were exchanged in the barter economy, an important part of the economy in Mozambique and Angola, as it also was to some extent in East Germany. The wars in Angola and Mozambique had halted production. In some respects, cash was not always useful because of the lack of goods available on the market. As a result, products and services were often exchanged as in the example of the MZ above; the MZ and other goods thus became currency. TVs as well as refrigerators were

items commonly shared with neighbors as bargaining units in the barter economy, as an income-generating activity, or to invest in relationships.<sup>42</sup>

Over time, the returnees' economic contributions shifted from using the imported goods to generate profits in the barter economy to selling them in parallel markets. As the months passed, the returnees' savings dwindled, their transferred wages remained inaccessible, and they increasingly resorted to selling their possessions from overseas. Some of the international socialist vanguard became traders on the informal markets of Mozambique's unregulated parallel economy. One such informal market was the Mercado do Estrela Vermelha, the Market of the Red Star. This was nestled on the sidewalks of central Maputo, in the vicinity of what is now known as the park of the *madjerman*.<sup>43</sup> The market still takes up much of the street along Avenida Emilia Daússe.<sup>44</sup> The street is named for Emilia Daússe, a member of a FRELIMO women's detachment who was active in the liberation struggle and died from a Portuguese bullet. The street eventually became an important base for the *madjerman* as they fought for survival in the early 1990s, as they struggled to find employment and could not access the money they had been promised.

Socialism under Samora Machel meant stamping out informal employment and petty criminality and maintaining a clean and orderly city, though those goals were not entirely met.<sup>45</sup> Ask any *Maputense*—the name for inhabitants of Maputo—about the Mercado do Estrela Vermelha today and three associations come up: illegality, informality, and the *madjerman*. In the words of a *madjerman* who has been selling at the market since 1990:

This market became famous for the products that the returnees from East Germany brought with them. ...When we returned from Germany and neither encountered integration nor the money we had transferred, we had to arrange ways of surviving. The only way to survive was to sell the goods we brought from Germany, for us this turned into employment.<sup>46</sup>

The four *madjerman* vendors whom I interviewed in April 2014 started by selling their own East German goods in 1990. They then bought goods from other *madjerman* and made a living reselling them until about 1998. They remembered about twenty *madjerman* sellers on this market at that time. Some had died, others had left. They described the choice to sell in the market as an “informal and spontaneous process. ...Here we had no rules, we just put the goods out and waited for people to come. We put a

just price on the goods, but everything was negotiable.”<sup>47</sup> They stored the goods, mostly electronics, refrigerators, ovens, and motorcycles, in an adjacent warehouse. Business went well because European products were highly sought after. When I spoke to them, the four vendors were no longer selling East German items. They were mainly reselling secondhand goods or trading in South African items.<sup>48</sup> The Market of the Red Star has become a fixture in capitalist Maputo’s economy.

Returnees also bemoaned their loss of job security. When they spoke to me in 2014, despite having worked on the Mercado do Estrela Vermelha for decades, the interviewees, like the vast majority of *madjerman* employed in the informal market, perceived themselves, in line with traditional definitions of unemployment, to be unemployed. Their measuring rod remained their East German experience of formal employment: “We lived a normal life [in East Germany], we left to work and returned home like normal people.”<sup>49</sup> “Normality” to them was equated with formalized, secure, permanent, or contractual blue-collar employment with benefits. This was in spite of the fact that normality in Maputo was, and is, informal self-employment such as had been the case since the 1990s.<sup>50</sup> Many returnees continued to see informality and insecurity as an abnormality, against all evidence to the contrary. As one returnee expressed it: “Normally, when a government sends a person away, it has a responsibility to reintegrate this person but what happened with us is that when we returned, they abandoned us at the airport. We received neither job placements nor our money.”<sup>51</sup> This discourse of normality and abnormality was in some respects a device to press their claims for compensation from the government, alongside being a change in their expectations after their German sojourn.

In the early 1990s, it was not apparent to every returnee that the government would not be able to live up to its promise of providing jobs upon their return. Instead of actively looking for a job, many simply waited for the government to approach them with a job and their deferred pay. To a certain extent, their years in East Germany had left them with the expectation that institutions would provide. As Santana, the president of one of the returned workers associations in Luanda, explained in 2015:

After our return, we needed to be integrated into the labor market. At the time of our return communism in Europe and Angola collapsed and the economic system changed. From that point onwards, it was no longer the government who gave you employment but the individual companies. This



was already a market economy. In this new context, many of us did not achieve employment. At the time, we were also still in civil war and many people were unemployed.<sup>52</sup>

Mozambican returnees who finished their contract during the 1980s were more often placed in positions that corresponded to their training. Marieta from Nampula trained at the VEB Malitex Hohenstein-Ernstthal, a textile company, from 1980 to 1984. She completed her training as a skilled textile worker “satisfactorily,” “with a spirit of mutual aid,” and was a “friendly” and “quiet” part of the “socialist work collective.”<sup>53</sup> After her return, she was placed by the Mozambican Labor Ministry with Texmoque, a Mozambican textile company, where she worked until the company closed in 1992. After that, she was mainly unemployed, apart from a short period of domestic service.<sup>54</sup> The textile industry was not the only Mozambican industry that employed returnees. Some returnees who previously worked and trained in the harbor of Rostock were able to find regular employment in Mozambican harbors.<sup>55</sup> Others who had trained in coal mining went to work for Carbomoc, a coalmine in Tete in Mozambique.<sup>56</sup>

The wars in Angola and Mozambique often derailed professional paths. Alfredo was among the first Mozambican worker-trainees to be sent to East Germany in 1979 to work and train at the VEB Braunkohlewerk Belzow, a coalmine, where he was “respected by his collective” and judged a “promising cadre” who “showed great interest in his education and good work.”<sup>57</sup> He returned as a skilled electrician in 1983 and was placed with Carbomoc. There, he worked as a mining electrician and in a leading position as chief of general offices.<sup>58</sup> Despite being able to apply his knowledge and having achieved a senior position at just twenty-two years old, Alfredo was not willing to take the security risk that living in Moatize, a civil war hotspot, entailed at the time. He asked for a transfer to Maputo, which he received. Originally from Boila, near Angoche in Nampula, Alfredo wanted to be closer to his family and went back to Nampula to find work on his own initiative. He succeeded, and worked at Texmoque, a textile factory, as an electrician and later as the chief of maintenance and supervision. He also taught at the company’s secondary school from 1985 to 1987. Despite these early successes, Alfredo decided to go back to East Germany after he discovered his supervisor’s poor treatment of employees. During his second contract, Alfredo served at a car factory, IFA Automobilwerk Berlin Ludwigsfelde, as an electrician and assembler from

1987 to 1990. He then returned to Mozambique as he became afraid of continuing as a black man in unified Germany.<sup>59</sup> Like Alfredo, many of those early migrants who were able to use their East German skills training to work for Mozambican companies decided to return to East Germany on another contract after failing to find a place in Mozambique that satisfied them.

The returnees' professional paths diverged throughout the 1990s. A few worker-trainees were employed long term in the fields that they had trained for. However, as Santana explained above, those who were part of the mass return had to look for their own employment. Some returnees eventually used their skills and the machines they brought home with them. Some opened up unregistered mechanic shops or guesthouses and employed others off the books.<sup>60</sup> Others never succeeded in using any skills and lived in poverty as porters or ambulant traders, or on the hand-outs of fellow *madjerman*.<sup>61</sup> Those with the means sometimes tried to further their education after their return and succeeded in adding a few more grades to their formal schooling. Some found employment opportunities in the service sector, as staff in restaurants and hotels, as drivers in transport, as security guards, and as shop assistants. These are positions which many still held in 2014.<sup>62</sup> A few chose other professions, such as the artists Xefrino and Dito, the latter of whom painted the cover for this book.<sup>63</sup> A small number of returnees succeeded in completing tertiary studies and subsequently found governmental positions or worked in the private sector.<sup>64</sup> Unsurprisingly, the returnees developed into a heterogeneous group.

The legacy of being a former worker could be advantageous or disadvantageous to the returnees. Having been to Germany helped some, such as Boato, in serendipitous ways:

I returned to Inhambane and tried to stay, but it was too difficult, and I came back to Maputo in 1999. I worked again in a security firm. While I was sitting outside a house, guarding it, I saw a lady walk by with her little girl and they spoke German. I talked with them for a while. It turned out that this lady was the director of the DAAD. I started working for the DAAD, then for ICMA and later for the GIZ.<sup>65</sup> I have been with German institutions since the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2002 now.<sup>66</sup>

While some returnees tell stories of getting a job because they spoke German or had been to Germany, the more common reality is that of

those former workers reporting that they faced exclusion because of their affiliation with the *madjerman*.<sup>67</sup>

I worked as a governess in a family and as soon as they discovered that I was a *madjerman* I was sent away. ...We don't have the right to work, they don't want to pay us and on top they are discriminating against us. When I go to look for work, I can't write on my CV that I am a *madjerman*.<sup>68</sup>

As we will see later in this chapter, the *madjerman* acquired a reputation as troublemakers when they organized and campaigned for their rights during the 1990s and 2000s. Other Mozambicans are often less than sympathetic to their cause. For the more marginalized former migrants, what was once intended to guarantee stable employment in industrialized Mozambique became instead an impediment to employability in the contested labor market of post-socialist Mozambique. Life at the margins for many returnees was, and is, a far cry from what they had imagined their future to hold. This disillusionment put them in the company of millions of their compatriots.

In Angola, the story was similar, albeit with four significant differences. Firstly, only about 1100 workers returned in 1990, so the government had to respond to a much smaller group of returnees.<sup>69</sup> Some Angolan returnees from the VEB Gas- und Elektrogerätewerk Dessau found work at Sonangol, the state oil and gas conglomerate. Some of those who trained in Leipzig and Gera in textile production worked in the same field in Benguela. Others found work at Elisal in Luanda in garbage collection and processing. Still others, from the Industrieverband Fahrzeugbau, IFA, were employed in car repair around Luanda and Benguela in connection with the transport ministry.<sup>70</sup> The majority of returnees, however, struggled to find employment or further training opportunities in Angola, as was the case in Mozambique.

Secondly, in Angola, civil war continued for another twelve years, albeit with a brief interlude between the Bicesse Accords in 1991 and the multi-party elections in 1992.<sup>71</sup> Returnees and their fellow citizens were primarily concerned with the war, especially since the conflict spread to Luanda in 1992 and continued to be waged in the cities. This was different from earlier conflicts that had primarily affected the countryside and smaller towns. In this context, neither the government nor the public attached much importance to the workers' return: "The government did not give even minimal attention to the fact that we returned. They said nothing

about what should happen to us. They limited themselves to silence.”<sup>72</sup> About ten years passed, in which “everybody went about living their own life on their own costs,” between return and the first conversations about forming an association of returned workers.<sup>73</sup> “We expected to be integrated [into the Angolan labor market]. We did not have access to the agreement, and we had absolutely no way of...questioning the state as we are doing now.”<sup>74</sup>

Thirdly, Angolan returnees refrained from large-scale public protest and did not develop a separate public group identity as in the case of the *madjerman*. Finally, although the Angolan economy was hard hit, thanks to the country’s oil wealth its recovery after the end of the war was impressive, albeit very uneven. My interviews suggested that between 2002 and 2014 many Angolan former migrants were able to profit from the new economic world to a larger extent than their Mozambican colleagues.<sup>75</sup> Alongside the greater opportunities afforded by the Angolan economy, as we will see later in this chapter, Angolan returnees were eventually granted significant financial compensation by the government. This was in stark contrast to events in Mozambique.

Overall, most returnees in Angola and Mozambique would have agreed with Adevaldo Banze, in that they were welcomed with open arms but thereafter experienced a gradual fall from grace. Many felt alienated and betrayed as they failed to see long-term benefits from what they perceived as time spent abroad serving their country. While the workers’ willingness to serve on the factory floor remained constant, the governments became disinterested in their now outdated skills. The workers’ mass return in 1990 thus brought to light the mismatch between the programs’ stated aims and their reality. In many ways, the returnees’ fate was a reproduction of their pre-existing status, in the sense that most workers came from modest backgrounds and returned largely to similar positions.<sup>76</sup>

It had become clear that the Mozambican and Angolan war-torn economies had failed to industrialize on the envisioned scale, thus limiting the number of functioning factories that could absorb the returning skilled laborers. Another problem was that not all returnees returned as skilled workers. The last years of the migration scheme saw a dramatic drop-off in training outcomes. According to Ulrich van der Heyden, the percentage of Mozambican workers who acquired a useable level of training actually rose to 70.5 percent from 1983 to 1985. Of these, only 1 percent received certificates of professional competence in individual skills rather than certificates as skilled laborers.<sup>77</sup> However, these numbers fell thereafter for

several reasons. These included East German preference for labor power rather than skilled work, especially in the textile, chemical, and energy industries and mining. Also, individual workers often chose to prioritize working extra shifts to earn money over education. Language classes also seem to have become less intensive, resulting in difficulties in qualifying for training. The highest numbers of foreign workers in East Germany were registered at the tail end of the 1980s, leading many to experience less rigorous vocational training than earlier generations. The disconnect between the workers' training and dismal economic reality became ever-more apparent. Something similar happened to millions of East Germans after unification. The world for which they had been trained had ceased to exist. The difference was that in Angola and Mozambique this world had never come into being in the first place, and all ambitions for making it exist had been abandoned.

These historic shifts cost the returnees their expected role as members of a vanguard workforce and inspired their struggles for repayment in Angola and Mozambique. We will examine the ongoing claims against the Angolan and Mozambican governments in the last part of this chapter. But for now, we turn toward the loss of affective ties the migrants experienced during the 1990s.

### *The Loss of Transnational Ties*

Hello to East Germany and to my lost son,

I was only with you once—it was beautiful. You know, East Germany, you've hidden my child, my blood, my sunshine! Blood of my blood. What should I do now? It was so long ago, but nobody comes to help me find you. God is no devil—one day a light will appear, somebody will come to help me to find my sunshine, blood of my blood. Small Friedland, where you, Heiko were born, tell me, you peace-land, where do you hide my son? Do you finally hear me? All that I had of you, the pictures, and your date of birth, I lost in the flood in 2000. All that I know is that your mother is called Marina and that you were born 1984 in Friedland. My son, I would like to get to know you one day.<sup>78</sup>

Many of the relations that migrants had created with East Germans were destroyed in the chaos of the programs' end upon German reunification. This was one of the most poignant aspects of the human cost of the Mozambican and Angolan migrant schemes.

Transnational families were one of the most visible results and tightest ties of the contract labor migration to East Germany.<sup>79</sup> The new generation of Afro-Germans that Angolan and Mozambican workers fathered in East Germany were a durable legacy of their presence and their intimate relations with East German women.<sup>80</sup>

Many of us created families over there because we left when we were still young, and we lived with the people from there. We had women, we fathered children, and all that leaves a mark on a person. I always say that we sowed trees in Germany because our blood flows through the veins of many people there. These are things we will never forget.<sup>81</sup>

To many Angolan and Mozambican fathers of mixed-race German children, their relationships were about blood bonds, roots, and seeds.<sup>82</sup> Even in the abstract, fatherhood was still important, regardless of the degree of separation or connection with the child. The return logic integral to this labor and training program meant that workers had to sign up as individuals without family attachments. As people do everywhere, workers created new families in East Germany. Many then lost them.

As with all utopian schemes to remake humankind, creating New Men and New Women carried a human cost. Workers were temporarily or permanently separated from a generation of children who grew up disconnected from at least one biological parent, whether that parent was in Angola, Mozambique, or East Germany.<sup>83</sup> Female worker-trainees more often left a child behind with family members when they migrated to East Germany than did male worker-trainees.<sup>84</sup> Some returned pregnant from East Germany, leaving the father in Europe.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, many children in Africa grew up temporarily separated from at least one birth parent, if not both. While distance and the need to earn a living separated children from parents in the African context, in East Germany racism played a large role. In (East) Germany, some of the children of Angolan and Mozambican and East German parents were separated from both birth parents and grew up with foster parents, in children's homes, or with grandparents. Many grew up with their mothers, sometimes in new patchwork families. Not all biological fathers lived with their children or were active parents while in East Germany; some East German families barely accepted the children but not the black fathers. Some workers were sued to pay child support but never met their children.<sup>86</sup> Yet, in other cases intercultural families stayed together and actively parented their children.<sup>87</sup>

Despite this diversity of circumstances, a pattern emerges: after the mass return of workers to Angola and Mozambique, many of their children in Germany lost connection to their biological fathers. Most grew up without knowing much about them and their African roots; many started actively searching for these lost connections in their teens and as young adults.<sup>88</sup> Manuel, for example, grew up in Halle and Hamburg. In 1995, six years after his father returned, letter exchanges between his parents ceased. Manuel recalled:

I resigned myself to the idea that I would never meet my biological father. ... When I was fourteen, I talked with my father on the telephone for the first time. ... The first conversation with my father was not that great, because I was not interested in getting to know him or even in calling him 'Dad.' ... I had no interest in being involved with Mozambique or with my father until I noticed that... I desperately wanted to know who my real father was... and what I might be like in relation to him. So, in 2012 I initiated the contact by calling him myself. In 2013 the opportunity arose for us [Manuel and his mother] to fly to Mozambique. It was an incredible experience. Half an hour before I met with my father, I started feeling very nervous and I realized how important this moment was... this was the piece that had always been missing from my life.<sup>89</sup>

Upon meeting his father in Maputo, Mozambique, Manuel was confronted with conflicting emotions. On one hand, it was a joyous occasion because he was welcomed by his father's Mozambican family. On the other hand, Manuel confronted his father with his feelings of loss:

I was also upset with my father, because it was through him that I got the skin color which I have, my dark skin... I always had to explain myself because of it, I had to put up with so much because of it, I was always a target, and my father was never there to protect me.

Manuel was marked by his experience with racism in Germany. He not only experienced the stigma attached to his skin color, but he also suffered the loss of his black father and was missing a source of positive identification with blackness in shaping his identity as a black man.<sup>90</sup>

Another child born of the migration schemes is Adelino, born in 1990 to a Mozambican father and East German mother in Leipzig. Like Manuel, he had a complicated relationship with his own national and racial identity. Adelino grew up believing his birth father had died, but then as an adult

managed to establish contact. This made Adelino reconsider who he was: “You aren’t German and the more you grow up the more you notice that. I am Mozambican, but what that means I don’t know. That I will still have to find out.”<sup>91</sup> Adelino had not yet been to Mozambique when I spoke to him in 2014.

Peter, born in 1984 in Radeberg, “grew up like a German boy, with a German mother and a German father because my Mozambican father left again in 1987.”<sup>92</sup> His mother told him early on that he had a Mozambican father, but he was not interested in the topic until he turned twenty and wrote a letter to his father’s work address in Maputo. He received a reply. Peter traveled to Mozambique to meet his father and new family. Afterwards he started learning Portuguese and made plans for a return. One thing led to another, and in 2014 he was living in Inhambane with his Mozambican partner and children. “I think I am one of the first ones to return to Mozambique,” he proudly states.<sup>93</sup> His use of the word “return” was interesting given that Peter had been born and brought up in Germany and had previously never been to Mozambique as an adult. He had fully embraced his father’s identity. Peter held German and Mozambican citizenships and saw his future between the two countries.

Many returnees and their children are not as lucky as Manuel, Adelino, and Peter, and their fathers. Fathers and children were not always able to find each other. Aniko from Dresden, for instance, took up the search for her father. This was against the wishes of her mother. Her father still wrote to her for ten years after leaving. Aniko’s mother kept the letters from her to shield her daughter from a geographically distant, and what she perceived as unreliable, connection. Aniko finally flew to Maputo and followed the traces of her father to South Africa without finding him.<sup>94</sup> Both Angolan and Mozambican fathers and German children sought to fill a void in their lives by rebuilding a connection that had been severed, or perhaps never even established. The many active ongoing searches for one another speak to an emotional, though abstract, family connection and a need to transform this into a real bond.<sup>95</sup>

Fathers’ searches for their offspring have often been equally emotional and tenacious. Santana’s case was instructive because it illustrated how deep the commitment to establishing connections could be in the face of adverse circumstances:

I did not return [to Angola] with the intention of staying because I already had assumed a commitment with a woman in Germany who was pregnant.



When I returned in November, I was informed the child was born on October 20 and it was a girl. I tried in vain to get in contact with the mother; she did not respond. The child was in the care of the youth welfare service. I got in contact with a German lawyer now...who found out that the woman died in 2010 and that it was a boy rather than a girl. ...Later, they made me take a paternity test at the embassy. ...I am now waiting for the results of the second test. ...At the time, she had all my documents, and she had my address but unfortunately, she decided to give the child up for adoption when it was four months old. And now I don't know....so this is what is gnawing inside of me.<sup>96</sup>

For Santana, the search was also related to his life cycle. As a pensioner with more free time and a level of financial independence, he was able to establish contacts with Germany, and make a serious effort to find his lost son.

Fathers approached me with different stories. Some had left their young children and their mothers, later tried to get back to Germany, but failed. Others did not remain in contact after their departure. Some no longer recall the names of the mothers of their children; others remember them as the love of their life. Some had children with different German women; others had several children with the same women. Very few have managed to visit their children—and grandchildren—in Germany.<sup>97</sup> All spoke of the desire to rekindle a connection with their far-away offspring.

The reasons that Angolan and Mozambican fathers lost contact with their East German families were many, including shame, trauma, lost or destroyed contact information, relocation, and sabotage of communication by family members. The children who grew up in Germany were often unfamiliar with the precarity that returnees faced and had difficulty understanding the forces that brought about familial ruptures. Many relationships proved problematic due to language barriers and different cultural expectations about parenthood and parent-child relationships. Augusto, who lived with his daughter's mother in Berlin for two years, told me:

Our daughter was born in 1987. ...I started having contact with her last year but one day she got very angry and cut all contact with me and even my friend who helped me locate her is no longer answering my calls and I was left without understanding the situation that led to this attitude.<sup>98</sup>

Augusto's experience is not unique, as there was much room for misunderstanding.

Family relations and child-rearing was one area where cultural differences emerged between the Angolan, Mozambican, and East German norms. In the GDR, custody resided with both mother and father in the name of equality, even in the case of small children, but it was usually mothers who won custody.<sup>99</sup> Many Afro-German children held expectations about a father's role that did not correspond to their father's understanding of their role. Many former worker-trainees saw children as central to a complete life. However, they had grown up with more expansive family relationships than a German nuclear family. Many had experienced separation from one or both parents during their childhood and youth, for instance because they left to pursue secondary education in a city or because their parents left for work. The civil wars in Angola and Mozambique introduced an additional level of precarity, which included the loss of family members and an increased burden on mutual help networks and kinship care.<sup>100</sup> In many parts of Africa, child-raising is not the sole responsibility of birth parents as is the norm in Europe. Shared parenthood and child-circulation among kinship and other support networks are socially accepted and widely practiced in Angola and Mozambique.<sup>101</sup>

The rupture of transnational romantic relationships and the associated emotional costs was another narrative of loss for both returnees and their East German partners. What remains striking is the loss of agency in the worker-trainees' retelling of separation narratives, which mirrors the lack of agency many worker-trainees felt vis-à-vis their careers, and ties in with a certain feeling of post-socialist fatalism familiar from around the world. Returnees detailed to me many cases in which a couple at first maintained a long-distance relationship, until they lost contact by accident or through jealous family members' interference. It is important to note just how separated from a globalized socialist world the lives of many returnees became as their prospects deteriorated after their return, postal service was not reliable, often workers lacked stable addresses, and phone conversations were beyond their means. In other cases, lovers simply grew apart or found new partners in East Germany, Angola, and Mozambique.<sup>102</sup> Given that many migrants intended to return home only temporarily, they often saw separation as an unintended consequence of life decisions, made with incomplete information about the medium-term effects of the transition in East Germany and migration policy changes in Germany and their consequences for romantic partnerships and family life. The following extract,

from a letter written by a German woman to a Mozambican returnee in 1990, underscores this difficult negotiation:

I hope that you have reintegrated well at home and that you don't have any problems. What are you doing now? Will you work somewhere or is that impossible? I still have work but in the next couple of weeks many workers will be let go. I hope I can keep my work. There are already many unemployed. You write that you want to return. Do wait at least until 1992. We will need that time to create order in our country. After October 3, the GDR will cease to exist. It would be very difficult for you to live here through this time. There is no work and the hatred of our people towards foreigners is really bad right now. I am very sorry for all this, but I would be distraught if I knew stupid people would hurt you. Do you know, little one, I miss you terribly. Sometimes I think you aren't really gone, and you will soon walk in through that door. But that is impossible. You remain many thousands of kilometers away from me!<sup>103</sup>

Though none of my interviewees brought a German woman home with them, some East German women lived in the *bairros* in Maputo and other provincial capitals where they were a visible presence in the early 1990s.<sup>104</sup> Faced with the harshness of the living conditions there, most eventually left again for Germany.<sup>105</sup> A popular song, by well-known Mozambican musician José Guimarães, called “Miboba”, referred to the returnees from Germany with the line “other boys came back with motorbikes and white girls from Germany.”<sup>106</sup> In the popular memory returnees were linked to material possessions and to white women. Both were lost to the returnees.

## PART II: GAIN

### *East German Legacies: “When We Came Back, We Had Another Way of Being in the World”<sup>107</sup>*

A quick glance at a map of central Maputo is a reminder that the socialist past has not vanished. Street names feature prominent socialist leaders, among them Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and many of Africa's socialist-inspired leaders: Congo's Patrice Lumumba, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, Guinea's Ahmed Sékou Touré, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Angola's Agostinho Neto, and Mozambique's Samora Machel and Josina Machel.<sup>108</sup> In Luanda, on the other side of the continent, visitors can stroll along streets with strikingly similar names and

stumble upon other reminders of a socialist past: both a stranded ship in Luanda's ship graveyard and an abandoned cinema are named after Karl Marx; and socialism's great men such as Agostinho Neto, Leonid Brezhnev, and Fidel Castro adorn decayed murals.<sup>109</sup> Maputo and Luanda continue to bear witness to FRELIMO's and the MPLA's quarter-century flirtations with socialism.

The attentive visitor to both Maputo and Luanda will also detect the enduring presence of socialist material relics. Occasionally, one might come across an old MZ or other goods with Eastern Bloc brand names that migrants brought back home from their extended stays in the East. Listening closely, one might detect a linguistic legacy of the former global socialist links. Some Angolans and Mozambicans can switch from Portuguese to German, Czech, Cuban-accented Spanish, Bulgarian, Romanian, or Russian. These fragments of the past remind a visitor who is paying attention to such things that well into the new millennium there are still echoes of a time in which the promise of a socialist utopia inspired Angolans and Mozambicans. These echoes are a reminder of how Angolan and Mozambican migrants shaped and were in turn shaped by these internationally entwined national histories.

In Mozambique, names emerged to describe former workers in East Germany. The most common is the term *madjerman*. It is an ambiguous name. On one hand, it is an externally imposed identifier with negative connotations: laziness, arrogance, a sense of entitlement. On the other, it is a positively affirming and internally ascribed name.<sup>110</sup>

We feel good about the name [*madjerman*] because we were there, and it corresponds to the truth. Sometimes we are called *Djerman Kohl*, that was our adaptation. ... We ate cabbage there and here we continued eating it. We called each other by that name, and nobody gets angry because we all ate that product in that country. ... Our official name is 'returnees from Germany.'<sup>111</sup>

Returnees are perceived as a collective group by the public in Mozambique. Decades later, when I conducted my research, whether former migrants were referred to as *madjerman*—"those from Germany"—or referred to themselves in self-mockery as "German cabbage," there was nevertheless recognition that this group of former migrants had developed its own identity and had been transformed to a degree that distinguished them from those who stayed. In Angola, due to the significantly smaller number

of returnees, they had not had the same public attention and were simply referred to as returnees.

Not all was negative. Returnees brought with them memories and experiences of life under East German real socialism that continued to mark them and their behavior after their return:

We learned many things and in life all types of experiences count, especially when people emigrate and go to another country, get to know other cultures, habits, and customs. That person adopts other habits and evolves intellectually. ...we also transmit what we have learned regarding social questions living together with other people, to our countrymen who stayed. When it comes to education you never lose anything. I can say it was definitely worthwhile that I learned to speak German. ...I also learned about German history and saw some culturally significant places such as Weimar, the Berlin [TV] tower, and the Dresden picture gallery, which is one of the biggest in the world. ...I also got to know the old town of Dresden which the Americans bombarded during the Second World War. ...These are memories that we will never erase.<sup>112</sup>

Migrants brought with them material possessions, new blood ties, and non-material legacies. In the following pages, we will explore one subset of ideas and practices that distinguished returnees from their home communities, namely their ideas about sexuality and gender roles.

When in 2015 I asked Bernardo a question about the applicability of the knowledge that he had acquired in East Germany to his present life, I was expecting an answer about his professional skills. However, he surprised me with a reference to his intimate relationships:

Simplicity in terms of intimate relationships. I don't have problems with kissing my lover or wife in the streets. That sort of behavior is until today still complicated in this country [Angola]. That is why my family says that I am very German. [Another difference is that] when I say 'no, I don't want to' it is because I really don't want to do something and when I want to, I say, 'Yes.' My family asked me whether I would like to marry again, and I said yes, I would like to marry a white woman. They asked me why, and I said because a white woman is more loving and attentive.<sup>113</sup>

Bernardo's perception of white women as "loving and attentive" compared to Angolan women, whom many men portrayed as solely interested in economic gains, was consistent with the general idea migrants had of

East Germany as a land of sexual freedom. Dagmar Herzog's analysis of sexual behavior and morality in East Germany argued that an affirmative attitude toward sexuality developed over time.<sup>114</sup> In Angola, gender equality is enshrined in the constitution. Yet the notion of male supremacy remains ingrained in many Angolan men and women.<sup>115</sup> João Baptista Lukombo Nzatuzola claims that a "man flirting with more than one woman is seen as a sign of social prestige, reinforcing male authority."<sup>116</sup> Bernardo picked up on the different degrees of equality practiced in the two societies, albeit both being countries that professed women's equality before the law and lacked in practice.

Bernardo's statement also highlighted differences between direct and indirect communication styles, which in turn shapes relationships. He was exposed to, and subsequently adopted, a direct communication style in East Germany, which, now that he had returned to Angola where indirect communication was more usual, made him an outsider and earned him the label "German." It was this difference in communication style that probably contributed to his generalized reading of Angolan women as "difficult"—presumably, not a one-way street.

In Mozambique, Bernardo's colleagues dealt with similar changes to their behavior that rendered them different. This notion of being an outsider also came with changed ideas about masculinity that seemed to some to undermine what they thought of as traditional "Mozambican" masculinity based on the role of the man as the provider. Particular points of difference were the relatively domestic role of men in East German society and associated approval of women's active participation in the workforce. Adriano stated:

[In East Germany] we saw the men get up and walk into the kitchen to wash dishes. If you do that here, you won't find a woman. The woman controls a lot [in Mozambique]. But we are already acculturated, and we say we are all human beings and if I wash the dishes, you will go and iron, and if you sweep the rooms, I will do another thing in the house over the weekends. ... We do not hide [what we have learned in East Germany].<sup>117</sup>

His colleague, Alves, shared the housework with his wife on the weekends.<sup>118</sup> Alfredo and his wife also made a conscious decision to only have two children to ensure they could finance their education, a decision he attributes to the nuclear family he experienced in East Germany.<sup>119</sup>

East German women in East Germany were expected to become part of the workforce, were encouraged to pursue further education, and assumed

leadership positions in companies, albeit rarely achieving top leadership positions.<sup>120</sup> The subsequent economic independence of women resulted in a shift in gender relations as women increasingly had bargaining power with their partners and the state.<sup>121</sup> As the regime encouraged men to actively participate in household chores, a particular brand of East German manhood emerged. Dagmar Herzog describes this as a “distinctive egalitarian style of heterosexual masculinity” based on “East German men’s domesticity and self-confident comfort with strong women.” This move toward equality, however imperfect, according to Herzog, was different from the “socialist machismo” seen in other Eastern European states, where patriarchy and misogyny existed side by side with gender-egalitarian rhetoric.<sup>122</sup> What is more important than the extent to which East German households were actually marked by shared tasks here is that many worker-trainees perceived the roles of East German men to be different from the cultural context from which they emerged. The extent to which many worker-trainees picked up on gender roles and cultural cues in East Germany once again demonstrated the importance of their affective ties with the East German population; the fact that they acted (or at least claimed to act) upon some of these new ideas, despite causing friction in their home environments, speaks to the lasting effects of these socialist ideas.

In East Germany, workers were also exposed to a different relationship to the body. Regina described her discovery of nakedness in the following terms: “There are things that for our Mozambican culture are unacceptable. After having come back from Germany we already thought of them as normal. For instance, when the people heard us talk about having gone swimming all naked, they thought it was very strange, but we already thought of it as normal.”<sup>123</sup> Not all interviewees embraced East German nudism (Freikörperkultur, FKK), as Regina did. This form of nudity was one of the freedoms the East German people carved out from the regime starting in the 1960s. By the 1970s, full nudity was the norm at many beaches and lakesides.<sup>124</sup> In a culture that promoted a non-commodified relationship to sex, many East German women felt safe stripping and being seen without feeling as if they were being consumed.<sup>125</sup> Regina captured this general sense of freedom around the female body, read against her own experiences of sexual violence in Mozambique:

we saw so many white women wearing very little over there and in contrast here we have old women who dress in *capulanas* [traditionally worn type of

sarong] and hide every part of their body, and they are still violated. These kinds of values that we learned in Germany; these are the values we really need to transmit to the next generation.<sup>126</sup>

What Regina had seen and adopted as desirable, she did not want to keep for herself. She was driven to work toward greater gender equality in Mozambique. To that end, Regina was raising awareness about domestic violence in Mozambique and was volunteering for various social projects in Namaacha.<sup>127</sup> Whether it was Regina's empowerment, Bernardo's willingness to show affection publicly, or Adriano's and Alves's domestic chores, these workers' stays in East Germany had shown them aspects of a society striving toward gender equality and a more liberal expression of sexuality. They were keen on keeping these aspects alive despite criticism from neighbors and friends.

### *A Luta Continua! Activism for Redress and Acknowledgment*<sup>128</sup>

So many years of work, but all in vain,  
*Madjermanes* don't know anymore whether they have  
 The right to those moneys they conquered  
 With the sweat of their undershirts  
 And that they confiscated from them.  
 Where is justice? Who has the power tramples on the hand.  
 The poor stay even poorer and are left with *xiça*.<sup>129</sup>  
 Injustice! The most common word used among us.  
 We complain so much, we practically lose our voice.<sup>130</sup>

Verse from "O Pais da Marrabenta" by Gpro Fam

In Mozambique, *madjerman* collectively gained an ambiguous reputation; loss and gain in this section lie as closely together as admiration and contempt for the *madjerman* in Maputo. Hip hop artists like Gpro Fam, Azagaia, and Tira Temas composed songs that reference the *madjerman's* ongoing struggle for vindication. These songs portrayed *madjerman* as people who stood up for their rights against a FRELIMO government that betrayed them.<sup>131</sup> Yet, many a *Maputense* sighed when stuck in a traffic jam caused by yet another *madjerman* demonstration.<sup>132</sup> Some even saw the *madjerman* as ungrateful troublemakers who had already had the privilege of living abroad while others suffered through the civil war and were now claiming preferential treatment yet again. Despite this criticism, the group became a reference point for civil activism against the



government. This sentiment was humorously expressed in a caricature published in *Savana* in 2014 that depicted masses of people demonstrating and holding signs that identified them as interest groups. Among them were the *madjerman*, the resettled, the demobilized, and opposition parties such as MDM and RENAMO. In this depiction, a line of heavily armed police officers from the rapid intervention unit kept the trouble-makers at bay to allow the then President Armando Guebuza and Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina to walk to work. Guebuza beamed: “What is important is that the same remedy works for all diseases!”<sup>133</sup> The *madjerman* thus earned a certain prominence in the political landscape of post-socialist Mozambique.

They also gained a collective voice. The overwhelming majority of returnees in Angola and Mozambique expressed disappointment, anger, and continued hope when it came to the tense relationship between them and their respective governments. They felt as if the government had betrayed them. The various organizations the returnees formed proclaimed to fight for the workers’ rights. These rights involved the repayment of outstanding wages, which had been withheld in varying percentages from 25 to 60 percent, as well as social security and pension benefits. Deferred pay was nothing new to many migrants as it had also been practiced in the labor migration to the South African mines; likewise Angolan and Mozambican workers were not the only foreign workers in East Germany for whom the plan was to find parts of their wages in bank accounts upon their return home.<sup>134</sup> In the Angolan case discussed below, the workers fought for a collective compensation settlement, rather than restitution of the exact amount owed to each individual worker. In Mozambique, the ATMA (Associação dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos na Alemanha, Association of Mozambican Workers in Germany), the largest organization representing the *madjerman* countrywide, leaned toward group compensation in its demands but individual workers often expected specific restitution of the exact amount owed per worker. Most individuals in Angola and Mozambique remained unclear about the details of the claim-making; they did not relate to the ongoing fight as a technical negotiation but rather as a moral discourse. They felt economically, socially, and morally wronged by the actions of their respective governments and sought to redress this injustice by claim-making. Even on the level of the leadership, facts and wishful thinking intertwined, and the movement leadership has changed repeatedly over the last two decades.

As soon as it became clear that the government would not honor their agreement to make good the deferred wages, an angry opposition formed in Mozambique, which saw the formation of various organizations of returned workers and public protest marches. A similar process later occurred in Angola.<sup>135</sup> The public protests by angry Angolan and Mozambican workers in Maputo, Luanda, Berlin, and Brussels were a direct result of the migration experience to East Germany. The money and benefits claimed were a product of the workers' labor in East Germany. In a less material legacy, their methods drew on the active protest culture they witnessed in East Germany. Most important in this respect were *madjerman* participation in and leadership of company strikes, and in 1989 to 1990, their witnessing of, and occasionally participation in, the Monday Demonstrations when people in East Germany came out to peacefully protest the government. The *madjerman* protest movement has been the subject of countless news reports, exhibitions, and analyses over the years.<sup>136</sup> *Madjerman* have taken part in creative May 1st demonstrations, occupied the German Embassy in Maputo in 2004, and marched into the Mozambican parliament, all in an effort to get the respective governments to pay out what is owed.<sup>137</sup> Rather than drawing a complete picture of the protest movement, I focus in the following on the political voice of the protesters, a voice they gained after coming back from Germany.

The returnees foremost criticized their governments for exploiting them. At the heart of their grievances was less the deferred payment policy per se and more the bitterness about the (non-)repayment process. One worker in Maputo remembered:

We thought it [the deferred pay option] was a good thing because we would receive the money after our return. It was better only to receive 40 percent of our wages there because we didn't have a future in that country [East Germany]. So, it would have been better to get the other portion here and live very well but that never happened.<sup>138</sup>

The deductions varied from 25 to 60 and later 40 percent of the wages of the workers. Many workers mention that they had to part with their documents outlining how much money was deducted from each of them at the airport upon returning. Subsequently, some workers received some payouts but could no longer prove how much the money they received was compared to what they had once earned. The fact that many workers did

not receive the withheld portions of the wages gave rise to allegations of government corruption and continues to fuel the demonstrations.

Workers also gained a political voice as some compared their situation to slavery, as in Momade's critique: "When FRELIMO sent us to Europe they said it was for our vocational training but in reality they used us as political slaves."<sup>139</sup> Momade's realization came after he learned about the use of his transfer payments to pay off some of the Mozambican debt resulting from imports from East Germany. It is a retrospective evaluation of the migration scheme on a continuum of forced labor practices. The fundamental economic rationale for slavery is extracting value from people's labor by not paying them. Mozambicans did receive a wage, and one that—without the subtractions—would have been equal to that of an East German worker in the same position. But both governments party to the bargain did indeed extract value from the workers' labor. The government officials involved in negotiating higher numbers of Mozambican worker-trainees to East Germany and a higher percentage of mandatory transfers in the mid-1980s with the explicit aim of reducing rising Mozambican debts must have been aware of the fact that there was no feasible way for Mozambique to pay the workers upon their return. They must have realized when they stipulated that pension entitlements were to be credited in the Mozambican system that no such system was in place at the time. It was only introduced in 1988.<sup>140</sup> The program was thus built on deceit and a level of exploitation that rendered all claims to socialist solidarity absurd. Foreign workers (and East German companies) were left in the dark about the machinations regarding their transfer payments. As of June 1, 1987, the standard contract to be signed by Mozambican workers and their East German employers simply stated that with their signature, workers agreed to transfer 60 percent of their net wages to accounts at the Banco de Moçambique for their benefit, where the money would arrive "through the intergovernmentally agreed channels."<sup>141</sup> Nebulous formulations such as this kept the actual schemes hidden from the workers.

Outright slavery cannot operate without force; here participants were attracted and kept motivated with promises that were in reality to be broken, a sad echo of forced and indentured labor programs throughout world history.<sup>142</sup> While the daily lives of Angolan and Mozambican contract laborers as remembered here departed significantly from those of earlier, far more exploitative contract labor migrations of indentured laborers in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Chinese or Indian contract labor to Cuba or Peru and South

Africa, the fundamental rationale was built on state-sponsored deception in both cases.<sup>143</sup> Labor exploitation happens on a continuum from unfree to free labor and the fact that workers' payments and benefits were traded for debt reduction without a plan in place for how to compensate the workers in full reveals the East German and Mozambican propaganda about the labor migration programs as woefully incomplete.

The fact that the money the workers had earned with their labor was used to pay back Mozambican debts was the issue that continues to incite former workers. Juma from Nacala compared his father's life under Portuguese colonialism to his own under FRELIMO leadership:

I felt aggrieved because we did not see the benefit of the things for which we worked in East Germany. It was as if I were my father. When he was taken to São Tomé e Príncipe, he only received a subsidy. The real money went to the colonial government. That is why he returned only with a suitcase of ragged clothes and a pair of shoes. ...I had a contract for Germany and worked there for three and a half years but 60 percent of my wages was subtracted, which I was supposed to receive after my return. I never received anything. That is exploitation like the labor of my father. The difference is that I am exploited by compatriots. That is the difference between the colonial government and that of the FRELIMO...I returned with the same clothes here, with the same shoes. I did not construct my house, I did nothing, and they kept my money. For me there is no difference between colonialism and the FRELIMO government.<sup>144</sup>

The comparison is fair, to the extent that the same basic economic idea sent Juma's father to São Tomé e Príncipe and him to East Germany in the late 1980s, where 60 percent of his wages were taken from him. We can therefore speak of a continuum between contractual labor practices between colonial and postcolonial governments in this case. Yet, the working and training conditions, the remittances, and the degree of freedom with which the migration started varied significantly. The comparisons with the colonial regime were drawn by a generation of migrants who had never lived with the threat of forced labor producing cash crops to enrich the colonial masters. They grew up instead with the promise of socialist revolution. Collective labor practices drawing on the labor power of subjects/citizens to develop the colony/country through infrastructure projects showed marked continuity from colonial to postcolonial times, not only in socialist Angola or Mozambique but across Africa. Yet, what changed fundamentally was the relationship between citizens and the

state.<sup>145</sup> Many workers I interviewed embraced the development dream of the Cold War period wholeheartedly. They bought into the postwar dream of development “as a promise of a better future, as a tool of liberation, and as a vision of a feasible alternative to the past and present.”<sup>146</sup> They sincerely expected development to lead to a better life for everyone and to be the result of schemes like the one in which they had participated. They believed in the importance of their training. Instead of a blue-collar job, they received decades-long warfare and the precarity of an economy unable to provide formal employment for many. Juma’s disappointment and anger were real. His were the sentiments that continue to fuel the ongoing protests decades later.

The fact that the money the workers had earned with their labor was used to pay back the debts of Mozambique was the issue that continues to incite former workers, where they are aware of this aspect of their history. Having grown up with the memories and histories of slavery and forced labor in the colonial context, labor migrants watched closely how their working conditions compared. One worker from Ilha de Moçambique remembered: “We knew it was a real offer because we had a contract and all types of guarantees that this was not slavery. When we arrived there, we met people from other nationalities, and we were all treated the same as the German people.”<sup>147</sup> This worker’s assessment rings true, too, to a certain extent, especially if we think of the first generation of worker-trainees, who on the whole received better training and job placements upon return. If the workers had received their full wages and benefits either in East Germany or upon return, they would have likely returned with grievances about working conditions in East Germany but not with the fundamental distrust of the FRELIMO government which continues to govern the country in 2022.

Former worker-trainees also gained a place to cement and maintain their group identity. The central gathering place in Maputo, replicated throughout the provincial capitals of Mozambique, is the Jardim 28 de Maio, colloquially known as the park of the *madjerman*. Situated in downtown Maputo, close to the Labor Ministry, the park serves as the headquarters of the umbrella organization for returned workers, the ATMA, and as the central rallying spot for weekly demonstrations.<sup>148</sup> A memorial bears witness to comrades lost to the past two decades of the workers’ struggles to claim government payments. The park also serves as a social, economic, and protected space for various *madjerman* groups. This includes the destitute, who sleep in the park and spend their days living off

the alcohol and food given by fellow *madjerman*. There are also many *madjerman* traders and informal businesses along Av. Ramao Fernandes Farinha. Someone from the ATMA leadership is usually on hand at the tables next to the organization's office. This person is the initial point of contact for the constant trickle of *madjerman* from all over the country who stop by to be updated on *nossa luta*—our struggle. “We are a family,” observed Juma in 2014.<sup>149</sup> *Madjerman* support each other in this space with connections and advice. They can also find a place there to recuperate and anchor their collective memory of their shared past. They use the place to express solidarity with each other and lend weight to their collective claims on the government. While a renovation of the park and the Covid-19 pandemic have altered the use of the park in recent years, it continues to be the place to which *madjerman* turn in search of information about ongoing demands for restitution (Fig. 6.1).

In Angola, there are no *madjerman*, or rather there is no equivalent term, and no cohesive organization representing former worker-trainees as a whole. Instead, two single-story brick houses in the Luandan suburbs,



Fig. 6.1 Prayer time at a *madjerman* reunion in the Jardim 28 de Maio on February 4, 2014. Source: Photo taken by the author

one in Prenda, the other in Tala Hady, serve as the offices and meeting places for two rival wings of AEX-TAA, the association of the Angolan ex-workers in former East Germany.<sup>150</sup> In 2015, the acting president of the Prenda wing was José António. He spent four years in Ludwigsfelde at the IFA car factory before returning to Luanda in 1990.<sup>151</sup> The president of the organization in Tala Hady was Estevão de Santana Maria Dias de Elvas, who was also part of the first group of Angolan workers sent to IFA Ludwigsfelde to work in truck assembly in June 1985, and who later worked as a translator at various companies in East Germany.<sup>152</sup> AEX-TAA was formed in 2003 to negotiate with the government in the name of approximately 2500 former Angolan workers in East Germany.<sup>153</sup> The reclaiming process started officially in 2004, to which the government responded positively.<sup>154</sup> In the meantime, the organization had split into two wings. The key difference between the two factions was that the Prenda wing was still pursuing its claims against the government, while the Tala Hady faction had accepted a settlement. Rather than making new demands, Prenda focused on signing on all former worker-trainees who were eligible for the benefits that had been agreed.

The agreement in question was signed on February 11, 2011. The government agreed to attribute the status of Técnico Médio de 1ª classe, a category identified in Angolan labor law, to all workers who had labored in East Germany. This categorization made Angolan laborers, who had been subject to East German labor laws, visible in Angolan labor laws. The amount allotted to each worker was 1,278,000 kwanza (US\$13,462 at the time). This consisted of the payment of a fee for the contract cancellations, holiday subsidy, Christmas subsidy, departure subsidy, money to kickstart self-employment, and money for re-training. In addition, every worker fifty years of age and older could sign up to the system of the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) to receive a pension calculated as if it were for twenty-eight years' work—this was worth 45,000 kwanza per month.<sup>155</sup>

As of August 2014, the Angolan government viewed the case as closed, having made available 4,016,604,800 kwanza since 2004.<sup>156</sup> This would mean that by 2015 each of the 1600 registered former worker-trainees had the opportunity to receive a total of about US \$26,000 in compensation, regardless of their time in service. In addition, they were entitled to a monthly pension of roughly US\$450. President Elvas thought that the settlement was fair:

Normally sixty is the retirement age here...many of us, when we are 50 years old, we receive our pension but still continue working. ...This was one of the advantages that we had based on the agreement. Today we are in a good place because the state already grants us a monthly pension.<sup>157</sup>

Members of AEX-TAA Prenda disagreed and continued mobilizing for higher remuneration:

This is impossible, we are on our way to 30 years of involvement in this process and they just say, ‘you like demonstrations, you are cooked and grilled!’ Nobody likes demonstrations. People demonstrate because they feel injured. If MAPTESS [Labor Ministry] had paid, nobody would be on the streets to demonstrate.<sup>158</sup>

The campaigners cast themselves as victims:

Give us back what is ours, our sweat. It isn’t easy to leave a place and then come back and not find what you have worked for; it hurts. You know, in Europe we worked in the cold, in the rain, everything. We had to get up at 4:00 AM and by 5:00 AM we already had to fight the cold.<sup>159</sup>

They also cast their demands in terms of human rights. José António maintained: “Angolans have to learn to fight for their rights and demand dignity!”<sup>160</sup> This rights-based discourse was, and continues to be, central to both the Mozambican and Angolan processes, and it indicates the larger meaning that these individual cases hold for the country as a whole.

In an interview on a Voice of America podcast, *Angola Fala Só*, José António made a connection between his cause and the wider state of democracy in Angola: “Angolans need to claim their rights and voice their positions because one day the situation will change.”<sup>161</sup> He expressed his conviction that it was important to stand up for one’s cause, because of the potential this act has to collectively contribute to political change. He connected the rights of the former migrant workers with a larger human rights framework: “They have to respect the rights of the workers because these are also human rights.”<sup>162</sup> Asked how much longer they are willing to continue their fight, José answered: “As long as necessary, until our claims are met. We are also citizens of this country and we have earned recognition. We conformed to all our duties for the fatherland until the moment of peace and now we demand our rights.”<sup>163</sup> This statement clearly demonstrated an idea of a bargain between citizens and



government—a social contract that Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have recognized—that had not been upheld.

Public opinion is generally supportive of the former worker-trainees' claims because dissatisfaction with the Angolan government is widespread.<sup>164</sup> On the other hand many perceive the claimants as a privileged group: "They went there and ate and drank and had a good life. They ask for more than US \$200,000 but nobody speaks about the money for former FAPLA soldiers who gave their very best while those in Germany ate, drank, and went out with prostitutes. We [...] only ate gunpowder."<sup>165</sup> Or worse, they accuse them of opportunism: "They want to use the disorganization...If Angola was still in the hands of the oldest brother, Dr. Savimbi [leader of UNITA, the MPLA's civil war opponent, killed in 2002], they would all be thrown into the fire because this is absurd."<sup>166</sup>

Former worker-trainees have protested in Angola.<sup>167</sup> But given the tenuous security situation for visible protest in Angola, more open demonstrations are outsourced to the Angolan diaspora in Europe. There are about 300 former Angolan workers still registered in Germany.<sup>168</sup> The press attaché of the Angolan Embassy in Berlin, Fernando Tati, stated in December 2014: "They are attempting to extort the Angolan government. Today they ask for a predetermined amount, tomorrow they ask for more. It practically amounts to racketeering."<sup>169</sup> In another *Deutsche Welle* article, the embassy is quoted denouncing the workers' ongoing demonstrations as "irresponsible" and as "misleading propaganda."<sup>170</sup>

In the opposition press, the demonstrations in Germany are characterized as expressions of the "profound indignation of the Angolan diaspora, which is faced with corruption and impunity in Angola."<sup>171</sup> At least ten demonstrations took place from 2011 to 2017 in Berlin, Frankfurt, and in front of the European Parliament in Brussels.<sup>172</sup> The protest march in Brussels in June 2015 was attended by about 250 former worker-trainees, mainly men, now living in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. Key protest slogans were: "Down with corruption!" "Long live democracy!" "Down with the dictatorship!" "Long live freedom of expression!" and "We will win!" The wider aims and claims of the movement were clear in these phrases.

Miguel Cabango, the organizer and president of *Assoextra e.V.*, maintained: "it is not our intention to stain the Angolan image here in Europe, but necessity obliges us. This is our right because we worked but never saw our money. Until we see our money the marches here will not stop."<sup>173</sup> The protesters delivered a letter to the President of the European

Commission and addressed the then Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos, calling on him to intervene on their behalf. Diasporic Angolans saw and portrayed themselves as patriotic Angolans, on the right side of history, holding the elite accountable while demanding their own rights, and campaigning for greater accountability and responsiveness in Angolan governance.

Employing patriotism and the independence struggle has allowed for a critique of corrupt elites. The victimization narratives and the rights dialogue aimed at both an international and national audience. The desire for recognition and further payments motivated the protestors, some of whom acknowledged that the current political system allowed greater leeway for this kind of action: “Now we have the right to claim our rights if we think that things aren’t going well. That was not possible earlier on...During socialism we had a one-party state and that was an authentic dictatorship.”<sup>174</sup> Ultimately, Angolan former workers achieved a settlement that allows them many more benefits than the former workers in Mozambique. The crucial difference is that the Angolan state is flush with oil money, which has allowed it to buy off the former migrant workers and, in so doing, draw much of the sting from their protests. Mozambique, lacking the oil riches of Angola, does not have this option.

In recent years, the Mozambican community in Germany, represented by the CMA (Comunidade Moçambicana na Alemanha, the Mozambican Community in Germany), has engaged lawyers to claim missing repayments for members of the Mozambican diaspora.<sup>175</sup> Formalized relations between the campaigning groups for the former workers in Germany and Mozambique, the CMA and ATMA respectively, came about in 2014 and allow for a certain level of coordination with regard to demonstrations and preparations for different legal proceedings in Berlin and Maputo.<sup>176</sup> As of 2019, former Mozambican workers in Germany and Mozambique, working alongside German civil society actors with a background in East German resistance networks and the Sant’Egidio community, have organized with the goal to have former contract laborers recognized as victims of the East German SED regime and to reenter negotiations with the German as well as Mozambican governments about retributions.<sup>177</sup> Key to this was a conference on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the 1979 agreement between East Germany and Mozambique.<sup>178</sup> It brought together participants—former workers and school children from Mozambique, former workers’ German children, East German development experts posted to Mozambique, those having worked with Mozambican laborers in East

Germany—with state representatives from Mozambique and Germany, researchers, artists, and interested citizens.<sup>179</sup> The central concern of the conference was to seek a solution for the missing wages, social security contributions, and unclear pension entitlements of the Mozambican contract workers. In this context, journalist and legal expert Dr. António Frangoulis brought out the exploitative nature of the agreements when he stated: “In fact, the inheritance of the GDR is a dark chapter in the history of the relationship of friendship and cooperation between Mozambique and Germany.” He called the labor migration to East Germany “a living history of modern slavery [...] smack in the middle of the twentieth century” and referred to the workers as having been “sold like things” and having been “robbed of their fundamental rights, in clear violation of the universally applicable Declaration of Human Rights.”<sup>180</sup> Günter Nooke, personal Africa representative of Chancellor Merkel in the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Africa Officer in the same ministry, represented the German government and emphasized that no valid outstanding payment liability existed for the German government. However, he also admitted: “For the GDR, its engagement in Mozambique and the contract labor agreement was not just socialist fraternal assistance but also business. East and West both instrumentalized African states, their governments and especially the people of those countries for their political and geopolitical interests.”<sup>181</sup> The representative of the Mozambican Embassy, Julião Armado Langa, recognized the contribution of the workers to the development of Mozambique “in one way or another” and underlined his wish for a continued close German–Mozambican relationship.<sup>182</sup> Since then, the new momentum has carried the issue into debates in the German *Bundestag* where MP Dr Karamba Diaby has called upon parliament not to forget the Mozambican workers in debates about East German pension transitions, and Katrin Budde and Matthias Höhn have exchanged viewpoints on whether Germany needs to accept financial responsibility vis-à-vis former contract laborers in East Germany;<sup>183</sup> Vice-President of the *Bundestag* Dagmar Ziegler acknowledged that parliament needs to ask the moral question. She underlined that the East German side knew perfectly well that workers did not receive what they had worked for, and opened the door toward recognizing the continuing workers’ demands as moral demands.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, well over 400 researchers signed an open letter to the German government in support of compensation payments.<sup>185</sup> These developments have not gone unnoticed in Mozambique. The *madjerman* have, after pausing due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, resumed their meetings in

the park of the *madjer*, where they discuss the ongoing developments in Germany.

This migration had far-reaching unintended consequences which continue to echo in the lives of Angolans, Mozambicans, and Germans. None of the program planners could have anticipated the transnational protests which are its most recent reverberations. What becomes apparent when Angolan workers march in front of the European parliament, or Mozambican workers march through the Brandenburg Gate, are the ongoing ties that bind Angola and Mozambique to Germany through the legacies of their shared socialist histories even as all three countries firmly form part of today's globalized world. The diaspora, at home and abroad, has found its political voice and is utilizing it, as fiercely proud Angolans or Mozambicans, to stake their claims to consideration in domestic policy.<sup>186</sup> What will happen next is history's unfinished business.

## CONCLUSION

Angolan and Mozambican workers returned home to rebuild their personal and professional lives and to support their country's development through industrialization. But they soon realized that their dream of living life as blue-collar workers, with similar benefits and privileges to those they had encountered in East Germany, was to remain just that—a dream. What originally was a euphoric return, followed by active participation in the sharing economy and enjoyment of newfound social capital, soon turned into disappointment and marginalization. The workers thus narrated their return through the prism of their loss: loss of their goods, their deferred wages, their social standing, their ties with Germany, and their professional and personal dreams.

Despite this, they also spoke of the transformations they underwent abroad and the gains from this journey. They came back with a group identity that bound them together and provided them with a community. They adapted their worldview in lasting ways about issues such as gender equality, sexuality, and partnership. And finally, they gained agency and successfully negotiated repayments. Their experiences with life under real socialism heightened their political consciousness as civic actors, taught them the skill of protesting, and allowed them to envision the possibility of an alternative present. The migrants are part of their national histories; through their lives, the East German experience became interwoven in the fabric of Angolan and Mozambican history. Through the Angolan and

Mozambican protests in Europe, their national histories once again became situated within a global context. But this time, it was a post-socialist one.

The German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Mozambique, and the People's Republic of Angola have all ceased to exist. The legacies of the historic entanglements of all three states are complex. The positive and the negative exist side by side. In telling this multi-faceted history we must have the patience to balance workers warmly recalling facets of their East German lives with the structural critique that exploitation became part of the system once it was clear to the parties involved in signing the bilateral government agreements that no provisions were made to pay workers their full wages, social security benefits, and pension entitlements upon their return. The next chapter examines how the memories of the migrations have continued to shift and evolve, and how this relates to their overall meaning. For thousands of present-day Mozambican and Angolan returnees, the legacy of this migration continues to live on in their memories in the form of eastalgia, a longing for aspects of their East German experience.

## NOTES

1. M. Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, *Magnificent and Beggar Land: Angola since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); João Mosca, *Economia de Moçambique, Século XX* (Lisboa: Editora Piaget, 2005); Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal, eds., *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst, 2007); Tony Hodges, *Angola: From Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism*, African Issues (Lysker, Oxford, Bloomington: The International African Institute, James Curry, Indiana University Press, 2001); Tony Hodges, *Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).
2. Jean-Pascal Daloz, "'Big Men' in Sub-Saharan Africa: How Elites Accumulate Positions and Resources," *Comparative Sociology* 2, no. 1 (2003): 271.
3. Jeffrey A. Engel, *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Susanne Stemmler, Valerie Smith, and Bernd M. Scherer in collaboration with Nevim Çil, Manthia Diawara, Silvia Fehrmann, Navid Kermani, and Yang Lian, eds. *1989—Globale Geschichten* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag,

- 2009); James Mark, Bogdan C. Iacob, Tobias Rupprecht, and Ljubica Spaskovska, *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Carlos Riojas-López, “1989: Global History?” *Iberoamericana* 14, no. 54 (2014): 7–26.
4. Ulrich Mähler, *Kleine Geschichte der DDR* (München: Beck, 1998), 166f, Ch. 6.
  5. Dale Gareth, *Between State Capitalism and Globalisation: The Collapse of the East German Economy* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 255–60.
  6. David Birmingham, *Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (London: James Currey, 1992); James Ciment, *Angola and Mozambique: Postcolonial Wars in Southern Africa* (New York: Facts on File Inc, 1997); Kai M. Thaler, “Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence from Mozambique and Angola,” *Civil Wars* 14 (2012): 546–67.
  7. Only seven days afterwards Savimbi destroyed the electricity supply in Luanda; see David Birmingham, *A Short History of Modern Angola* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 106–7. The MPLA retaliated with new offensives against Mavinga, the gateway to Savimbi’s encampment at Jemba, in August and again toward the end of the year leading into the new year. Stephan L. Weigert, *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961–2002* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 94–6.
  8. Stephen Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique* (Pinetown, South Africa: 30 degrees South, 2014), 190.
  9. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*, 136.
  10. David Birmingham discusses the economic crisis of 1985 that introduced “a policy of ‘economic purification’” which brought with it some market principles and incentives; see Birmingham, *A Short History of Modern Angola*, 102. For the oil sector, see Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, “Business Success, Angola-Style: Postcolonial Politics and the Rise and Rise of Sonangol,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (2007): 595–619. Ku-Ntima Makidi even argues that Angola pursued a policy of “economic non-alignment” expanding the private sector and increasing Western investment initiated by Neto and continued by Dos Santos; see Ku-Ntima Makidi, “Class Struggle and the Making of the Revolution in Angola,” *Contemporary Marxism* 6 (1983): 137.
  11. Almuth Berger, “Annäherungen - Bericht der Ausländerbeauftragten des Landes Brandenburg” (Potsdam: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Landes Brandenburg, 2006), 38; Andreas Müggenburg, *Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation* (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996), 18.

12. Uli Sextro, *Gestern gebraucht—heute abgeschoben. Die innenpolitische Kontroverse um die Vertragsarbeitnehmer der ehemaligen DDR* (Dresden: Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1996), 216. My book is not concerned with the workers who stayed on in Germany. For a summary of the fate of former contract workers in united Germany, see Eva Kollinsky, “Meanings of Migration in East Germany and the West German Model,” in *United and Divided. Germany since 1900*, Mike Dennis and Eva Kollinsky, eds. (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2004), 145–75.
13. Pedro Taimo, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, May 20, 2014. In 2006 there were still about 20,000 former contract workers in Germany across all nationalities. About 100 Mozambicans and 70 Angolans resided in Brandenburg alone; see Berger, “Annäherungen,” 36. This book does not trace the history of the few who stayed in Germany, but traces the return of the many to Angola and Mozambique.
14. Almuth Berger, pastor and founding member of the *Cabana* movement, was elected as representative of the civil society movement Democracy Now to the Round Table in the working group on rights of foreigners. She then assumed the role of Secretary of State and Representative for Foreigners (*Ausländerbeauftragte*) for the Council of Ministers of East Germany under Hans Modrow and Lothar de Maizière until unification and subsequently held the same post in unified Germany for the federal state of Brandenburg. Members of the German delegation included: Almuth Berger (head), GDR-ambassador Günter Fritsch, Jürgen Schröder, Reinhard Gerber, advisor in the office of the Representative for Foreigners, and Mario Sande and Peter Schwotka as translators. The Mozambican delegation included Labor Minister Aguiar Real Mazula (head), Miguel Jona (National Director for social organization in the Labor Ministry), Pedro Taimo (head of the representation of the Labor Ministry in East Germany), Fontoura Sebastião Correia (National Director for Social Security), Muzemyk Aly (department head in the labor ministry), and Gregorio Elton Lingande (head of the department of socialist countries in the Foreign Ministry), Berger, “Annäherungen,” 524.
15. The protocols in question consisted of twenty-five articles and an agreement signed by Almuth Berger and Minister of Work Aguiar Real Mazuala in Maputo on May 28, 1990. The Angolan protocol consisting of twenty-seven articles and an additional agreement declaring prior agreements to be invalid were signed on June 1, 1990 in Luanda, 1–6262, MFAA, Berlin.
16. This particular East German delegation was not authorized to negotiate national debts. Almuth Berger, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 17, 2014.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*

19. *Tempo*, October 14, 1990, 22–6.
20. Group interview with Pinto, Rafael, Bacal, Fortunado, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, April 21, 2014.
21. There is no current consensus on how to call this period in German history, which processes this includes, and how they should be rated. Among the different terms to chose from are: *Wende*, *Umbruch*, *friedliche Revolution*, *deutsche Einheit*, *Wiedervereinigung*, *Einheitskrise*, *Ausverkauf*, *Transformation*. Of course, the evaluation of history depends to a large extent on the perspective from which it is written. For the workers, the *Wende* or transformation might be most suitable, as their lives hit a turning point with the reunification of Germany and subsequently fundamentally changed. Speaking about the peaceful revolution blends out the victims of xenophobic and racist violence around the same time. As Patrice Poutrus, states, in some places the revolution of the Monday demonstrations included voices against foreigners and demands for foreign workers to leave, Katrin Gottschalk, Historiker über 32 Jahre Mauerfall: “Nicht nur friedlich,” *TAZ*, November 9, 2021.
22. See Dr. Zieger, “Die rechtliche Situation der Ausländer in der ehemaligen DDR nach der Wende,” in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews-Berichte-Analysen*, ed. Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt and Bernd Bröskamp (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 119–28.
23. For instance, see Jacinto, interview conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 3, 2014; Paulo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 14, 2014.
24. Jacinto, Beira, June 3, 2014.
25. Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter,” 11–12. For texts discussing the fate of those foreign workers who stayed on in unified Germany, see Zieger, “Die rechtliche Situation”; Sextro, *Gestern gebraucht*; Helga Marburger, *Und wir haben unseren Beitrag zur Volkswirtschaft geleistet: Eine aktuelle Bestandsaufnahme der Situation der Vertragsarbeitnehmer der ehemaligen DDR vor und nach der Wende* (Frankfurt: Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1993); Almuth Berger, “Vertragsarbeiter: Arbeiter der Freundschaft? Die Verhandlungen in Maputo 1990,” in *Wir haben Spuren hinterlassen! Die DDR in Mosambik: Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse aus drei Jahrzehnten*, ed. Matthias Voss, *Die DDR und die Dritte Welt* (Münster: Lit, 2005), 36–40.
26. Pedro, Maputo, May 20, 2014.
27. Adevaldo Banze, in Ulf Dieter Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta: Vivências dos Moçambicanos antes, durante e depois de estadia na Alemanha* (Maputo: Instituto Cultural Mocambique—Alemanha, ICMA, 2005), 37–8.



28. I discuss this name in more detail in the introduction.
29. I speak about small-scale big men because while migrants amassed relative riches abroad and thus turned temporarily into providers for their personal networks and commanded local respect, they did not operate on the level of the politicians, warlords, and other Big Men discussed by Jean-Pascal Daloz, “‘Big Men’”; and Mats Utas, ed. *African Conflicts and Informal Power: Big Men and Networks* (London: Zed Books, 2012).
30. Adevaldo Banze, in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta*, 38.
31. Elke Ahrens and Siegrid Müller, “‘Ohne Perspektive’ Zur Situation der Rückkehrer aus der ex-DDR in Mosambik” *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews- Berichte- Analysen.*, ed. Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt und Bernd Bröskamp (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 130.
32. Fernando Agostinho Machava, “Os Madjermanes e o seu impacto: Caso da cidade de Maputo” (Licenciatura thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2017); the thesis was published in part as “Echoes of the Past: The Social Impact of the Returned Labor Migrants from East Germany on the City of Maputo,” in *Socialist Encounters: Relations, Transfers and Exchanges between Africa and East German*, Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel Harisch, and Marcia C. Schenck, eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021): 207–33; Theresia Ulbrich, “‘Madgermanes’ moçambicanische VertragsarbeiterInnen in der DDR und ihre Rückkehr nach Moçambique. Zur kollektiven Identität der Madgermanes” (Master’s Thesis, Universität Wien, 2009); Isabella Laura Sophie Kern, “Nachwirkungen der DDR-Vertragsarbeit am Beispiel der mosambikanischen Remigranten” (Undergraduate Thesis, Hochschule Fulda, 2011); Héctor Guerra Hernández, “Ma(D)Jermanes: Passado colonial e presente diaspóricado: Reconstrução etnográfica de um dos últimos vestígios do Socialismo colonial europeu” (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2011).
33. Samuel Manjate, July 15, 2016, interviewed by Machava, “Os Madjermanes,” 19.
34. Cartoon by Magaia reprinted in Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt, and Bernd Bröskamp, eds. *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews- Berichte- Analysen* (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 128. The clothes could be read as gifts from the *madjerman* boyfriend. Clothes were popular gifts for friends and family as fashionable items were hard to come by in Mozambique’s conflict economy. One *conto* referred to 1000 *escudos*, the Portuguese currency also used in Mozambique but substituted by the old *metical* already in 1980.

- The reference here is thus anachronistic but serves to underline the mental connection between money from the GDR and Portugal.
35. Alfredo Mandlate and Carlos Cossa, July 18, 2016, in Machava, "Os Madjermanes," 20.
  36. Jacinto, Beira, June 3, 2014. According to Andreas Müggenburg, the transfer of goods was regulated due to shortages in East German production. Each foreign worker could send home a package worth 100 East German mark twelve times a year and six times a year parcels through duty-free mail, Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter," 22.
  37. The first *metical* depreciated rapidly during the late 1980s and 1990s, placing the currency among the least valued currency units.
  38. Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004), Ch. 5. Todd Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917–1975* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015), Ch. 7; Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, C.1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994), Ch. 4.
  39. Migrants who returned after the opening of the inner German border—which was the majority of migrants—also came back with West German goods. And even before workers had free access to Western goods, they bought Western goods in East Germany by illegally exchanging money and buying in the appropriate hard currency stores and by asking more mobile foreign students to acquire goods for them, as discussed in Chap. 4. For more about the value attached to Western goods in the former East, see David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 19.
  40. While in many Western countries cycles of acquisition and disposal determine consumer behavior, in much of Eastern Europe as well as in Angola and Mozambique repair in the household or in formal or informal repair shops was much more prominent. For the Eastern European context, see Crowley and Reid, *Pleasures in Socialism*, 29.
  41. AbdouMaliq Simone, "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004): 407–29.
  42. For instance, see Alfredo Mandlate, July 18, 2016, in Machava, "Os Madjermanes," 21.
  43. The park is situated along Av. 24 de Julho between Avenida Alberto Luthuli, Av. Romão Fernandes Farinha, and Av. Ahmed Sekou Touré. For more on the park of the *madjerman* see Chap. 7.

44. "Mozambique: Guebuza Pays Homage to National Heroine Emilia Dausse," June 17, 2014, *AllAfrica*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201406171706.html> accessed February 26, 2017.
45. Margaret Hall and Tom Young, *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence* (London: Hurst, 1997), Ch.3; Benedito Luís Machava, "State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983)," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 593–609.
46. Group interview, Maputo, April 21, 2014.
47. *Ibid.*
48. One vendor goes directly to South Africa to acquire his products, the others acquire their goods via middlemen. Today, these *madjerman* vendors live precariously but some are more established than others; some live in reed housing in places like Boquisso—a situation they describe as temporary and undignified—others started building brick houses in which they live as they continue to build. Purchasing land and starting to build brick houses was a high priority for returnees, something that not all of them have achieved.
49. Group interview, Maputo, April 21, 2014.
50. Keith Hart, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1973): 61–89; Keith Hart, "The Informal Economy," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 10, no. 2 (1985): 54–8; Tatiana Adeline Thieme, "The Hustle Economy: Informality, Uncertainty and the Geographies of Getting By," *Progress in Human Geography* 42, no. 4 (2018): 529–48.
51. Group interview, Maputo, April 21, 2014.
52. Santana, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015.
53. Urkunde, Textilfacharbeiter; P1040968.JPG; Juizo, 20.7.1984, VEB Malitex Hohenstein-Ernststahl, Betrieb im Kombinat Baumwolle, P1040966.JPG; originals in Marieta's possession.
54. Marieta, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 14, 2014.
55. See, for instance, Saise in Nacala harbor, Field Notes, Nacala, June 18, 2014, and Azaria in Maputo harbor, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique March 20, 2014. Their areas of responsibility changed over the years. Saise, for instance, trained as a crane and forklift operator and today is in management.
56. See, for instance, Alfredo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2014.
57. Urkunde, VEB Braunkohlewerk Belzow, P1010707.JPG; Zeugnis über die berufliche Qualifizierung, P1010712.JPG; originals in Alfredo's possession.

58. East Germany was involved in Carbomoc; see Heide Künanz, “Das Steinkohleprojekt Moatize zwischen solidarischer Hilfeleistung und kommerziellem Anspruch,” in *Die DDR und Afrika: Zwischen Klassenkampf und neuem Denken*, ed. Ulrich von der Heyden, Ilona Schleicher, and Hans-Georg Schleicher (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1993); Iris Christina Obernhummer, “Experten der ‘wissenschaftlich-technischen Zusammenarbeit’ der DDR in Afrika. Alltag und Lebensweisen zwischen DDR-Richtlinien und angespannter Sicherheitslage in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren” (Masters Thesis, Universität Wien, 2010).
59. Alfredo, Nampula, June 12, 2014; CV, P1010703.JPG, P1010704.JPG, originals in Alfredo’s possession.
60. Group interview Anselmo, Antonio, Carlitos, and Juma, interview conducted by the author, Nacala, Mozambique, June 17, 2014; Lucía, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2016; Namalela, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2016. This returnee couple opened up a little shop and guest house next to their house.
61. Many of the *madjerman* who spend their time in the park of the *madjerman* live precarious existences; see Theresia Ulbrich, “Auf der Krokodilsinsel,” in *Mosambikanische Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR-Wirtschaft: Hintergründe - Verlauf - Folgen*, Wolfgang Semmler, Ulrich van der Heyden, and Rolf Straßburg, eds. (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2014). See also Nelson, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 21, 2014 and March 23, 2014; Regina, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, February 19, 2014.
62. Their occupational profile reflects James Ferguson’s argument that skills training is no longer productive in now primarily extractive and service-based economies. The socialist socialization into factory work practices in a context where the state was responsible for education and job placement became increasingly outdated as the Mozambican economy transitioned to a free-market economy starting in the late 1980s. James Ferguson, *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
63. Zefrino, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 3, 2014; Dito, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 7, 2014. Both were already involved with art during their time in East Germany.
64. Fabião, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 13, 2014; Nelson, Maputo, September 6, 2011; Aníbal, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 1, 2011. Aníbal Fernando Lucas graduated with a Licenciatura in History from Eduardo Mondlane University; his thesis was about the worker and train-

- ing program; see Aníbal Fernando Lucas, “Mao-de-obra moçambicana emigrante na ex. Republica Democratica Alema, 1979–1990” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2002).
65. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), German-Mozambican Cultural Center (ICMA), and German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) were all German institutions in Maputo at the time of the interview.
  66. Bato, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, January 27, 2014.
  67. On Ilha de Moçambique, Abdussamimo worked as a tour guide because of his German knowledge, Field Notes, June 15, 2014. Bacar’s career with the railroad in Beira started because he was able to translate a German user guide for a machine, Field Notes, June 4, 2014.
  68. Ilda, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 4, 2011.
  69. This number is calculated based on Berger, “Annäherungen,” 38. The actual numbers of returnees might have been even smaller as some of the migrants migrated to other European and African countries as labor migrants and refugees to avoid a return to the civil war context at home. Eric Allina powerfully demonstrates the level of internal and international displacement from the sixteen year war in Mozambique, see Eric Allina, “Bright lines and fault lines: the politics of refuge in independence-era Mozambique,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines* 55, no.3 (2021): 457–96.
  70. Elvas (president AEX-TAA Tala Hady), interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015.
  71. Birmingham, *A Short History*, 107; 111
  72. Group interview with José António (President), Marcos Fuca (Vice-President), and Lopez Sebastião (Member) AEX-TAA Prenda, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 11, 2015.
  73. Ibid.
  74. Ibid.
  75. Angola is categorized as an upper middle-income country. The GDP in 2002 was US\$12,497 billion, in 2014, US\$126,777 billion. In that time frame Angola gained an additional 10 million inhabitants, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/angola>, accessed July 15, 2017. Despite its impressive GDP growth, it remains one of the most unequal societies with a Gini index of 51.3 in 2018; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2018&locations=AO&start=2000> accessed October 1, 2021; Mozambique’s value is even higher with a Gini index of 54 in 2014, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2018&locations=MZ&start=2000> accessed October 1, 2021. Mozambique is catego-

- rized as a low-income country. Its GDP at the end of the war was US\$2291 billion. In 2014, the country had reached US\$16,961 billion; during that time frame, the country gained 14 million citizens, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/mozambique>, accessed July 15, 2017. The life expectancy is growing in both countries and had passed sixty years by 2019.
76. In contrast, many of the African students to the Eastern Bloc came from relatively elite backgrounds and returned to assume leadership positions at home; see Marcia C. Schenck, "Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan Student Migration During the Cold War, 1976–1990," *Africa* 89, no. 1 (2019):144–66; Jessica Allina-Pisano and Eric Allina-Pisano, "'Friendship of Peoples' after the Fall: Violence and Pan-African Community in Post-Soviet Moscow," in *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: 300 Years of Encounters*, ed. Maxim Matusevich (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2007): 175–98.
  77. Ulrich van der Heyden, *Das Gescheiterte Experiment: Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik in der DDR-Wirtschaft (1979–1990)* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019), 163f.
  78. Letter written in German by Tamele, Maputo, Mozambique, original with Tamele. To maintain the privacy of the people involved I have changed their names.
  79. Almuth Riedel emphasizes similar experiences regarding romantic relationships between East Germans and Algerians, which to her interviewees emerged as central to their migration experience. Eighty percent of the Algerian workers questioned had a German girlfriend and 40 percent had children, numbers she deemed exceptional among foreign worker-trainees, Almuth Riedel, "Erfahrungen algerischer Arbeitsmigranten in der DDR: 'Hatten och Chancen, ehrlich!'" (PhD diss., Free Univeristy, 1992), 90. I do not know how many children were born from the relationships between Angolan and Mozambican men and East German women, but forty-six former Mozambican worker-trainees approached me for help with looking for a total of fifty-seven children left behind in East Germany. This would suggest a ratio of about one in every four workers with whom I interacted searching for offspring. This ratio does not include those parents who were already in contact with their children or had no interest in a search.
  80. The term Afro-German is a self-designation of a West German movement of the 1980s. In this case, not all children of former contract workers self-identify as either black or as German or as black Germans; see Manuel, Berlin, November 2, 2014, and Adelino Hamburg, November 20, 2014. The term Afro-German serves to describe the mixed parentage of this generation, some identifying more with their German, others more with their African heritage. Yet, self-identification is but one side of the coin. Michelle M. Wright aptly reminds us that many white Germans continue

- to be unable to imagine black Germans, “Others-from-Within from Without: Afro-German Subject Formation and the Challenge of a Counter-Discourse,” *Callaloo* 26 no. 2 (2013): 297, which makes it more important to complicate narratives of a white (East) Germany.
81. Santana, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
  82. For a study focusing also on the children’s view of the relationship, see Johanna Wetzel and Marcia C. Schenck, “Love in Times of Socialist Solidarity: Racism, Knowledge and Mixed-Race Relationships in East Germany,” *Peripherie* 165/166, no. 42 (2022): 31–55.
  83. There is ample evidence on the negative psychological effect of the absence of one parent and a change in caregivers on children. For the Angolan context, see Cecilie Oien, “Transnational Networks of Care: Angolan Children in Fosterage in Portugal,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (2006): 1104–17; Valentina Mazzucato, et al., “International Parental Migration and Psychological Well-Being of Children in Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola,” *Social Science & Medicine* 132 (2015): 215–24.
  84. See group interview Maria, Beatriz, Mafalda, Irene, and Ilda, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, August 31, 2011; Lina “Die haben uns beigebracht, wie man arbeiten kann” interview by Eva Engelhardt, in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten. AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews- Berichte- Analysen*, Ahmed Farah, Eva Engelhardt, and Bernd Bröskamp, eds. (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, BAOBAB, 1993), 44; Bernd Bröskamp, “Vom Auswanderungs- zum Einwanderungsland: Die DDR, Ihre Ausländer, die deutsche Wiedervereinigung und die Folgen,” in *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten*, 13–34.
  85. For instance, Graciél, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, April 19, 2014; Lucía, Nampula, June 12, 2014; Almuth Berger, Berlin, November 17, 2014; Luzia, Luanda, April 16, 2015. No case of a mixed-raced child being born to a female former worker-trainee either in Angola or Mozambique has been brought to my attention.
  86. Field Notes, Nampula, June 14, 2014.
  87. Wetzel and Schenck, “Love.”
  88. Manuel, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 2, 2014; Adelino, interview conducted by the author, Hamburg, Germany, November 20, 2014; Peter, interview conducted by the author via Skype, Berlin-Inhambande, November 7, 2014; Aniko in “Papa wo steckst Du: Auf Spurensuche in Afrika,” in *24 Stunden My Story*; Wetzel and Schenck, “Love.”
  89. *Manuel in his Father’s Footsteps—Documentary* by Jens Vilela Neumann, Paradise Garden Productions, 15:57min, <http://vilelaneumann.com/english/?projects=manuel-in-his-fathers-footsteps-documentary>, accessed April 20, 2017.

90. Writing about East German black adolescents before 1989, Peggy Piesche reveals that few identification possibilities with Africa were available while growing up in a relatively homogenous and closed East German society. These East German adolescents often had German names, lived within white families, and were part of white-majority everyday life. Piesche concludes: "The black color of their skin made them special, while the context of their lives seemed to attest to successful integration," Peggy Piesche, "Black and German? East German Adolescents before 1989: A Retrospective View of a 'Non-Existent Issue' in the GDR," in *The Cultural After-Life of East Germany: New Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Leslie A. Adelson (John Hopkins University: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies 2002): 39. She defines the black German minority that she studies as the children of German mothers and fathers from one of the contract states, Piesche, "Black and German?" end-note 8, 57.
91. Adelino, Hamburg, November 20, 2014.
92. Peter, Berlin-Inhambande, November 7, 2014. Peter's sentiments about growing up German are expressed by many Afro-Germans who grew up in East Germany; see Peggy Piesche, "Black and German?" 39. This case also illustrates that not all families were separated in 1990; some were already separated earlier.
93. Ibid.
94. "Papa wo steckst Du: Auf Spurensuche in Afrika," documentary, in *24 Stunden My Story*.
95. The German embassies in Maputo and Luanda and other German institutions receive inquiries from both sides. Facebook and the Internet also play a role to varying degrees. An organization called *Reencontro familiar* (family reunification), with which I also registered the searches I collected, registers searches from within Germany and from Mozambique: in the Angolan context Mr Elvas, the President of AEX-TAA Tala Hady, also voiced an interest in his organization becoming active in connecting fathers and children.
96. Santana, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
97. Field Notes, Reunion in Pemba, June 21, 2014; group interview Incubeque, Basilio, Josina, Sufo, Abrão, Alberto, and Selemana, Pemba, June 20, 2014.
98. Augusto, Luanda, April 12, 2015.
99. Anita Grandke, *Die Entwicklung des Familienrechts der DDR* (Berlin: EDOC, 2010), 92, 106.
100. João Baptista Lukombo Nzatzuzola, "Gender and Family Life in Angola: Some Aspects of the Post-War Conflict Concerning Displaced Persons," *African Sociological Review* 9 (2005): 106–33.



101. Oien, "Transnational Networks of Care"; Mazzucato et al., "International Parental Migration," 216; Valentina Mazzucato et al., "Transnational Families between Africa and Europe," *International Migration Review* 49 (2015): 144; Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes eds., *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social Regeneration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 20. While some workers chose to return home rather than stay with their new East German families, others consciously decided to stay in East Germany to remain close to their children. José grew up without a father and did not want his daughter to experience the same fate; see José, interview conducted by the author, Hamburg, Germany, November 20, 2014.
102. Returnees approached me with search requests for children, former romantic partners, and occasionally guest families in Germany. I collaborated with *Reencontro familiar* to locate individuals.
103. Private collection of a Mozambican worker who wishes to remain anonymous. Field Notes, Maputo, May 10, 2014.
104. Lícino Azevedo, "Adeus RDA," documentary *Ébano Multimédia*, Maputo, Mozambique (1992).
105. Informal conversation with the Director of ICMA, the German Cultural Center, Birgit Plank-Mucavele, Maputo, Mozambique, January 28, 2014.
106. Guimarães, José. *Miboba*, RM, 2000.
107. Group interview, Nacala, June 17, 2014.
108. The FRELIMO government's "forgetting" of its socialist past has thus far not extended to Maputo's road map. M. Anne Pitcher, "Forgetting from above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique," *Journal of the International African Institute* 76 (2006): 88–112.
109. Nadine Siegert, "Luanda Lab—Nostalgia and Utopia in Aesthetic Practice," *Critical Interventions Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture* 8 (2014): 176–200; Nadine Siegert "Nostalgia and Utopia: On the (Post-)Socialist Condition in Angolan Contemporary Art Practice," in *Red Africa: Affective Communities and the Cold War*, ed. Mark Nash (London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2016), esp. Ch. 5, 116.
110. For a full explanation of the term, see the introduction, Endnote 1.
111. *Kohl* means cabbage in German. Group interview Januário, Rute, Francisco, Manuel, and Fernando, conducted by the author, Beira, Mozambique, June 4, 2014.
112. Santana, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
113. Bernardo, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 2, 2015.
114. Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 188, 92.

115. In Angola, children can be registered outside of marriage since 1987. Legal marriage remains limited and polygamous relationships continue to be practiced in urban and rural settings across social classes. With regard to parenthood both mothers and fathers share responsibilities and rights. Nzatzola, "Gender and Family Life in Angola," 107–8.
116. *Ibid.*, 110.
117. Adriano, interview conducted by the author, Nacala, Mozambique, June 18, 2014.
118. Alves, interview conducted by the author, Nacala, Mozambique, June 18, 2014.
119. Alfredo, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 12, 2014.
120. Donna Harsch, "Communism and Women," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 488–503.
121. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 188.
122. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 218–19; Josie McLellan argues that much of the positive interpretation of sexuality in East Germany is an expression of nostalgia; see Josie McLellan, "Did Communists Have Better Sex? Sex and the Body in German Unification," in *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany*, David Clarke and Ute Wölfel, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 119–30. Regardless, to the workers from Angola and Mozambique the difference between the treatment of women in their home and host contexts was noticeable.
123. Regina, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, February 21, 2014.
124. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 203; Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 144f. Saskia Köbschall examines the colonial origins of FKK culture and life reform in (East) Germany; see "German, Natural and Naked? The Colonial Entanglements of the Life Reform," *Art Education Research* 10, no. 15 (2019): n.p.
125. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, 202–3; Josie McLellan, "'Even under Socialism, We Don't Want to Do without Love': East German Erotica," in *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*, David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 223f.
126. Regina, Maputo, February 21, 2014.
127. Field Notes, Namaacha, Mozambique, February 26, 2014.
128. "The struggle continues" as an expression forms part of the language of the Mozambican and Angolan anticolonial resistance and socialist revolution and is still used today.

129. Workers use *xiça*, or *chiça* in Portugal, to express pain and dissatisfaction when they get hurt or things go wrong.
130. *Marrabenta* refers to a popular Mozambican music style. “País Da Marrabenta” by the Mozambican rap group Gpro Fam. The song was launched as an advanced single, part of the first Mozambican hip hop album *Um Passo em Frente*. Translation: Inês Alves. Thank you to Janne Juhana Rantala for introducing me to this music.
131. “País Da Marrabenta” Gpro Fam (2003), “A minha geração” by Azagaia ft. Ras Haitrm (2013), and “Sistema tá fudido” by Tira Temas ft. Shackal (2008).
132. Fernando Agostinho Machava, “Echoes of the Past,” 207.
133. *Savana*, Suplemento Humorístico do Savana, No. 1014, de Junho de 2013, 2.
134. See, for instance, Hana Bortlová-Vondráková and Mónika Szenté-Varga “Labor Migration Programs Within the Socialist Bloc. Cuban Guestworkers in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia and Hungary,” *Labor History* 62 no. 3 (2021): 297–315. This issue remains understudied and further inquiries need to be made into how deferred payment systems for foreign workers functioned across the Eastern Bloc.
135. Apart from a few newspaper articles, studies about the Angolan reintegration process and anti-government protest have not been written.
136. For academic literature, see Héctor Guerra Hernández, “Ma(d)jermanes: passado colonial e presente diaspórizado: reconstrução etnográfica de um dos últimos vestígios do socialismo colonial europeu” (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2011); Lucas Xavier Canjale, “O fórum dos extrabalhadores da ex-RDA na cidade de Maputo (1999–2006)” (Undergraduate Thesis, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2007); Isabella Laura Sophie Kern, “Nachwirkungen der DDR-Vertragsarbeit am Beispiel der mosambikanischen Remigranten” (Undergraduate Thesis, Hochschule Fulda, 2011). The demonstrations have also inspired artists to visually document the protest movement; see Malte Wandel, *Einheit, Arbeit, Wachsamkeit: Die DDR in Mosambik* (Germany: Self-published, 2012); Annett Bourquin, *Madgermany* (Lisboa: DPI - Cromotipo, n.d). An in-depth historical analysis of the protests since the early 1990s read against the various responses from the German and Mozambican governments is yet to be written.
137. Field Notes, History of the Majerman according to Majerman leadership, Maputo, 2014; Lina Gronau, Thomas Kunze, “Das Wohnzimmer im Park. Ehemalige DDR-Vertragsarbeiter in Mosambik,” in *Ostalgie International: Erinnerungen an die DDR von Nicaragua bis Vietnam*, Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel, eds. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010), 80.

138. Group interview, Maputo, April 21, 2014.
139. Group interview, Momade and anonymous, interview conducted by the author, Nampula, Mozambique, June 13, 2014.
140. Field Notes, Berlin, Germany, September 6, 2021.
141. Staatssekretariat für Arbeit und Löhne, Ordnung zum Ablauf des Transfers von Lohnanteilen mosambiquanischer Werkstätiger, Neufassung vom 8. Mai 1987, Anlage 4a, <https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Transferordnung.pdf>, accessed January 27, 2022.
142. Cindy Hahamovitch compares slavery, indentured labor, and guest worker programmes, “Creating Perfect Immigrants: Guestworkers of the World in Historical Perspective,” *Labor History* 44, no.1 (2003): 70–2.
143. Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 69; Lisa Yun and Ricardo René Laremont, “Chinese coolies and African slaves in Cuba, 1847–1874,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 99–122; Sunanda Sen, “Indentured Labour from India in the Age of Empire,” *Social Scientist* 44, no. 1/2 (2016): 35–74; Evelyn Hu-DeHart “Opium and social control: coolies on the plantations of Peru and Cuba,” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1, no. 2 (2005): 169–83.
144. Group interview, Nacala, June 17, 2014.
145. Corinna R. Unger, *International Development: A Postwar History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 80.
146. *Ibid.*, 9.
147. Group interview Salimo Abdussamimo, Abudo, Suatico, and Musa, interview conducted by the author, Ilha de Moçambique, Mozambique, June 15, 2014. For workers’ experiences with forced labor in the Mozambican context, see, for instance, Eric Allina, *Slavery by any other name: African life under company rule in colonial Mozambique* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).
148. ATMA is a countrywide organization representing returned worker-trainees. Enough *madjerma*n continue to be committed to the fight to organize active protests. However, Maputo is the only location with open demonstrations, and even they have become irregular.
149. Juma, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 13, 2014.
150. AEX-TAA is an abbreviation of *Associação dos Ex-Trabalhadores Angolanos da Extinta RDA*, the association of former Angolan workers in the extinct GDR. I draw on interviews with the leadership groups and worker-trainees in Luanda as well as Angolan, German, and international newspaper articles for the analysis of the Angolan case. The press coverage by Voice of America (VOA) and Deutsche Welle (DW) but even

- in local newspapers is overwhelmingly in favor of the worker-trainees' demands, who are perceived as having been "'exported' to the former GDR"; see Orlando Ferreira, "Ex-trabalhadores angolanos na RDA recebidos pela 9.<sup>a</sup> Comissão da Assembleia Nacional," *Agora*, March 9, 2013, 16.
151. José António; see group interview, March 11, 2015; I received José António's contact via journalists writing for Voice of America Português; see João Santa Rita, email message to author, October 24, 2014.
  152. Elvas, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 9, 2015. This contact I received through the Angolan Labor Ministry, MAPTSS, Ministério da Administração Pública, Trabalho e Segurança Social (Ministry of Public Administration, Work, and Social Security); also called Ministério da Administração Pública Emprego e Segurança Social, MAPESS.
  153. The president of AEX-TAA Tala Hady spoke of about 2500 returned workers that his association is representing, Elvas, April 9, 2015. According to the acting President of AEX-TAA Prenda, José António, and the Vice-President, Marcos Fuca, the organization had 1676 members in Angola and about 300 in Germany in 2015; see group interview, March 11, 2015. More than a decade post return, the idea emerged of founding an association representing the interests of the workers, and AEX-TAA was founded possibly in response to the *madjerman* protests in Mozambique. The delay can be explained also by the fact that the content of the agreements between East Germany and Angola remained unknown to the workers.
  154. "Executivo pagou mais de 4 biliões de kwanzas aos ex-operários angolanos na antiga RDA," *Semanário Angolense*, August 23, 2014, 4; group interview, March 11, 2015; Elvas, April 9, 2015.
  155. Both presidents corroborate these numbers; see Elvas, Luanda, April 9, 2015; José António in "Mantêm-se o braço de ferro entre MAPTSS e membros da AEX-TAA" by Moreira Mário, *Manchete - Jornal de Angola Democrática*, February 27, 2015, 29. In addition, the members have a right to professional training and entrepreneurial starter kits as well as to micro credits through the Banco de Poupança e Crédito (BPC). Those who were physically injured and are unfit to work get signed up for early retirement; see Manuel Vieira, "Luanda chega a acordo com antigos trabalhadores angolanos na ex-RDA," *DW*, February 21, 2011; Moreira Mário, "Executivo não cumpriu com a dívida dos ex-trabalhadores angolanos na antiga RDA," *Manchete*, September 5, 2014, 10.
  156. This amounted to US\$ 41,207,400, using [Oanda.com](http://Oanda.com), with the exchange rate as of August 23, 2014, the date of the publication of "Executivo pagou," 4.

157. Elvas, Luanda, April 9, 2015.
158. President AEX-TAA Garcia Samuel Manuel, quoted in Manuel José, “Trabalhadores da ex RDA dizem que vão manifestar-se,” VOA, January 13, 2014.
159. Group interview, March 11, 2015.
160. Angola Fala Só, José António: “Angolanos devem lutar pelos seus direitos,” podcast, VOA, October 17, 2014.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Mário, Interview with José António, 29.
164. Angola Fala Só, “Angolanos devem lutar pelos seus direitos.”
165. An anonymous comment in response to “Trabalhadores na ex RDA manifestem-se em Luanda,” VOA, March 27, 2014.
166. Wangolano comment responding to “Trabalhadores na ex RDA manifestem-se em Luanda,” VOA, March 27, 2014. See “Continua braço-de-ferro entre antigos trabalhadores da ex-RDA e MAPESS” by Kim Alves, n.d., no journal information.
167. For instance, the vigils in front of the labor ministry in February and March 2013. See Orlando Ferreira, “Dinheiro alemão ainda não foi pago,” *Agora*, February 23, 2013, 17; Kim Alves, “Antigos trabalhadores na ex-RDA querem intervenção do Presidente,” *Semanário Angolense*, April 27, 2013, 6; Kim Alves “Continua braço-de-ferro entre antigos trabalhadores da ex-RDA e MAPESS,” n.d, n.s.
168. The associations that defend the interests of former Angolan workers in Germany are called “Angogermany” and Associação de ex-trabalhadores angolanos na extinta RDA residents na diaspora, ASSOEXRTRA e.V. The organizations in Angola and Germany work independently, are registered separately in Germany and Angola respectively, and represent the diverging interests of the diaspora vs. returnees. Both in Angola and in Germany, the existing organizations split into those who were satisfied with the 2011 key agreement, including payment and pension (*Angogermany*, AEX-TAA Tala Hady), and those who continue to fight for more money (Assoextra and AEX-TAA Prenda). Interview with Miguel Cabango, President of Angolan workers in East Germany, in Lisa Optiz, “Haben die Hoffnung nicht aufgegeben,” TAZ, July 24, 2014.
169. Nádia Issufo, “Trabalhadores angolanos da ex-RDA voltam a manifestar-se em Berlim,” *DW*, December 5, 2014.
170. From the point of view of the Angolan Embassy in Berlin, *Angogermany* and the Embassy agreed upon payments according to the 2011 contract signed between the government and AEX-TAA. *Angogermany* was subsequently dissolved. Therefore, they regard ongoing demonstrations as

- inappropriate. See Christine Vieira Teixeira, “Antigos trabalhadores de Angola na ex-RDA reivindicam maior compensação,” *DW*, May 8, 2014.
171. Movement for peace and democracy in Angola, Movimento para a paz e a democracia em Angola (MPDA), “Três manifestantes dos ex-trabalhadores da extinta RDA preso em Luanda,” MPDA, February 11, 2011.
  172. Based on what is available on YouTube and in the press, MPDA, “Três manifestantes”; Issufo, “Trabalhadores angolanos”; Teixeira, “Antigos trabalhadores de Angola”; Lisa Optiz, “Haben die Hoffnung nicht aufgegeben,” *TAZ*, July 24, 2014; “Grande marcha dos ex-trabalhadores angolanos na RDA, 06 03 2015,” uploaded by Mpda Eu, YouTube, March 8, 2015; “Grande marcha dos ex-trabalhadores angolanos na RDA, 06 03 2015, 3,” uploaded by Mpda Eu, YouTube, March 8, 2015.
  173. Manuel José, “Trabalhadores angolanos da antiga RDA manifestam-se em Bruxelas,” *VOA*, June 4, 2015; N.a. “Antigos trabalhadores na ex-RDA manifestam-se em Bruxelas,” *VOA*, June 5, 2015. This latter article was cross-posted on the Mozambican blog “Moçambique para todos,” indicating some cross-fertilization of the goings on in Angola and Mozambique. There is, however, no concerted or institutionalized effort to keep the two movements informed of each other.
  174. Miguel, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 27, 2015.
  175. Comunidade Moçambicana na Alemanha e.V., Mozambican Community in Germany.
  176. CMA meeting in Berlin in December 13, 2014; CMA President Tito Truvinho, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 7, 2014. Most of these initiatives do not seem to have resulted in tangible outcomes.
  177. Sant’Egidio, a lay Catholic organization, led the negotiations between RENAMO and FRELIMO leading to the 1992 peace agreement in Mozambique. Also instrumental are the Lothar-Kreyssig-Ökumenezentrum of the protestant church of middle Germany (EKM) and the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany, as well as the Commissioner for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship in Saxony-Anhalt.
  178. The conference resulted in the Magdeburger Memorandum, “Magdeburger Memorandum der Tagung ‘Respekt und Anerkennung’ für mosambikanische Vertragsarbeiter\*innen, Madgermanes und Schüler\*innen der ‘Schule der Freundschaft’ im 30. Jahr der Friedlichen Revolution,” February 24, 2019.
  179. The international conference “Respect and Acknowledgement” took place in Magdeburg, Germany, from February 22 to 24, 2019.

180. Dr. António Frangoulis, speech delivered for the conference “Respect and Acknowledgement,” Feb. 22–24, 2019, [https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz\\_video/konferenz-video-1/](https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz_video/konferenz-video-1/), accessed January 1, 2021.
181. Günter Nooke, speech delivered for the conference “Respect and Acknowledgement,” Feb. 22–24, 2019, [https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz\\_video/die-position-der-bundesregierung/](https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz_video/die-position-der-bundesregierung/), accessed January 27, 2022.
182. Julião Armando Langa, speech delivered for the conference “Respect and Acknowledgement, Feb. 22–24, 2019,” [https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz\\_video/grussworte-der-mosambikanischen-botschaft/](https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/konferenz_video/grussworte-der-mosambikanischen-botschaft/), accessed January 27, 2022.
183. MP Dr. Diaby (SPD), debate on May 20, 2021, <https://www.bundestag.de/mediathek?videoid=7523226&url=L2l1ZGlhdGhla292ZXJsYXk=&mod=mediathek#url=L2l1ZGlhdGhla292ZXJsYXk/dmlkZW9pZ-D03NTIzMjI2JnVybD1MMjFsWkdsaGRHaGxhMjkyWlhKc1IYaz0mbW9kPWl1ZGlhdGhlaw==&mod=mediathek>, accessed January 27, 2022. MP Matthias Höhn (Die Linke), MP Katrin Budde (SPD) debating 30 years of German reunification on September 18, 2020; see <https://vertragsarbeit-mosambik-ddr.de/2020/11/26/test-beitrag-1/>, accessed January 10, 2022.
184. See the short documentary *DDR-Vertragsarbeiter warten auf Lohn*, Heute in Deutschland, 2 min, June 1, 2021, ZDF. Further research is needed on the exact modalities of the transfers and the debt relationship between Mozambique and East Germany, but the argument could tentatively be made that since East Germany profited from the labor power of foreign contract workers like the Mozambicans, it was richer on unification than it would have been, had it paid full wages, social security, and pension contributions to each foreign worker. This wealth can thus also be seen as benefiting unified Germany, making modern Germany also a beneficiary of the schemes and therefore complicit. Following this argument, this is more than a moral question.
185. At the time of writing, the open letter “Für Entschädigungszahlungen an die sogenannten Madgermanes” is still open to signatures.
186. The impact of the former migrants and their diaspora organization is but one way in which mobility constitute a process that continues to shape Mozambique; see Sheila Khan Pereira, Maria Paula Meneses, and Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, eds. *Mozambique on the Move: Challenges and Reflections* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).



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# Temporality, Memory, and Meaning: Eastalgia in Angola and Mozambique

## INTRODUCTION

It is 2014. The faded flag of the German Democratic Republic blows in the wind on a makeshift flagpole in the heart of Maputo. Although East Germany has long since ceased to exist, twenty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, 9000 kilometers to the south, a group of former worker-trainees raises its flag every day. The emblem of the hammer and compass, surrounded by a ring of rye, has become a common sight for those walking the streets of the Mozambican capital (Fig. 7.1). In Mozambique, it symbolizes the returnees' faith that their youth, and the beliefs that sustained them in the past, will yet be redeemed. It has been a long wait. Those who fly the flag are mostly in their fifties and sixties. For some, it is a waning faith, but for almost all this faith relates to a deep and nostalgic longing for their East German past. This longing for the past is inseparable from dreams of a better future.

On most Wednesday mornings a group of the former Mozambican contract workers widely known as *madjerman*, who worked and trained in

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**Fig. 7.1** Juma under the East German Flag in the park of the *madjerman* in Maputo in February 2014. Source: Photo taken by the author



East Germany from 1979 to 1990, gathers under the flag in the Jardim 28 de Maio in the vicinity of the labor ministry. The park has become colloquially known as the park of the *madjerman*.<sup>1</sup> The *madjerman* have occupied the park since the early 1990s. The offices of the “central base of the *madjerman*” are in the park’s public toilets (Fig. 7.2). A few members gather every day to set up shop, drink, exchange gossip, support each other, and plan future events. Wednesday demonstrations against the Mozambican government, inspired by the East German Monday Demonstrations, start with communal prayers at the headquarters. Donning German flags, soccer caps, t-shirts, and all sorts of German apparel, the group makes for an odd picture as they march singing and dancing through the streets of Maputo. They are demanding payment of social security benefits and outstanding wages from the Mozambican



**Fig. 7.2** The *Base Central*, office, and central congregation space for the *mad-german* in Maputo, in the Jardim 28 de Maio (Garden of the 28th of May) in August 2011. Since the photo was taken, the park has become gentrified. Source: Photo taken by the author

government that were in part withheld during the 1980s. After two decades, protest has become a way of life for many in this group. If you stop and take the time to speak to any of the protesters, you will soon be told nostalgically about the golden times in East Germany and learn how the former migrants draw on their experience abroad to aspire to similar living and working conditions at home.

The nostalgic narratives shared by many former migrants to East Germany diverge markedly from a standard description of life in the Soviet Bloc, which is more often depicted as drab and restrictive.<sup>2</sup> Not without reason, we more usually hear about East Germany as a country of monotonous rows of prefabricated concrete housing blocks, Trabant cars, barbed wire, black and white news, omnipresent Stasi officials, and the Wall.<sup>3</sup> Life in this gloomy place is frequently portrayed as especially unattractive for

the Cubans, Vietnamese, Mongolians, Chinese, Algerians, Angolans, and Mozambicans who were visibly identifiable as foreigners.<sup>4</sup> This one-dimensional view of East Germany is not, however, shared by many of the Angolans and Mozambicans who lived and worked there during the 1980s.

Strikingly, the retrospective images that these migrants paint of their life and work in drab East Germany are often conspicuously colorful. Rather than long hours of toiling on factory floors, many Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees recount warm friendships, swirling parties, opulent consumption, and youthful hipness during their sojourns in East Germany. The legacies of their migration remain a daily feature of many returnees' lives. The East German flag continues to fly over the park of the *madjerman* in Maputo. This park also serves as the headquarters of the main organization of returned worker-trainees and a place where workers greet each other with *Freundschaft*—a socialist greeting meaning friendship—and a knock on the table, as they learned in East Germany.

As *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* has made abundantly clear, there was more to the migratory experience than “fun because we were young and we always had money in our pockets.”<sup>5</sup> Long-term family separation, routinized hard work, the challenges of learning a new language, and cultural, climatic, and culinary adjustments were part of everyday life. In the late 1980s, racism was on the rise and violence increasingly became part of foreign worker-trainees' lived reality as it also fell to them to contribute with up to 60 percent of their wages to working off their home country's debts to East Germany. However, longing for parts of their East German lives remains an important part of worker-trainees' memories. This chapter, and book, is colored by memories of experiences in a world I cannot replicate and do not wish to validate socially, politically, or otherwise. I am not invested in glorifying the socialist projects in East Germany, Mozambique, or Angola. I do not set out to rehabilitate the East German dictatorship or to suggest that it was virtuous.<sup>6</sup> Rather than treating these playful memories of East Germany as exceptions to a broader darker narrative, I read these voices as an opportunity to question not only how and what the former workers remember, but also why.<sup>7</sup> The point of this chapter is not to establish a set of facts. It is to explore the fascinating overlap between temporalities that memory achieves. There is an interplay in the minds of the *madjerman* between their German past and their Mozambican past, present, and future, and this interplay says something about all those things. Exploring these

interplays is at the center of what I am trying to do in *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World*.

The first part of this chapter deals with nostalgia and explores the workings of a particular form of nostalgia, namely eastalgia, in relation to the workers' pasts, presents, and futures.<sup>8</sup> The second part then relates this nostalgia, with its multiple temporalities, to the life cycle approach which I have adopted in this book. It simultaneously looks back and out to place the labor migrations into their historic context and a global perspective. We have repeatedly explored in this book the interface between past, present, and future in people's memories, and how the narratives that people tell about themselves and their past lives reflect all three of these things. Nostalgia is therefore the perfect theme with which to finish this book, as it encompasses so much of what I am trying to say. It is a particular relationship between memory and emotion, not only a descriptor, but also an analytic tool that allows for understanding the memories of the returned migrants as an emotional critique of Angola's and Mozambique's economic development since 1990. In a sense, Angolan and Mozambican migrants were time travelers. If we conceive of economic development as an inevitable linear process that affects all countries sooner or later, as conceived of by Marxist and modernization theory, we can get at what this means. Traveling geographically to the more developed East Germany meant for the migrants that they were traveling forward in time. By working in the industrialized East German economy, they had been to Mozambique's and Angola's futures. Returning was therefore for them like going back in time, and a brutal disappointment as they saw not only that Mozambique and Angola had not traveled along the supposedly inexorable path to socialist development but that they were in fact giving up on the idea of even trying. Many of the migrants have spent much of the rest of their lives longing for a future that never happened. They went to the future, came back to the present, expecting to help take their homes forward in time, but ended up stranded in the past. Worker-trainees had mainly left with two broad objectives: to gain the skills to help build and industrialize their country, and to become upwardly socially mobile through the knowledge gained abroad. Both expectations were dashed. Many former migrants were left with nostalgic memories of a youth that never was and dreams of a future that was not to be. This temporal rupture has colored their memories since.

PART I: EASTALGIA—THE PAST IN THE PRESENT  
FOR THE FUTURE

*Longing in Mozambique and Angola: Post-Socialist Nostalgia,  
Ostalgie, and Eastalgia*

In the landscape of memories of the global socialist moment, Angola and Mozambique are two of many underexplored territories. Much work remains before we have an acceptably full picture of the myriad of ways in which people across the world remember socialism and relate it to their post-socialist lives. So far, scholarship has primarily engaged with Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the study of post-socialist nostalgia sparked a literature boom examining its relationship to the economy, politics, and time.<sup>9</sup> These three themes resonate with the Angolan and Mozambican memories discussed here. Nostalgia for some aspects of communism does not automatically correspond to a wish to reinstate a previous regime. In Angola and in Mozambique, just as in other Central and Eastern European countries, nostalgia for a socialist past is not a binary discourse. Most people have an ambivalent attitude toward the past. In Germany, nostalgia for aspects of East German life has become such a widespread phenomenon that it has brought forth its own name, *Ostalgie*, a portmanteau denoting longing for the East (*Ost* being the German word for east and *Nostalgie* meaning nostalgia).<sup>10</sup> It describes the relationships of former East Germans with East German consumer culture, even as most of the surviving eastern brands are now produced in former West Germany. The term has become a lens for understanding the subtle lingering of East German legacies in the reunified Germany, ranging from an analysis of counter-memory to East German sexuality and the East German fashion industry.<sup>11</sup> In *Ostalgie International*—a collection of academic voices and eyewitness accounts written by East Germans who traveled around the socialist world and socialist world citizens who sojourned in East Germany—*Ostalgie* broke out of its German straight-jacket.<sup>12</sup> This emerging map of international longing for aspects of socialist life leads us through the varied memoryscape of people who lived in and traveled between socialist countries around the world. They remember dreams of development, consumer goods, and memories of a different life including scarcity but also security and predictability.<sup>13</sup> Some of these memories are shared privately; others are publicly displayed as group reminiscences.

Talking about post-socialist nostalgia and *Ostalgie* brings into focus feelings of longing for a past that is often negatively perceived by others. In an effort by post-socialist regimes to distance themselves from their pasts, the socialist legacy is often silenced, as in the case of Mozambique, or hotly debated, as in the German post-reunification discourse.<sup>14</sup> Post-socialist nostalgia, *Ostalgie*, refers to ways of speaking about the positively experienced aspects of socialist regimes. However, in this book I refer to the anglicization of *Ostalgie*, eastalgia. To my knowledge, this is my coinage. I do this because the eastalgia which I encountered when interviewing people for this book has several differences to *Ostalgie* as it is usually manifested and described. Whereas German *Ostalgie* is to a large extent associated with people's relationships with consumer brands, this is not the case for Mozambican or Angolan nostalgia. Eastalgia has much more to do with the experience of migration, which for obvious reasons does not feature much in *Ostalgie*. Furthermore, eastalgia functions more than *Ostalgie* as a criticism of the present. Many former East Germans hold deep reservations about what has become of unified Germany—as evidenced by the recent rise of the far-right political party the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, or AfD) in the German states that were formerly in the East—but they do not, as a whole, express this through a longing for the past in the way that I saw in Mozambique and Angola. Furthermore, for former worker-trainees, eastalgia is a form of claim-making. It justifies why the former workers should be compensated for the earnings that they never received after their return home. There has been a complete divergence in experience since 1990 for German *Ostalgie* and Mozambican and Angolan eastalgests. Above all, I feel that it is more appropriate to use the anglicization in an English-language book, as using the German loan word implies that it is a German phenomenon. Of course, in this case, it is not: it is a Mozambican and Angolan phenomenon. There are therefore both theoretical and linguistic reasons for my coinage and use of eastalgia.<sup>15</sup>

People who experience or express eastalgia or *Ostalgie* are usually not expressing a political wish to return to pre-1990 socialism. Both types of nostalgia bring into focus a partially remembered reality, as they filter out the negative aspects of life under socialist regimes. As with all visions of a rose-tinted past, they are a blueprint of perfection against which to measure the imperfect present. The present will always fall short. In fact, it is precisely because the present falls short that the past appears so enticing. As we will see, the former Angolan and Mozambican labor migrants



express longing for aspects of East Germany, the People's Republic of Mozambique, and the People's Republic of Angola. Many continue to feel disappointed by the contours of their lives in the post-socialist world they came to inhabit.

*The East German Past Through Mozambican and Angolan Eyes:  
"A World Full of Roses"*<sup>16</sup>

Integral to both socialist and capitalist modernization projects was what philosopher Susan Buck-Morss calls "the dream of the twentieth century." This dream "dared to imagine a social world in alliance with personal happiness, and promised to adults that its realization would be in harmony with the overcoming of scarcity for all."<sup>17</sup> The worker-trainees' reintegration into southern Africa by the early 1990s coincided with an academic decline in the belief in the twentieth century's linear modernization project, marking the arrival of the postmodern world.<sup>18</sup> Yet such a narrative lives on in the imaginations of many worker-trainees.<sup>19</sup> Their lived experience in East Germany shaped their expectations of linear development through industrialization.

Some of the interviewees' eastalgia is expressed as longing for a dream of development. As an advanced and modern socialist state, for the workers East Germany was a model of what the socialist future might hold for their own nascent socialist countries. According to the developmentalist paradigms to which socialist governments wholeheartedly subscribed (though it was not only socialists who believed in linear development at that time, it must be said), instead of time traveling to see what the future or past held, one could simply travel to places in different stages of development.<sup>20</sup> One could travel to developmentally "backward" places to understand earlier forms of development. Consequently, traveling to Europe from Africa meant traveling to the future. As global travelers, Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees did not only change their geographic location; in their understanding, they could also travel through time along the linear path to development on the map of modernization.<sup>21</sup>

The flight to East Germany catapulted worker-trainees from recently independent, emerging socialist states struggling to assert themselves economically, politically, and socially, to the most developed actually existing socialist dictatorship in the heart of Europe. Angola and Mozambique faced multifarious issues including a host of negative developmental effects

on their economies and infrastructure, including the Portuguese mass exodus and sabotage acts, internal political rivalries, regional power battles, and Cold War geopolitics resulting in proxy war. Witnessing organized public infrastructure and an industrialized consumer culture, migrants often describe their physical arrival in East Germany as their first plunge into modernity. Jaime pointedly contrasts his Mozambican and East German experiences:

We landed in a foreign country, which nevertheless smelled like flowers and made us, who were used to the smell of gunpowder, dizzy. The smell, the clean cities, the well-lit cities. We smelled the flowers right upon leaving the plane because our hosts welcomed us with bunches of flowers in their hands.<sup>22</sup>

The worker-trainees' longing is both a temporal longing for the past and a migrant's longing for a geographically distant place, forever frozen in time and remembered as seen through rose-tinted spectacles.

Underlying many eastalgic memories is the dream of a specific form of modernity, namely, of socialist industrial development. Many worker-trainees were introduced to the concept of socialist development during their education at home, and by the promises of their governments, and their commitment to this ideal was solidified during their time in East Germany. They were fascinated by the trappings of East German socialism, including entitlements such as housing, health care, public transport, and secure working conditions with reliable wages. While some workers had already critically eyed socialism in East Germany, all were rudely awakened from their socialist dream after returning to their war-torn nations, which had turned away from socialist state-led development at the end of the Cold War era. Returnees were left with a bitter taste in their mouths when confronted with the failure of the socialist path to development both personally and as a nation.

Both eastalgia and *Ostalgie* partly relate to consumption. However, while *Ostalgie* has to do with a preference for Eastern brands, eastalgia is for consumption as an activity. East Germans now living in the Federal Republic have few restrictions on the consumption options available to them. By contrast, for the African returnees, such as Lopes, East Germany meant economic freedom to consume that was lost on return: "We had money in our pockets and were able to buy what we wanted."<sup>23</sup> Inocêncio remembers East Germany as a consumer paradise because he could afford Western consumer goods, a predilection partially inspired by the

consumption of Western media: “It was in Germany...where I walked my first steps in paradise in Nikes and jeans like a black American.”<sup>24</sup> Miguel recalls his time in Germany as “a happy time,” a more predictable time when life was easier to organize because rules governed all aspects of life:

I would like to return to that life. There was none of that annoyance of having to run around looking for things everywhere because the things we needed were there and we knew how to go about getting what we needed or to whom to turn with a problem.<sup>25</sup>

Miguel’s depiction contrasts with the familiar image of state-socialist economies as places of scarcity and the inevitable long lines of people trying to obtain goods. These quotes show how experiences of the poverty or abundance of consumer culture in East Germany were relative and depended on the background of the observer. Most East Germans judged their offerings of consumer items against those of West Germany and believed themselves to be living in a context of scarcity. But foreign worker-trainees whose reference point was the global South, especially countries marked by warfare such as Angola, Mozambique, or Vietnam, experienced the opposite.<sup>26</sup> Longing for their East German consumer experience is fueled by the marginalization that many former workers face today.

Both *Ostalgie* and eastalists are nostalgic for what they remember as a secure and comfortable life centered on consumer socialism.<sup>27</sup> Quite a few returnees still possess German memorabilia such as postcards, photos, drinking glasses, and flags that they display prominently in their houses.<sup>28</sup> As we learned in the previous chapter, most had to part with the more valuable goods they imported during their difficult reintegration process. Gone is the comfort of TVs, fridges, stoves, motorbikes, and, just as importantly, the status that owning such goods conveyed. The fathers and grandfathers of some of the migrants had worked in the South African mines and invested their earnings in household goods like cloth, clothes, shoes, sewing machines, plows, bikes, tractors, and cars. Decades later, migrants brought back goods to establish their own households, including tables, chairs, dishes, bedding, motorbikes, cars, records, stereo equipment, TVs, movies, and books. The centrality of consumer items and the status migrants acquired through European goods is a historical constant in southern African labor migrations.<sup>29</sup> The returnees’ relationship with

their East German goods was subordinate to their need to survive. What the migrants were left with was not physical but psychological.

Another aspect of eastalgie longing has to do with mobility. As socialist cosmopolitans, returnees had greatly broadened their horizons.<sup>30</sup> State-socialist labor migrations were an example of what Christina Schwenkel terms “socialist mobilities.”<sup>31</sup> Migration exchanges created a landscape of memories and shared experiences. How these experiences were interpreted depended on one’s vantage point, whether one was in the global South/Third World or the global East/Second World. This is demonstrated by the commonalities and differences between eastalgie in Mozambique and Angola and *Ostalgie* in Germany.

Angolan and Mozambican workers were mobile inside East Germany and in Europe after German reunification. Gaspar contrasted what he remembered as a time of mobility to stasis in Angola. There was an irony in this because legally there were many more controls over his mobility in East Germany than in modern Angola, but the reality of his lives in these two countries was a complete reversal of this. His mobility in Germany was made possible through relatively generous wages and functional public infrastructure, both factors absent in his present life: “When we were in Germany, I just bought a ticket to see my brother-in-law in Czechoslovakia and I went from Berlin to Munich, but since I returned [to Luanda], I have not left this place and that makes me feel as if I am imprisoned.”<sup>32</sup> Memories like these highlight how many workers recall their sojourn as highly mobile, despite being restricted from travel to the West prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This stands in sharp contrast to their immobile lives at home, enforced by poverty and the paucity of transport options there. Post-socialist globalization has not really brought about a more interconnected world for these migrants. Rather, it has fragmented and ruptured the world they operated in up to 1990.<sup>33</sup> Many find themselves marginalized, unable to traverse continents and countries as they did in their youth, and they feel isolated.

Nostalgia for one’s youth is common in all peoples across the world.<sup>34</sup> Many worker-trainees in Angola and Mozambique frame their sojourn overseas in terms of life stages. Regina speaks in one of her poems of “Germany, the cradle of our birth,” alluding to the deep impact the temporary stay had on some workers as they were forming their personal identities.<sup>35</sup> Probably this had something to do with the young age—late teens to early twenties—of many of the migrants. In Augusto’s words: “It was great. Germany made me a man. I learned how to live on my own and take

more responsibility for life.”<sup>36</sup> For many worker-trainees, especially those who left as teenagers, straight from school, or in their early twenties, the transcontinental journey was a journey into adulthood and financial and geographic independence.<sup>37</sup> We might compare their nostalgia with other people’s nostalgia for their university years or for the time they spent traveling before settling down to permanent careers. It was exciting; the world seemed full of opportunities; it was different to what they had experienced before and what they would experience afterwards. For Gaspar, the advantages of being young in East Germany outweighed the disadvantages:

I consider it a pleasure to have been young in [East] Germany because the social standing of youth in society was good. We had basic rights concerning our training and workspace and we had a right to lodging and healthcare. ... We were also under surveillance. If we didn’t go to school or work, our group leader knocked on our doors and asked what happened. We were very irresponsible not least because we had money. ... We had practically everything in Germany.<sup>38</sup>

Many Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees spent the defining years of their youth in East Germany. They fell in love, started families of their own, and established close friendships with East German families. Through these intense interpersonal and intercultural experiences, they to some extent became “Germanized.” They also left traces abroad. Today, a generation of Afro-Germans can trace their fathers to Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees. Though in many cases all physical contact has been lost, emotional ties bind the workers and their memories to East Germany.

I do not intend to portray eastalgia as a naïve dream, a deception, or simply a product of the imagination. Far from it. The fact that eastalgia is almost universal among those whom I interviewed suggests that something profound is going on. Nostalgia is an emotional—and some would say rational—response to the complex changes in various environments that migrants experienced. Longing stems from the suffering induced by separation from a child, from a spouse or a lover, from friends and colleagues. In this case it is a result of big differences in living conditions, infrastructure, and general economic development between sending and receiving countries. Both Angola and Mozambique were engulfed in protracted armed regional conflicts during the years of the worker-trainee programs.<sup>39</sup> As socialist cosmopolitans, returnees continue to long for the

unfulfilled promise of modernity that they felt they were working toward in the 1980s. They decry the lack of egalitarian development at home, but they do not necessarily wish to return to socialism or Germany. Rather, they wish that Angola or Mozambique could adopt some of the positive things they remember from their stay in Europe.

In retrospect, East Germany appears in the brightest of colors, assuming in some interviews an idealized status that it can only retain because returning is impossible economically, geographically, and temporally: “If they told me to choose a country to live, I would clearly choose Germany!”<sup>40</sup> This remains a hypothetical situation and therefore one that can be freely imagined.<sup>41</sup> The country of their memory is forever lost and probably never existed in the way they evoke it. The temporal return to the migrants’ youth is impossible; the transcontinental journey unaffordable; and East Germany no longer exists. In many interviews, the loss of paradise and the loss of youth go hand in hand.

### *Back to the Future: Mozambican Post-Socialist Nostalgic Critiques of the Government*

This section examines the Mozambican version of eastalgia, which critiques the present-day government in two ways. Firstly, it does so by comparing the former worker-trainees’ lives after their return to Mozambique to their lives in East Germany. Secondly, it looks at how eastalgia manifests itself through a longing for the former Mozambican leader Samora Machel. Today, eastalgia is an anachronistic annoyance for the FRELIMO government. The Mozambican government has long moved on from the socialist development dream that it had held when concocting its worker-trainee scheme.

Mozambican former worker-trainees deploy positive memories of East Germany as a criticism of what they perceive as the failed modernization project in Mozambique. This perspective is certainly true for the *madjerman* activists who draw on such narratives when they articulate their claims to non-*madjerman*, such as me. But this is equally the case for social events such as family gatherings and the groups of workers who assemble in the park after work. And it also held true for reminiscences shared by non-activists in interviews with me. As far as I can discern, nostalgia for East Germany as a criticism of modern Mozambique is almost universal among *madjerman*. Where post-reunification histories often see

decay and underdevelopment in East Germany, Luís saw communist Germany as a progressive and livable alternative:

You cannot compare Maputo and [former East] German cities. There is just simply no comparison. Look around and you will see garbage everywhere [in Maputo]. ...Nothing works here, and everything has been decaying since independence even here in the city of cement. ...No, you cannot compare that with the clean, modern, well-lit, and organized [East] German cities.<sup>42</sup>

Rather than describing actual lived realities, Luís employed an exaggerated anachronistic comparison, emphasizing both the decay of modern Maputo and the modernity of East Germany's cities to give weight to his criticism of Mozambican underdevelopment. The fact that I am German might have played a role not only in his embellished description of German cities but also his use of independence as caesura. But more so, these were comments that returnees made among each other from the perspective of socialist cosmopolitans. What is left unsaid is that inner cities in colonial Mozambique and perhaps to a lesser extent in East Germany were predominantly white spaces from which Africans as customers and inhabitants were excluded and to which they had access only temporarily through labor.

*Madjerman* also often talk about an idealized past East German society to criticize the current Mozambican government's failed integration of the approximately 12,300 migrants who were repatriated in the early 1990s.<sup>43</sup> This was apparent in Adevaldo's accusation:

Ah! I experienced beautiful times in Germany, a country that welcomed me, gave me hope for a better life with work. Hope that was taken from me in my own country because there was no compensation for my hard and honest work. We only experienced contempt, beatings, and inhumane treatment because here we are only poor workers from Germany, just slaves of those governing, who stole from us.<sup>44</sup>

Memories are mediated through the present. If the injustices of the East German labor environment remain suppressed in such comments, it does not mean that such injustices did not exist, only that such a differentiated view would weaken the critique made of the Mozambican government today. In addition, the East German experience was far less immediate than their post-return lives, so that the post-return grievances seem so much sharper to the *madjerman* than any wrongs or grievances they had

suffered in East Germany.<sup>45</sup> Another important aspect may be that although things were often tough for them in Germany, they still felt in control of their lives. They were young, they were doing things which many of their compatriots could not even dream of, and their general trajectories were upward, even if there were short-term frustrations or things that were upsetting. After their return in 1990, it became much harder to tell themselves a narrative of progression and progress.

The critique of the present FRELIMO government also includes for many former migrants a nostalgic longing for President Samora Machel—or at least, an idealized version of him. The figure of Machel is bound up in the promise of a young, socialist post-independent Mozambique with high hopes of development and equality.<sup>46</sup> President Joaquim Chissano (1986–2005), the president following upon Machel’s untimely death in a suspicious plane crash in South Africa in 1986, abandoned both the socialist project in Mozambique and the memory of Samora Machel in a process M. Anne Pitcher has described as “organized forgetting.”<sup>47</sup> Yet, President Armando Guebuza (2005–2015) realized the power that Samora Machel still held and resurrected his memory as romanticized symbol. The nostalgia for a lionized Machel is shared by many a Mozambican from *madjer-man* to rappers. As Janne Rantala argues in the context of contemporary Maputo rap, Samora Machel is remembered as “the great modernizer of his time” and “the people’s ally in the struggle against present-day injustices.”<sup>48</sup> This we see reflected in Juma’s words:

I remember those days. It was a calmer time. The country was clean. Today the country might have developed but it is dirty and unorganized. ...Samora Machel loved his people. He was the only president that had a love for his nation, his people. For the country, for the infrastructure, for everything. This country used to smell of perfume, of cologne.<sup>49</sup>

The key to nostalgia for Machel’s era was its forward-looking promise of development. President Samora Machel’s vision for an alternative Mozambican socialist modernity left a deep impression on many of the young Mozambican migrants, several of whom claimed to have met him personally. Idolized by many interviewees as the father of the nation, Machel is also a highly contested figure, and the methods and results of his push toward socialism and modernity were often far from benign.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, many worker-trainees who returned to Mozambique share



an uncritical glorified sentimentality toward their founding father with many other Mozambicans.<sup>51</sup>

Comparing eastalga with black South Africans' nostalgia for apartheid is instructive for understanding what is going on. In *Native Nostalgia*, Jacob Dlamini writes that it is both "illuminating and unsettling to hear ordinary South Africans cast their memories of the past in such a nostalgic frame" but that "[t]hese are people for whom the present is not the land of milk and honey, the past not one vast desert of doom and gloom, and the ancient past not one happy-go-lucky era. For many, the past is a bit of this, the present a bit of that and the future hopefully a mix of this, that and more."<sup>52</sup>

By engaging nostalgic memories under apartheid, Dlamini sought to challenge the depiction of faceless struggling masses central to a South African master narrative of black dispossession. Similarly, taking the Mozambican migrants' memories seriously, and acknowledging the richness and complexities of Mozambican life in East Germany, challenges simplistic narratives of East German exploitation of foreign workers. Moreover, Dlamini's work shows the ahistoricism of teleological narratives which assume an ever-better future. He shows that people's experience is much more complex than the official periodization dividing South African history into a negative experience of the apartheid past and a positive experience of the rainbow present. If this is true for South Africa, it is also the case for its regional neighbors, Angola and Mozambique. The colonial past is not uniformly remembered as evil. The government may have been unrepresentative, racist, and exploitative, but people still lived, loved, and succeeded with their lives. Similarly, the socialist governments in East Germany, Angola, and Mozambique all had exploitative tendencies and continued to dominate the people in whose name they were supposed to govern. In East Germany, African workers were exposed to racism and exploitation and treated as intimate strangers, and yet, as we have seen, positive memories are shared about these times, memories that run counter to certain narratives of liberation or exploitation. These memories are also valid because they demonstrate the complexity of the lives of people who were victims but also so much more.

Positive memories can further work as a critique of the present.<sup>53</sup> Listening to the returned workers, we see that the returnees, too, are employing their eastalga for political criticism of their present. Even as FRELIMO turned away from the socialist revolution, socialism lived on in workers' recollections of it in East Germany. They continue to try to hold

the government accountable for their expectations through various public measures ranging from legal recourse to regular demonstrations in the capital. Against all odds, many returned worker-trainees still believe in Samora Machel's socialist revolution. They still wait in anticipation for the government to make good on its promise to provide them with appropriate work and repay their wages.

### *Eastalgic Memoryscapes in Angola and Mozambique*

Kathleen Stewart reminds us that nostalgia is “a cultural practice, not a given content; its forms, meanings and effects shift with the context—it depends on where the speaker stands in the landscape of the present.”<sup>54</sup> In the light of this, the two brands of eastalgia seen in Angola and in Mozambique are not quite the same. However, there are important similarities. Both Angolan and Mozambican migrants grew up under Portuguese rule in the late colonial period and came of age in the time immediately after independence when the countries were embroiled in civil war. Both groups went to East Germany to work and train, and both returned steeped in East German socialism just as their home countries left socialism behind. Based on similar horizons of experiences, we might assume that the nature of nostalgic longing would be similar.<sup>55</sup> It is in many ways, but not all.

While Angola and Mozambique share many themes in their histories, they are different countries with distinct economic, political, cultural, and social contexts. Accordingly, even within the same spatial and temporal contexts, I found different responses to the past. A country-level analysis is of course a rough generalization. Nevertheless, in what follows, I analyze how expressions of eastalgia differ in the two countries.

The Mozambican worker-trainees engage in a multitemporal form of nostalgia: their fantasy is turned backwards, toward the unreachable. They cannot turn back time to their youth, and the promise of contributing to the Mozambican industrial revolution. Their relatively worry-free existence of comparative material comfort in East Germany has gone and is irretrievable. They are acutely aware of the present as a product of their past. Identifying as *madjerman* means belonging to an active countrywide social group whose connections were forged during a shared experience abroad, but it also means carrying the stigma of political agitators. Moreover, *madjerman* face the future as an aspirational dream. They envision a future in which they will receive enough money from the

government to allow them to establish a comfortable material life once again.

Nostalgic longing in Angola, by contrast, is mono-temporal and looks backward. In the absence of a critical mass of returned workers from East Germany, their identity as former worker-trainees is not so crucial to their present. There is no collective name by which the workers are known, and they are not a vocal group in the country's landscape of political opposition in the way the *madjerman* are. While they are also successfully engaging the government regarding compensation, their fight is a more technical and partially successful one. The presence of campaigning groups does not extend beyond the capital. Internal criticism of the government is muted but the Angolan diaspora protests publicly in Europe.

The Mozambican migrants' longing is also multi-local, encompassing notions of being at home and abroad as distinct categories. To be *madjerman* is to be abroad at home and at home abroad. Their eastalgic longing is for their sojourn abroad, where they enjoyed a better life before returning home. The Jardim 28 de Maio in downtown Maputo—the park of the *madjerman*, the *madjerman* headquarters, Madjerman Republic, or the university of the *madjerman*, depending on the context—is in 2014 portrayed as a physical safe space, where “the rules and regulations of Mozambique no longer apply and we live according to our rules.”<sup>56</sup> This is, of course, a fiction. The occupation of the park is only possible because the Mozambican government turns a blind eye to it. Nevertheless, the park is an expression of displacement, an incongruent simultaneity echoing their identity, neither fully Mozambican nor German, but *madjerman*. It is quite visibly a bricolage of experiences, memories, and artifacts from East Germany and Mozambique (Fig. 7.2).

The Angolan workers, by contrast, are more firmly rooted in their Angolan identity. Even those Angolans who live abroad today invoke their patriotism and allegiance to their *Angolanidade* in their protests.<sup>57</sup> This might be because many Angolans stayed less than the contract period of four years due to their relatively late arrival, starting in 1985, when the East German economy began to struggle more, and the country became increasingly xenophobic. The timing of Angolan migration did not help them identify with East Germany's society to the same extent as Mozambicans, particularly those of the first generation from 1979, some of whom stayed for up to a decade.

Moreover, quite a few Angolan migrants were already older, in their mid- to late twenties, and came to East Germany after serving in the

military or pursuing other professions; their migration was therefore less emotionally formative. Finally, more Angolan than Mozambican migrants whom I interviewed subsequently attempted to migrate again, mostly as asylum claimants to unified Germany, to Portugal or other European countries, or to South Africa and Namibia. Therefore, their comparatively short East German stint did not assume such a central place in their life narratives as it did for many Mozambicans.

Eastalgia in Mozambique is created in the interplay between personal and collective memory. A key part of it serves to reinforce the *madjerman* identity, and the *madjerman* identity reinforces eastalgia in turn. Individual reminiscing occurs in the form of taking out and displaying photo albums, friendship books, magazines, and other memorabilia from East Germany. Such acts help to maintain a thread between past and present by tying their experiences abroad to their lives back home. They also share memories when they meet in friendship groups or at formal gatherings. Reminiscing together, then, becomes a communal act of belonging. Reminiscing is associated with emotions ranging from pride to disappointment. There is pride at having migrated, but anger and disappointment about the failed reintegration.

As a result, communal longing for East Germany has become a relational concept.<sup>58</sup> It situates individuals in a countrywide web, linking *madjerman* across time and space. Regardless of the origin or generation of a particular worker, the identity links them together. Sometimes being a *madjerman* is helpful for business relationships, but mostly the common identity is used as a framework for political activism. This network is tentatively spreading beyond Mozambique, including former workers and allies residing in Germany.<sup>59</sup> This kind of connection is not the case in Angola, where, as we have seen, a much smaller number of worker-trainees were sent to East Germany and there is no equivalent formalized national support structure. Given the politically repressive nature of the country, the Angolan diaspora in Europe has had more opportunity to protest. These protests employ a language of human rights and anti-corruption but not of eastalgia. Group identity is limited, and reminiscing takes place, above all, in the private sphere.

Eastalgia such as it exists in Angola is private, but in Mozambique it is both private and public. Some *madjerman* have published essays or memoirs.<sup>60</sup> There are related productions at the German cultural center in Maputo and beyond.<sup>61</sup> Through their artistic contributions and literary presence, *madjerman* have slowly carved out a space for their history

within broader national histories.<sup>62</sup> Nothing similar appears to exist in Angola.<sup>63</sup> The *madjerma*'s nostalgic longing is also political. The public anger voiced in the regular demonstrations of activists in Maputo arises from deception, dispossession, disempowerment, and disenchantment with the state as a provider of public goods or wages. It also emerges from alienation from post-socialist Mozambican development practices. While in this context eastalgic longing might be read as escapist, false consciousness, naiveté, or simply a feeling of longing, I read it as social critique. Eastalgia is profoundly political with its dreams of modernity, development, and consumption.

Svetlana Boym distinguishes between reflective and restorative nostalgia, the former emphasizing reconstruction, and the latter simply a longing from which no further action needs to follow.<sup>64</sup> Here lies the major difference between the Mozambican and Angolan case studies. While both case studies engage in reflective nostalgia that involves reminiscing about past times, the Mozambican form of eastalgia also performs a restorative function, namely the critique of government in the hope of creating change. The restoration is largely a potential one, the hope of changing their lives to resemble the material and working lives they remember, or increasingly for a peaceful old age. The former worker-trainees' current circumstances largely reflect those they left behind before migrating abroad. Their hopes for social upward mobility were short lived.<sup>65</sup>

## PART II: CLOSING POINTS—THE LABOR MIGRATION PROGRAMS

### *Modernity and Temporality*

When the returned worker who lives in the pictured bedroom in Maputo goes to sleep, the last thing he might see before closing his eyes is the East German flag decorating his room. In addition to his memories, this worker has held on to a few goods like a stove, TV, and vinyl records from his time in East Germany (Fig. 7.3). He is unwilling to relinquish these items that remind him of the “modern” life he once lived. The shared object of longing among Angolans and Mozambicans whom I interviewed is modernity, loosely defined as well-being, equality, progress, political stability, and economic development. The former worker-trainees measure this dream of modernity against their lived experiences in East Germany, and against



Fig. 7.3 The bedroom of a returned worker. Source: Malte Wandel, *Einheit, Arbeit, Wachsamkeit*, n.p

their experiences during the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique and their (mostly) failed reintegration into post-conflict economies. Few former worker-trainees have become part of Mozambique's new middle classes. The Angolans have fared marginally better. In this context, drawing on positive memories of East Germany must be seen in the light of the difficult reintegration workers subsequently experienced.

Eastalgia provides the means for critiquing persistent inequality and precariousness. The dictum of forgetting the ruling party's socialist past, as Pitcher has insightfully pointed out, leads to a double negation of the past.<sup>66</sup> There is little knowledge in the public realm about the socialist past outside of official party interpretations. However, even official party interpretations are now silenced as part of the reinvention process undertaken by parties that have been in power since independence.<sup>67</sup> Yet, as Pitcher observes, against this forgetting from above, some workers and peasants

continue to draw on language and practices familiar to them from socialist Mozambique to negotiate the demands of the market economy.<sup>68</sup> And as explored above, President Samora Machel has been reified as the hero of many different people in Mozambique. The returnees also continue to draw on their experiences under socialism to justify demands. They do not, however, simply draw just on comparisons with the Angolan and Mozambican past; they also use comparisons with East Germany. Their nostalgia is at once part of a global socialist sphere of ideas and very localized.

Angola and Mozambique did not industrialize as had been the plan and therefore had little use for the labor power of many returnees. However, the migrants' stay abroad influenced their home countries in unexpected ways. The profound developmental differences that the migrants lived, the experience of loss in their countries of origin, and the nature and timing of migrant projects are all crucial reasons why eastalgia remains prevalent. The *madjerman's* eastalgia cannot solely be understood as unreflective dreaming of an idealized past of safety, consumerism, and emotional relationships. The migration experience has become a motor for critiquing Mozambique's failed development and for envisioning an alternative future. Eastalgia conjures an alternative past in which Machel's promise of a socialist utopia was a guiding light for the country. By contrast, most of the Angolans' sense of longing is expressed individually and remembered as a personal recollection mostly focused on the past.

Envisioning the possibility of an alternative present is a legacy of the Angolan and Mozambican migrations. In East Germany, they encountered the future they envisioned for Angola and Mozambique. Eastalgia is not only for East Germany, it is for a lost vision of Mozambique and Angola. The returnees keep the memory of the global socialist moment alive in both their home nations and reunified Germany. Angolan and Mozambican returnees and their counterparts in the diaspora continue to stake a claim to a better material future and an acknowledgment of their role in the global socialist revolution, and they continue to hold their respective governments publicly accountable through marches and legal and political initiatives with German allies. While only a minority of all former workers participates in these public demonstrations and initiatives, the overwhelming majority shares in the eastalgia that continues to drive their dream for a future more akin to their past.

*Looking Back and Looking Out: The Workers' Life Course  
in Global Perspective*

...the end of colonialism, a changed world—this is the red entry into the main book of history. ...This could be it, the melody of how our life feels: distances shrink...and everywhere the earth is home to people. In this home we can live freely as equals and brothers. Because we are fundamentally the same, we become close with one another; the other complements alike. In so doing contrasts disappear, [yet] differences unfold in our longing for riches and diversity. Mankind makes an important step to realize...the ideal of equality. ...Now we have arrived at the point where mankind can extinguish itself. For the conditions for social equality have not yet been created. Something is racing. This is true when people—specialists in their areas from socialist countries—work for a few years in Africa to help extinguish the underdevelopment that is a result of colonial exploitation; for instance, our miners in Mozambique. This is true when a few thousand young Mozambicans study here [in East Germany] or receive vocational training. This is valid, this race.<sup>69</sup>

Ursula Püschel was an East German author who traveled to Mozambique and interacted with Mozambican worker-trainees in East Germany. Her book was a document of its time, a piece of literature, East German propaganda, which captured the tensions between a shared socialist dream of borderless human equality and the realist politics of state survival. Cooperation between the Second and Third Worlds was meant to overcome colonialism's legacies; together, through the transnational exchange of technical expertise between brother-states, the conditions for equality were seen as achievable. Meanwhile, the Second World was in a race with the First World while the Third World raced the Second World. Global inequality showed no signs of disappearing.

As should be apparent from the discussion on eastalgia so far in this chapter, the migration of Mozambicans and Angolans to East Germany constituted an event which needs looking at in its temporal totality. It is as real now as it was in its operation because those who participated are still living it. This book's life cycle approach allows for the holistic examination of this migration, an approach that benefits the study of most migrations.<sup>70</sup> We need to look at why people decided to migrate, their migration experience, reintegration, and material and immaterial legacies of the migration. We need to do this in one entirety because these aspects do not exist independently from each other. They do not even exist independently of the



present day. This perspective is an innovative model in the context of many studies which parse out the various stages and, in the process, often separate host from home countries. The complexities and ambiguities that our approach here brings to the fore are not conducive to forcing all into a single neat argument, but this is, ultimately, my contribution. When migrants are moved to the foreground as historical actors, their stories emphasize that they are people who make their decisions against a backdrop of personal security, family conditions, and career decisions which are influenced by national politics, and which in turn are shaped by the possibilities and pressures of an interconnected world.<sup>71</sup>

The Angolan and Mozambican migrants experienced the shrinking of distance, the acceleration of globalization, and the coming together of socialist axes; they experienced socialist internationalism firsthand as they integrated into East German workplaces alongside workers from places like Cuba and Vietnam. After their return to Angola and Mozambique and the collapse of socialism, their lives at the margins reminded them of the asymmetries of the post-socialist globalization as their international mobility was curtailed once again and their world shrank. These life histories provide a unique perspective on emerging transnationally mobile socialist lives in the second half of the twentieth century. But—and this is important, particularly in the context of global histories that have emphasized mobility and increasing connections—these narratives also illuminate how these same lives deflated again to become local lives, spectators of twenty-first-century globalization from the sidelines. This book underscores that despite increasing interconnection and mobility, large sections of the global population are being disconnected from migration circuits that were previously open. Globalization is not a linear process. Global processes—whether the global socialist moment or post-socialist globalization—do not create a flat, homogenized world, but produce new and reproduce old inequalities in many post-socialist nations around the world, including labor exploitation and the feeling of being left behind. From the perspective of many returnees to Angola and Mozambique, “the end of history” in 1990 in fact kicked off a history of fragmentation, loss, and isolation that finds an echo today across the world from the US to China.

Ursula Püschel wrote about a race against time to develop Africa. It is this race that the Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees felt they ran and lost. Before they could cross the finishing line, it vanished. Migrants went to work and train in the global North only to return with superfluous skills to a South that had promised socialist revolutions on buzzing

factory floors but had given up on this idea. Angola and Mozambique began to distance themselves from their socialist dreams in the late 1980s, introducing liberal structural adjustment programs. Mozambique became a poster child for privatization.<sup>72</sup> The collapse of socialism in Africa and Eastern Europe changed the rules of the game and decided the outcome of the race for the migrants. The migrants' historical legacy is not that of being those who shaped socioeconomic ties and policies, as they had expected it to be. Rather, it is of struggling to shape their lives on ever-shifting geopolitical and socioeconomic terrain. They witnessed decolonization, independence, the hot Cold War, the rise and fall of socialism, free-market adjustment policies, democratization, peace, resurgence of conflict, and peace again. Most returnees felt betrayed because they had not been given the chance to develop their home countries through their blue-collar skilled labor while building a stable working-class life as they had seen in Germany. Many carry that bitterness with them into the present and subsequently eastalgotically long for their time in East Germany.

The analysis of eastalgia in this book firmly positions Africa on the global map of post-communist nostalgia. East Germans express *Ostalgie*. Eastern Europeans from Bulgaria to the former Yugoslavia long for aspects of their socialist pasts. So do Mozambicans and Angolans, like many other citizens in the thirty-five African countries which experimented with some form of socialism post-independence. This is therefore an international longing, an unintended manifestation of elusive supranational socialist identity that was supposed to unite the proletariat around the world for the revolution. This international longing, however, remains very unevenly covered in scholarly analysis, and much more work must be done to understand the African part in it.

Neither the protesting *madjerma*n in Mozambique nor Angolans in the European diaspora are calling for a return to socialism. Their immediate demand is for governments to honor their promise to return the withheld funds and deliver employment opportunities. Their broader concerns are transparency and inclusive development. Angolan workers who continue to protest are motivated by successful past claims that saw a total of about US\$41 million paid to the 1600 registered former workers: approximately US\$26,000 per person.

For the Mozambicans, the motivating factor for their activism is the memory of the living conditions they enjoyed in East Germany, and the dreams they once harbored for their personal and professional post-return lives. They are inspired by the East German Monday Demonstrations, and

the responsiveness of the government to past claims. This encourages *madjerman* to don their German hats, t-shirts, and flags, grab their vuvuzelas, whistles, drums, and homemade protest signs and share in the Wednesday demonstrations in Maputo, more than a quarter of a century after their return.<sup>73</sup> Many returnees do not participate in protests or meetings. Some acknowledged long ago the utopian nature of the protest and have moved on; some would like to join but fear being considered political troublemakers, others live too far away to attend with any regularity, while still others are simply too busy to devote any attention to a part of their lives that they consider closed. Despite this, nearly all the *madjerman* with whom I talked share an unflattering returnee's gaze upon their home country. The former socialist cosmopolitans are constantly comparing post-socialist Angolan and Mozambican development with an increasingly nostalgic picture of their East German lives.

What their longed-for East German experience was actually like is almost a separate issue, albeit related, to how their memories interact with their present lives. Following the travelers to East Germany and witnessing their transformation into socialist cosmopolitans has told us new stories about the experience of being a young African involved in East Germany's labor, economic, and social life. We have seen how worker-trainees were shaped into skilled workers in heavy and light industries, agriculture, construction trades, mining, and transport. Their incorporation into working collectives in socialist people's enterprises was intended to create model socialist workers, experienced in real socialism and ready to apply and transfer that knowledge back home. We also saw that, far from being passive receptacles of this project, workers succeeded in negotiating employment terms through collective and individual actions. And yet, socialism's celebration of the working class looked more and more like propaganda when set against the political realities in the East German "workers' and peasants' state" as well as in Angola and Mozambique, where the working class in the traditional sense had always remained numerically small. Celebration of the socialist worker seemed insincere when compared to the treatment of African students in East Germany. It was the students, many of whom were drawn from among already established elites, not the workers, whom East Germany courted as the future leadership of their respective home countries.<sup>74</sup> In the name of building future political and economic partnerships, East German bureaucrats were willing to make concessions to students—for instance, in terms of freedom of movement

across the Iron Curtain—that they did not make to the migrant workers or most of their own citizens.<sup>75</sup>

Looking at the scale of economic and political relations between East Germany, Angola, and Mozambique suggests a story of state exploitation. The Mozambican government used the workers' deferred pay to reduce their debts to East Germany. East Germany in turn increasingly demanded higher numbers of foreign workers to support its struggling economy. This accelerated during the latter half of the 1980s. The labor and training program began with an emphasis on training skilled socialist model workers. As both Angola and Mozambique became mired in civil wars that halted much of their industrial development, partnerships that had been envisioned between East German and Angolan and Mozambican industries fell flat. With the weaker performance of the East German economy the exploitative side of socialism became predominant. These abusive tendencies were part of the long and ignoble tradition of European exploitation of African labor. Indeed, the Mozambican government's interest in the deferred pay program came from its own historical understanding of its citizens as a labor export, a regional tradition founded in Mozambican migration to South Africa since the middle of the nineteenth century. Africans thus emerged as victims *and* agents in these complex stories of internationally mobile African labor. The migrants were indeed being exploited, not least by their own governments, but this did not mean that they could not use the scheme to their own ends.

There is a long tradition of seeing Africa either as isolated from or a victim of globalization. Demonstrating the untenability of this idea is one of the key ideas of this book. Angola and Mozambique were enthusiastic participants in socialist globalization. Samora Machel, Agostinho Neto, and Erich Honecker shared a dream of a bright socialist future of global equality. They propagated scientific socialism and industrial development. They also believed in coercion as the best way to achieve their goals. Was the failure of this dream to achieve the envisioned industrial development in Africa a missed opportunity? Counterfactuals are notoriously difficult. We will never know what might have happened had Angola and Mozambique not been ravaged by civil war right through the period. What we do know is that we cannot continue telling the histories of socialist Angola, socialist Mozambique, and East Germany in purely national terms. This book, if it does nothing else, demonstrates that international connections shaped lives from the working class to political elites. In so doing it is part of a recent trend that examines the migration of African

politicians, exiles, and students to the Second World, but has not, until now, paid much attention to migration of workers.<sup>76</sup>

The Cold War shaped options for politicians and migrants alike. The MPLA and FRELIMO won their anticolonial wars with help from the socialist world. They were then able to stay in power and ultimately win drawn-out civil wars. Africans were therefore self-interested actors in the Cold War. The Cold War also shaped options for political, economic, and scientific-technical cooperation partners for Angola and Mozambique. Labor and education cooperation agreements with East Germany paralleled exchanges with Cuba, the Soviet Union, and others.<sup>77</sup> Escaping war at home was a great motivation for young potential worker-trainees to migrate to East Germany. Indeed, just as the civil wars were in large part manifestations of the Cold War and would have been less likely to have lasted so long without it, the migration schemes themselves would have almost certainly not existed in the form that they did without the Cold War. They were as much part of the Cold War as the Berlin Blockade or the Bay of Pigs invasion. The Cold War simultaneously engendered hot wars in Africa and enabled new international relationships between socialist nations and individuals.

Young Angolan and Mozambican migrants in Eastern Europe participated in the making of socialism. While their political leaders shaped socialism in Angola and Mozambique on the policy level, it was the migrants who acted out on the everyday stage what it meant to be socialist New Men and New Women and ambassadors for their home country. They spoke about their lives in Nampula or Namibe to their East German colleagues during coffee breaks; they learned East German workers' songs and sang Mozambican and Angolan revolutionary songs with their East German brigades. On return, they debated the socialist revolutions at home and compared them with the East German socialist reality they encountered, framing East Germany, much as Samora Machel had done, as a model socialist state.<sup>78</sup>

Workers spent time learning technical knowledge as well as Marxist-Leninist ideas. On a practical level, they produced goods to support and maintain the East German economy. They also consumed some of the goods they produced to support their family members at home through material remittances. They further used their socialist migration to invest in and capitalize on the goods they needed to start their personal lives as heads of families upon their return home.

Moreover, as intimate strangers the workers showed the extent and limits of East German solidarity with African revolutionaries. They represented their home countries, were welcomed as friends and brothers, but were also kept apart. However, workers also broke away from the official scripts and created private relationships with host families, friends, and romantic partners. This helped their integration into German society. One legacy of this is the generation of Afro-Germans who grew up after the workers had come to East Germany.

As the migrants faced gender and racial discrimination, their East German lives reminded them of socialism's limited ability to render race and gender meaningless through the supposed power of working-class identity. Until 1989, pregnant foreign workers were sent back home to give birth or were forced to abort if they wanted to continue in Europe. Toward the end of the period, racism and xenophobia spiked and made life for foreigners unbearable. The oral histories reveal that the East German state had enforced the illegality of racism fairly well in the public realm. However, as its power began to crumble and its citizens were subjected to dramatic political and economic changes and finally the dissolution of their state, racism and xenophobia could no longer be contained or suppressed.

The workers tested the limits of the socialist state's ability to control their lives. Following the narratives of the interviewees, we have shifted from presenting a society of stasis, want, and state control to include stories of consumerism, interracial romantic relationships, mobility, and racism and xenophobia. These things were all bound up with each other. Workers shaped their own lives, for instance by engaging in romantic relationships with East Germans, by working overtime to increase their earnings, by exchanging money on the black market to buy Western goods, or by asking students to bring back items from shopping trips to the West. Surveillance was uneven, allowing some workers to move out of their dormitories and create parallel private lives with German host families or romantic partners. Others had to register daily and needed to be creative to get any of the outside world into their lives, for example by smuggling visitors into their quarters.

After the workers returned to Mozambique and Angola, many scrambled to make a living in the informal market economy, or in the service industry as security guards, waiters, or taxi drivers. With the collapse of socialism, the workers' personal and professional dreams and their role in

their home country's development were thwarted. However, they did not simply leave East Germany behind. They took it with them. They did their best to East Germanize Mozambique and Angola, whether through the many German goods that flooded the parallel Mozambican markets in the early 1990s, or through their return with German mannerisms, often embodied in a direct communication style, a penchant for planning and punctuality, or a male interest in domestic chores. This behavior rendered them different from those that stayed, and it earned them the label "German" or *madjerman*.

Interviewing former worker-trainees about their memories has revealed the enduring legacies of their past experiences in their present lives. This might include a biracial child, the German language, memorabilia or consumer goods from East Germany on display, or an investment in the ongoing political demands for repayment of transfers made during their time as foreign workers in East Germany. These are among the many unintended legacies. The migrants' lives are reminders of the socialist pasts on which the present is built.

Is this an Afro-pessimistic narrative? A story of national decline? It is not. Neither is this an uncritical celebration of socialism. It is a story of loss *and* gain, of movement *and* stasis, of hope *and* despair. It tells the ambiguity of dreams and imagination, and the details of daily life between East Germany, Angola, and Mozambique. Following James Ferguson's call to think productively with narratives of decline, we have dealt here with the migrants' narratives of loss and eastalgia and we have tried to adopt their perspective and understand what it means to them and for their world.<sup>79</sup> A diverse group of migrants responded in myriad ways to the post-return losses they suffered. Some asked difficult questions about inclusivity and development in their home countries and found a collective voice to challenge the status quo. They marched to demand the repayment of withheld wages and raised their voices against corruption. Others wrote poetry or composed songs in which their migration experience lived on. Still others distanced themselves from their migration experience as they successfully integrated into the formal labor market. Even those at the margins are agents of change, their stubborn dreams and protest an act of resistance against despair.

## CONCLUSION

Eastalgia demonstrates that, in addition to skills training and intercultural knowledge, migrants left East Germany with an identification with a supranational socialist identity. Moreover, they remember having enjoyed a certain standard of public goods and amenities against which they measure their post-return lives. These included public transport, health services, contract labor, union activity, subsidized housing and basic necessities, and leisure time activities. Many of these things were sponsored by the state or by the companies that they worked for. Seeing Angola and Mozambique through the eyes of socialist cosmopolitans, they judge things differently to their compatriots. They demand an accountable state and an amelioration of their living conditions. It is through the agency of the migrant workers, their practices and memories, that they have impacted societies in Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany and continue to re-imagine them.

Studying life histories has provided a new perspective on the history of socialist solidarity and its aftermath in Angola and Mozambique. Socialist education and labor migration shaped the awareness of an entire generation of post-independence Angolans and Mozambicans who were educated in the socialist world from independence in 1975 until the collapse of socialism in 1990. The technical knowledge and the soft skills they learned abroad continued to shape the social, economic, and political life of their home countries.

These life histories also illustrate how the education and training exchanges of the Cold War era facilitated links for nations which under colonialism had been denied international links outside of that with the colonial metropole. Angola and Mozambique could now be independent drivers of connection with countries around the world, such as Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other Eastern European states. The Third World and the Second World worked together so that the former could become part of the latter. The migration circuits whose stories constitute this book would not have been possible without these socialist axes. Following Africans abroad and analyzing the impact that the global geopolitical climate had on Angolan and Mozambican national politics and economic development helps us arrive at a more nuanced and inclusive picture of post-independence history.

On one hand, the migration of unskilled Angolans and Mozambicans to Germany is now a faint memory of a bygone era. The German



Democratic Republic, the People's Republics of Mozambique, and the People's Republic of Angola have all ceased to exist. On the other, the legacies of these migrations continue today in the lives of their participants. African socialist migrations remain alive through the way former participants exert their will on the present.

## NOTES

1. Field Notes, History of the *Madjerman* according to *Madjerman* leadership, Maputo, 2014; for more on the park and what happens in it, see Lina Gronau, Thomas Kunze, "Das Wohnzimmer im Park. Ehemalige DDR-Vertragsarbeiter in Mosambik," in *Ostalgie International: Erinnerungen an die DDR von Nicaragua bis Vietnam*, Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel, eds. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010), 79–80; Héctor Guerra Hernández, "Ma(d)jermanes: passado colonial e presente diaspórizado: reconstrução etnográfica de um dos últimos vestígios do socialismo colonial europeu" (PhD diss., Universidade Estadual de Campinas Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2011), chs. 1, 2; Theresia Ulbrich, "'Madgermanes' moçambicanische VertragsarbeiterInnen in der DDR und ihre Rückkehr nach Moçambique. Zur kollektiven Identität der Madgermanes" (Master's Thesis, Universität Wien, 2009), ch. 8.
2. Paul Betts, "The Politics of Plenty: Consumerism in Communist Societies," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephen Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 424; Krisztina Fehérváry, "Goods and States: The Political Logic of State-Socialist Material Culture," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 426; Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History* (London: Harper Collins, 1997); Ruth Hoffmann, *Stasi-Kinder: Aufwachsen im Überwachungsstaat* (Berlin: List Taschenbuch, 2013).
3. For a reflection on the reimagination of the *Trabi* in post-unification Germany, see Roger F. Cook, "Recharting the Skies above Berlin: Nostalgia East and West," *German Politics & Society* 23 (2005): 38.
4. Irene Runge, *Ausland DDR: Fremdenhaß* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), 15; Andreas Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation," (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996), 14–17.
5. Gaspar, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 24, 2015.
6. Thomas Lindenberger discusses how the official connection between parliamentary debates and scholarly expertise regarding *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (mastering the past) led to the rise of totali-

- tarianism theory both in political language and scholarly interest. Social historians who attempted to center East German society and their everyday experiences were often accused of wanting to downplay East Germany's fundamentally dictatorial character or the 'unlawful' one-party state, the *SED-Unrechtsstaat*; see Thomas Lindenberger, "Eigen-Sinn, Domination and No Resistance," in *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, August 3, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.14765/zzf.dok.2.646.v1>, accessed September 1, 2020.
7. I do not treat memory as separate from history but as a malleable, interactive, and social remembering of the past. As Berdahl observed, "memory puts the past into dialogue with the present," Daphne Berdahl, "Good bye, Lenin! Aufwiedersehen GDR: On the Social Life of Socialism," in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 178.
  8. Herein, I define *eastalgia* as the returnees' nostalgia for aspects of their experiences in East Germany.
  9. For an introduction to the literature on Eastern Europe, see Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, eds., *Post-Communist Nostalgia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 1–13; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), especially Ch. 6.
  10. Daphne Berdahl and Dominic Boyer analyzed *Ostalgie* in order to comprehend East Germans' relationship with their past. Daphne Berdahl, "'(N) Ostalgie' for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things," *Ethnos* 64 (1999): 192–211, Berdahl, *Good Bye, Lenin!*; Dominic Boyer, "Ostalgie and the Politics of the Future in Eastern Germany," *Public Culture* 18 (2006): 361–81; Martin Blum, "Remaking the East German Past: Ostalgie, Identity, and Material Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture* 34, no. 3 (2000).
  11. Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 216–19; and Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics, and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (New York: Berg, 2005), 166–9.
  12. Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel, eds., *Ostalgie International: Erinnerungen an die DDR von Nicaragua bis Vietnam* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2010).
  13. As the political election campaign of the Alternative for Germany in Brandenburg in the fall of 2019 has shown, the longing for aspects of East Germany has a material basis but also draws on romanticized longings for a politically stable past in a relatively homogenous East German nation state with full employment and little crime. This political form of *Ostalgie* continues to blend out past political realities to portray a petty bourgeois dream of economic security and a modest and risk-averse life. Bernhard Sutor, "Herausforderungen der Politischen Bildung zwischen 'Ostalgie'

- und Neuer Rechten,” *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen und Zeitgeschichte* 12, no. 2 (2008); David Clark and Ute Wölfel, *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13–14.
14. For Mozambique, see M. Anne Pitcher, “Forgetting from above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 76 (2006): 89. For East Germany, see Clark and Wölfel, *Remembering the German Democratic Republic*, 4.
  15. *Ostalgie* serves as a counter-memory in an inner German landscape of hotly debated competing claims to the past, which does not map onto Angolan and Mozambican political and historic realities; see David Clark and Ute Wölfel, *Remembering the German Democratic Republic*, 7f; Klaus Schroeder Schroeder, Jochen Staadt, “Zeitgeschichte in Deutschland vor und nach 1989,” *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B26 (1997).
  16. Luís João Maconha in Ulf Dieter Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta: Vivências dos Moçambicanos antes, durante e depois de estadia na Alemanha* (Maputo: Instituto Cultural Mocambique - Alemanha (ICMA), 2005), 181.
  17. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe—The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), ix.
  18. Zine Magubane, *Postmodernism, Postcoloniality, and African Studies* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005).
  19. This is similar to the workers’ belief in modernization on the Copper Belt; see James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). The discrepancy between the relatively good life of elite workers who received benefits and the majority who continued to live a precarious reality is stark. Yet widespread nostalgia for a “golden age” of mining is noticeable. This golden age never existed except in the minds of those who reminisce about it; see Miles Larmer, “Permanent Precarity: Capital and Labour in the Central African Copperbelt,” *Labor History* 58 (2017): 170–84.
  20. Both the “West” and the “East” offered what Odd Arne Westad calls a “road to high modernity through education, science, and technological progress.” Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 92. Modernization theory advocated economic and military assistance to developing nations at the right time in the West. The USSR described the “Third World’s” “backward” status as a result of colonialism and highlighted the need to end foreign exploitation in order for a (socialist) society to develop. Brigitte Schulz demonstrates that East

- and West Germany's development aid to Africa offered two ideologically diverging paths to modernization but remained fundamentally motivated by self-interest, Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1985*, ed. Wolfgang Schwanitz Ulrich van der Heyden (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995).
21. In the case of post-communist Eastern Europe, citizens time traveled while staying put; post-communist state construction removed citizens from the state-socialist regimes under which they once lived. Nostalgic citizens long for a lost time under an extinct regime in the same geographic location.
  22. Jaime Faque Suldane in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha*, 105.
  23. Lopes, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, March 17, 2015.
  24. Inocêncio Domingos Honwana in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha*, 100.
  25. Miguel, Luanda, April 27, 2015.
  26. Schwenkel, "Post-Socialist Affect," 249.
  27. Paul Betts skillfully uses East German personal accounts to examine how the affective relationships between people and things in their everyday interactions make up the heart of nostalgically remembered history. Betts, "Remembrance of Things Past: Nostalgia in West and East Germany, 1980–2000," in *Pain and Prosperity: Reconsidering Twentieth-Century German History*, Paul Betts and Greg Eghigian, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 182.
  28. During my home visits to returnees, I ate and drank from East German dishes, was shown furniture brought from abroad, and looked at postcards, pictures, and other memories. Photo books also portray the role of memorabilia in the world of the Mozambican returnees; see Malte Wandel, *Einheit, Arbeit, Wachsamkeit: Die DDR in Mosambik* (Germany: Self published, 2012); Annett Bourquin, *Madgermany* (Lisboa: DPI - Cromotipo, n.d).
  29. Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-Creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia*, Social History of Africa (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004); Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, C.1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994); Ruth First, *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); Dunbar T. Moodie and Vivienne Ndatshe, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
  30. Gertrud Hüwelmeier, "Socialist Cosmopolitanism Meets Global Pentecostalism: Charismatic Christianity Among Vietnamese Migrants after the Fall of the Berlin Wall," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43 (2011): 439–40.

31. Christina Schwenkel, "Rethinking Asian Mobilities: Socialist Migration and Post-Socialist Repatriation of Vietnamese Contract Workers in East Germany," *Critical Asian Studies* 46 (2014): 236.
32. Gaspar, Luanda, April 24, 2015. In the first agreement of 1979, it was noted that Mozambican workers were not to leave East German territory; their passports were supposed to be taken until necessary for home travel. However, oral history suggests that both rules were not always followed.
33. Tracing similar experiences for former Vietnamese labor migrants to East Germany, Schwenkel argues that "disengagements and...processes of becoming disconnected" are as integral to modern globalism as entanglements, Schwenkel, "Post-Socialist Affect," 255.
34. Boyer, "Ostalgie and the Politics of the Future," 366, 372.
35. "Alemanha minha Pátria" (Germany—my fatherland), poem by Regina February 2, 2007, original in her possession.
36. Augusto, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 12, 2015. The coming of age through migratory experiences is a familiar theme in southern Africa. For example, Mozambican migrants worked in South African mines to earn *lobola* (bride price), making returnees fully married male members of their communities, Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*. This particular form of labor migration to East Germany still served to accumulate resources, but given the war context, these were for the survival of family, friends, neighbors, and oneself rather than for the accumulation of savings toward marriage. To this day, many workers lack the resources to marry their partners.
37. Migration has played a well-documented role as a rite of passage in southern Africa, especially for young men migrating to the Rand; see Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*; Moodie, *Going for Gold*; for women migrants, see Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotsoe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991).
38. Gaspar, Luanda, April 24, 2015.
39. The literature on the Angolan and Mozambican wars is vast. See, for instance, Stephen Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique* (Pinetown, South Africa: 30 degrees South, 2014); William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Vladimir Shubin and Andrei Tokarev, "War in Angola: A Soviet Dimension," *Review of African Political Economy* 28 (2001): 607–18; Victoria Brittain, *Death of Dignity: Angola's Civil War* (Chicago: Pluto Press, 1998). For comparative discussions, see James Ciment, *Angola and Mozambique: Postcolonial Wars in Southern Africa* (New York: Facts on File, 1997); David Birmingham, *Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992).

40. João, interview conducted by the author, Luanda, Angola, April 21, 2015.
41. Few Mozambican interviewees managed to return but many Angolans tried to either remain in Germany or return through asylum claims that were ultimately mostly unsuccessful. A few migrants had holiday trips sponsored by German families. However, for the majority of interviewees, the lived experience in East Germany ended in the early 1990s.
42. Luís, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, September 2, 2011.
43. Almuth Berger, “Annäherungen - Bericht der Ausländerbeauftragten des Landes Brandenburg” (Potsdam: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Landes Brandenburg, 2006), 38; Andreas Müggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter,” 18.
44. Adevaldo S. F. Banze in Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta*, 43.
45. See Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7; Joan Tumbly, ed., *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 7. This does not mean that the East German memories cannot be triggered, especially when the discourse changes, as it does more recently with the hopes of advancing claims as victims of the SED regime; see Chap. 6.
46. Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Mozambique’s Samora Machel: A Life Cut Short* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2020), ch. 9.
47. Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above,” 88.
48. Janne Rantala, “‘Hidrunisa Samora’: Invocations of a Dead Political Leader in Maputo Rap,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, Nr. 6 (2016): 1161.
49. Juma Madeira in Jack Davis and Marcia C. Schenck, *A Republic of the Mind*, short film (<https://vimeo.com/1473234882015>), accessed February 18, 2017.
50. For instance, the infamous reeducation camps, Operation Production, and the extension of the death sentence and introduction of public flogging, discussed in Benedito Luís Machava, “State Discourse on Internal Security and the Politics of Punishment in Post-Independence Mozambique (1975–1983),” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011), 593–609; Sarah LeFanu, *S Is for Samora: A Lexical Biography of Samora Machel and the Mozambican Dream* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 187–93, 215–21.
51. Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above,” 106; LeFanu, *S Is for Samora*, 187.
52. Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media, 2009), 6, 12–13.
53. Dan Hodgkinson demonstrates how graduates of the University of Zimbabwe use positive and negative memories of their student days to criticize or support present-day politics, depending on the political senti-

- ments of the interviewee, “Politics on Liberation’s Frontiers: Student Activist Refugees, International Solidarity, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe, 1965–1979,” *The Journal of African History* 62 no.1 (2021): 99–123.
54. Kathleen Stewart, “Nostalgia—A Polemic,” *Cultural Anthropology* 3 (1998): 227.
  55. The Vietnamese laborers’ memories about East Germany set out in Alena K. Alamgir and Christina Schwenkel, “From Socialist Assistance to National Self-Interest: Vietnamese Labor Migration into CMEA Countries” in *Alternative Globalizations*, M. James, S. Marung, and Artemy Kalinovsky, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 100–25; Schwenkel, “Post-Socialist Affect,” suggest that the Angolan and Mozambican eastalgic longing is echoed in Vietnam as well. This points to a larger shared experience among people from conflict zones experiencing East Germany as a consumer paradise and strategically using their stay to acquire goods that would serve them upon their return. It also points to how the dream of socialist development was similarly imagined in countries in the global South and what the experience of living under East German consumer socialism meant to people accustomed to contexts of deprivation and flexibility.
  56. Juma Madeira in Jack Davis and Marcia C. Schenck, *A Republic of the Mind* (<https://vimeo.com/1473234882015>).
  57. See Chap. 6.
  58. For a comparative discussion on the concept of nostalgia as a relational concept, see Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi.
  59. Besides informal family contact between transnational families, relations between CMA (the community of Mozambicans in Germany) and ATMA allow for a certain amount of coordination regarding demonstrations in Berlin and Maputo. I participated in the conference “Rentenanspruch aus der Zeit in der DDR von 1979–1990,” Berlin, December 13, 2014; and discussed this with CMA President Tito Truvinho, interview conducted by the author, Berlin, Germany, November 7, 2014. As of the writing of this book, the case of workers’ compensation has been opened again as a result of the conference “Respekt und Anerkennung,” Magdeburg, February 22–24, 2019, resulting in the Magdeburger Memorandum discussed in Chap. 6.
  60. For autobiographical writings by *madjerman*, see Ibraimo Alberto and Daniel Bachmann, *Ich wollte leben, wie die Götter: Was in Deutschland aus meinen afrikanischen Träumen wurde* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2014); Fernando Pedro, *Magermanes na RDA: vida cotidiana* (Maputo: Ndjiura, 2003). For writings that form part of an essay competition for

- former workers sponsored by German ambassador Ulf-Dieter Klemm, see Klemm, *Moçambique - Alemanha, Ida e Volta*.
61. For an exhibition about Mozambican-German relations, see Jens Vilela Neumann, *Identity, a Bloody Romance*, <http://vilelaneumann.com/english/?projects=the-exhibition>, accessed November 14, 2016.
  62. For photo books, see Wandel, *Einheit, Arbeit, Wachsamkeit*; Bourquin, *Madgermany*. For a graphic novel that skillfully illustrates the Mozambican labor migration experience, see Birgit Weyhe, *Madgermanes* (Berlin: Avant Verlag, 2016). East German writers also wrote about Mozambican contract workers. See Landolf Scherzer, *Die Fremden: Unerwünschte Begegnungen und verbotene Protokolle* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2002); Ursula Püschel, *Der Schlangenbaum: Eine Reise nach Moçambique* (Halle, Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1984).
  63. For a general reflection on the role that socialism played in the Angolan art scene, see Nadine Siegert, “Luanda Lab—Nostalgia and Utopia in Aesthetic Practice,” *Critical Interventions: Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture* 8 (2014): 176–200.
  64. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xvi.
  65. See Fernando Machava, “Echoes of the past: The social impact of returnees from the ex-GDR,” in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel R. Harisch, Marcia C. Schenck, eds. (Berlin: DeGruyter Oldenbourg, 2021), 207–33.
  66. Pitcher, “Forgetting from Above.”
  67. Joao Paulo Borges Coelho, “Politics and Contemporary History in Mozambique: A Set of Epistemological Notes,” *Kronos* 39 (2013): 20–31.
  68. M. Anne Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique: The Politics of Privatization, 1975–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 263.
  69. Püschel, *Der Schlangenbaum*, 14–15.
  70. While this book relies on aggregate life histories that allow for insight into the collective life cycle, I trace the life course of an individual worker in “Wandergesellen des Kalten Krieges: Arbeits- und Ausbildungsmigration von Angola und Mosambik nach Ostdeutschland,” in *Für Respekt und Anerkennung: Die mosambikanischen Vertragsarbeiter und das schwierige Erbe aus der DDR*, Birgit Neumann-Becker and Hans-Joachim Döring, eds. (Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2020) 103–13; and have co-written his life history with a former contract worker in Ibraimo Alberto and Marcia C. Schenck, “Paths are made by walking them: Memories of being a Mozambican contract worker in the GDR” in *Navigating Socialist Encounters: Moorings and (Dis)Entanglements between Africa and East Germany during the Cold War*, Eric Burton et al., eds. (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021), 247–62.



71. For a reflection on global mobile lives see Marcia Schenck and Jiyeon Kim "A Conversation about Global Lives in Global History: South Korean overseas travelers and Angolan and Mozambican laborers in East Germany during the Cold War," *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques*, 2018, vol 18, n.p.
72. Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique*.
73. A vuvuzela is a horn that emits a loud monotonous sound when blown and became famous around the world through the soccer World Cup in South Africa in 2010; it is also used in protests.
74. Hans Mathias Müller, *Die Bildungshilfe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995).
75. Marcia C. Schenck, "Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan student migration during the Cold War, 1976–1990," *Africa* 89, no. 1 (2019): 158–9.
76. This is a vibrant research field, producing many article-length studies, for instance Constantin Katsakioris, "The Lumumba University in Moscow: Higher Education for a Soviet-Third World Alliance, 1960–1991," *Journal of Global History* 14, no. 2 (2019): 281–300; Eric Burton, "Navigating Global Socialism: Tanzanian Students in and Beyond East Germany," *Cold War History* 19, no. 1 (2019): 63–83; Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, "African Soldiers in the USSR: Oral Histories of ZAPU Intelligence Cadres' Soviet Training, 1964–1979," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 49–66; Daniel Branch, "Political Traffic: Kenyan Students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958–1969," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 4 (2018): 811–31. Several special issues have also appeared: Patrice Yengo and Monique de Saint Martin, "Quelles contributions des élites 'rouges' au façonnement des États post-coloniaux?" *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 226 (2017): 231–58 and corresponding special issue *Élites de retour de l'Est* 226 (2017); Eric Burton and Constantin Katsakioris "Africans and the Socialist World: Aspirations, Experiences, and Trajectories. An Introduction," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 54, no. 3 (2021): 269–77; Betty Banks, Robyn d'Avignon, Asif Siddiqi, "Introduction: The African-Soviet Modern," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 41, no.1 (2021): 2–10.
77. Christine Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola: South-South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976–1991* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015); Hauke Dorsch, "Black or Red Atlantic?—Mozambican Students in Cuba and their Reintegration at Home," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 136 (2011): 289–310; Constantin Kastakioris, "Students from Portuguese Africa in the Soviet Union, 1960–1974: Anti-Colonialism, Education, and the Socialist Alliance," *Journal of Contemporary History* 56, no.1 (2021): 142–65.

78. Scholars like Nana Osei-Opare, Jeffrey Ahlman, Priya Lal, Eric Burton, and Benedito Machava have furthered our understanding of the workings of African socialist experiments in Ghana, Tanzania, and Mozambique as complex processes including utopic fantasies of progress through development, work programs to fashion the progressive citizenry, and different expressions and adaptations of socialist practices; see Nana Osei-Opare, “‘If you trouble a hungry snake, you will force it to bite you’: rethinking postcolonial African archival pessimism, worker discontent, and petition writing in Ghana, 1957–1966,” *The Journal of African History* 62, no.1 (2021): 63–4; Jeffrey S. Ahlman, “Managing the Pan-African Workplace: Discipline, Ideology, and the Cultural Politics of the Ghanaian Bureau of African Affairs, 1959–1966,” *Ghana Studies* 15–16 (2012): 337–71; Priya Lal, “Decolonization and the Gendered Politics of Developmental Labor in Southeastern Africa,” in *The Development Century: A Global History*, Erez Manela and Stephen J. Macekura, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 173–94; Eric Burton, *In Diensten des Afrikanischen Sozialismus: Tansania und die Globale Entwicklungsarbeit der beiden deutschen Staaten, 1961–1990* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021); Benedito Machava, “Reeducation Camps, Austerity, and the Carceral Regime in Socialist Mozambique (1974–1979)” *The Journal of African History* 60, no.4 (2019): 429–55.
79. James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1999).

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## Epilogue: Transnational Sojourners, Intimate Strangers, and Workers of the World

The transnational dimension of the labor migration programs between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany is vividly illustrated by Dito Tembe's 2021 painting *Remembering the GDR* (Fig. 8.1). Pedro Jeremias Tembe, alias Dito, was born in Maputo and lived in Schwerin between 1985 and 1989. There, he worked at the VEB Kombinat Lederwaren, a factory producing leather goods. The twenty-five-year-old Dito decided to leave Mozambique mainly for economic reasons and initially sought a way to migrate to South Africa, but eventually an opportunity to go to East Germany presented itself. In Germany, despite demanding shift work, he was able to carve out time to continue to paint. He also regularly attended courses in drawing and art at the cultural center in Schwerin. His passion for art and music connected him to East Germans and other international visitors, and he remains in contact with some of his old friends. These enduring friendships have enabled Dito to travel back to Schwerin several times to exhibit his work.<sup>1</sup> Since his return to Maputo, he has become a well-known painter. He, too, is hopeful that compensation payments will still be forthcoming and he still visits other *madjerman* in the park in downtown Maputo, whenever he can find the time to do so.

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The slogan “workers of the world” is inspired by Marcel van der Linden’s *Workers of the World: Essays toward a Global Labor History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill), 2008.



Fig. 8.1 *Remembering the GDR*, painted by Dito Tembe, 2021

*Remembering the GDR* strikingly illustrates the dualities that have been the central theme of this book. The city scene on the left features a gray Berlin winter's day, while the right side of the image shows the sun bathing a factory and its workers in warm light. The upper half of the image depicts the East German cityscape as Dito remembers it, while the bottom half shines light on figures who appear to be Mozambican. These moods, people, and places, even if they sometimes appear contradictory at first sight, played an important role in the lives of the worker-trainees, and accordingly take their place together on one canvas. In the same vein, this book embraces the dualities of the migrant experience, bringing them into one narrative through a lens of dichotomies: the state and the individual, working and consuming, integration and exclusion, loss and gain, the past

and the remembered past. These dualities coexist and mold this story of African migration to the Eastern Bloc.

Dito's painting centers the figures of two workers of nondescript age and ambiguous gender and race. The first worker—the one in the spotlight—is dressed in blue dungarees, wielding a hammer in the left hand and a spanner in the right. Their gaze is turned upwards, following their raised fist, toward the sun, imagining a brighter future. Behind, the face of the second worker emerges. The composition is reminiscent of the depiction of workers around the world in contemporary socialist chromatic images.<sup>2</sup> The image confronts the observer with the central theme of this book: the labor migration of young Mozambicans and Angolans to East Germany. Like this book, the image is a product of the twenty-first century, and is thus as much about the present moment as it is about the last few decades of the Cold War. Dito's painting does not attempt to show the totality of the labor migration program; similarly, this book is neither intended to be a total or comprehensive history of the labor programs between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany, nor is it a full record of the manifold migratory connections between these countries. In this book, like in the image, the state takes a back seat to the individual experience. The German state is relegated to the margins of Dito's canvas. The emblems of East Germany are clearly visible, but are clearly secondary to the two aspiring figures which are the centerpiece of the work: an impressionistic East German flag, the tricolor of black, red, and yellow, and a hazy rendering of the emblem of East Germany, the compass and hammer surrounded by a ring of rye. This book, much like Dito's painting, foregrounds the workers' own agendas.

The complexity of the bottom-up perspective—the multiple, overlapping, and fluid motives of the migrants—challenges prevailing concepts of socialist migrants as passive participants in state-led schemes and stagnant definitions of labor migration. The workers had myriad motivations to sign up for a labor and training program roughly 9000 km (or 5600 miles) to the north of their home. This truth reveals the epithet “labor migrations” to be a shorthand for complex decisions involving a deeply personal mix of a desire for education, to flee war, to travel to Europe, and to earn money for consumer goods and remittances. The workers' consumption ranged from entertainment goods like videos, TVs, compact discs, and sound systems, to household items like dishes, fridges, and ovens, to bicycles, MZ motorbikes, and even used cars. Worker-trainees bought necessities and luxury items for immediate consumption either by themselves or

through their friends and family at home and in Germany. Much of their buying was future-oriented and intended for their own and their families' futures in Africa. Perhaps the shadowy figures on the left-hand side of Dito's painting hint at the families and friends who always traveled in spirit and memory with the migrants. Migrants did not leave Africa behind when the airplane door closed behind them. As the central depiction of the two laborers in the composition of the painting makes clear, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* is a book that centers the human stories of the workers, their life course, experiences, and memories and follows their transnational sojourns in a socialist world.

Dito's painting resonates with this book in other ways too. The factory and the tools the workers carry evoke the centrality of the factory floor for the labor migration program. It was here that workers became workers, negotiated their working conditions, and labored to meet production quotas. Following the workers' oral histories, the importance emerges of seeing worker-trainees as both producers and consumers. Socialism held the promise of uniting production and consumption, an insight of central importance to the laboring sojourners. The helmeted workers in the painting suggest a certain uniformity of experience and hint at the formation of worker-trainees into workers in a double sense. They received language and skills training, albeit at times rather limited, to manage their new jobs. But more than that, working at an East German factory was intended to forge workers' new identities: blue-collar socialist workers, the vanguard of the new Angola and Mozambique. They were New Men and Women. These new identities were to stay with the migrants long after their return. The migrants saw and still see production and consumption through the lens of their experiences in the postcolonial conflict economies at home. This meant that they read these two facets of economic life radically differently to those who see capitalist economies as the benchmark of success. The experience of the East German socialist consumer economy from the perspective of producers and consumers from the global South offers insights into German, Angolan, and Mozambican histories that only a transnational history can offer.

Behind the two central workers in *Remembering the GDR* we see the blurry contours of a female shadow emerging on the horizon. According to the artist, she symbolizes the emancipation of East German women, which left a deep impression on him as a young man.<sup>3</sup> In this book, East German women emerge as cultural compasses, facilitating orientation in a foreign society and allowing for limited two-way integration of workers

into East German private lives. This provided migrants with a certain agency away from the blueprints of the state-led migration programs. German women played different roles in the lives of the labor migrants, most commonly as partners, mothers of children, and lovers. Both female and male labor migrants commented on the apparent freedom of “the East German woman” and the seemingly equal household relations they witnessed in East Germany. Even if much of this remained in the fantasy of the worker-trainees, mysterious like the woman in this image, the fact that these memories remain central tells us about the transformed understanding of gender relations and the role of women that many young worker-trainees experienced abroad and brought back home.

Dito’s painting features many people: some are recognizable as Mozambican; others remain of ambiguous provenance. Their centrality underlines the importance of human relationships to the labor migrants at the same time as it forebodes a life between inclusion and exclusion. As intimate strangers, labor migrants became part of life in neighborhood bars, discos, and shops. They invited guests into their hostels where possible. They negotiated and adapted the strict rules demarcating what was considered as proper socialist behavior. They became immersed in East German family lives and started families of their own, despite governmental attempts of all involved states to maintain distance between the East German population and the international guests. While many a worker-trainee learned how to subvert the barriers, they remained distant, different, intimate strangers.

Perhaps the gray figures moving toward the city in the painting are African contract laborers walking into their partly cold and dark East German futures. There was much that was difficult for the temporary sojourners: the weather, unfamiliar foodstuffs, the monotony of shift work. But most of all, they had to contend with exclusion. Exclusion operated on many levels. There was sexism, racism, and xenophobia. Sexist and ethnic tensions came to the fore within the groups of Mozambican and Angolan laborers and xenophobia also occurred between workers from Angola and Mozambique. Racism and xenophobia were the two most paramount problems in interactions with the East German host. In officially anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, and anti-racist East Germany, racialized thinking survived behind the propaganda, unquestioned from colonial times and the Nazi period. While some East German officials addressed racism in word and deed, they were not trained to see the racism in their own prejudices and interpretations of what occurred, often labeling racist



acts within the euphemistic categorizations of the East German state like antisocial behavior, rowdiness, or the deeds of a lone wolf. A state which literally walled off its citizens behind an “antifascist barrier” (as the Berlin Wall was called), allegedly to “protect” them from what was different, did not prepare its citizens to welcome black African migrants in an open-minded way. Many people turned away, although others were drawn to the exotic. Details pertaining to the labor migrations were not readily available to the public in East Germany, Angola, or Mozambique, and rumors about those who were perceived as foreign were rife in all these countries. And yet, as workers tell, the worst was to come only after the *Wende*, when racism reached unprecedented and unbearable levels and influenced the return decision of many workers.

The mass return of 1990 brought about a new distance between East German life and life in Angola and Mozambique. Dito’s painting deals with this theme of distance in several ways. Firstly, the medium of transport which the migrants took to and from East Germany, right in the middle of the painting’s sky: the airplane in which the workers journeyed back and forth along the longitude of labor. Secondly, the shoreline in the right lower middle section of the painting, which catches the viewer’s eye. This scene, too, remains ambiguous. Two women with their backs turned toward the spectator—one might be German, while the other could be Mozambican—are gazing out over a large body of water, which could be simultaneously read as the Indian Ocean or the Baltic Sea. And lastly, the pastel color scheme of the whole image suggests a certain distance to the spectator. Though we are seeing some elements clearly, the painting has a dreamlike quality, like a painted memory. It is an artistic rendition of a lived recollection.

Read in this way, the image is a symbol of socialism’s afterlife. Perhaps the woman balancing a clay pot of water on her head and the man gazing out of the picture are returned workers, who, after years on the factory floor, resumed a rural way of life in the early 1990s. These figures are painted in earthy colors and they do not bear distinct regional or ethnic markers, which might symbolize the unity of all Mozambicans. It was this idea of a single, unified nation with which the young workers were imbued during socialist nation-building under Samora Machel. They were to serve as its ambassadors on the East German factory floor and they were to return to help develop their home country as part of a new working class in the making. What had previously been a rather abstract idea became concrete to workers when they were sent abroad in ethnically and

regionally mixed groups in which they lived, worked, and trained. They returned from East Germany with a strong group identity maintained until this day. While this was less pronounced with the Angolans, organizations that represent the workers operate across regional and ethnic borders there, too.

Workers lost many things upon return. Necessity made them part with many of the goods they had brought from Germany, while many lost the opportunity to pursue a blue-collar work life with health insurance and pension entitlements. Others lost their status as big men and women, others still their ties to Germany and family members, and most lost at least a portion of the wages for which they had labored in East Germany. They also lost their belief in the development of Angola and Mozambique through industrialization as they saw that there was limited place for blue-collar workers in the new Angola and Mozambique. But the workers' return was not all loss. In hardship many found collective agency, and in their abandonment many forged solidarity with each other inside and outside of returned workers' organizations. In their difference many Mozambicans have formed a lasting identity as *madjerman*. Workers were transformed by their migration abroad and some gained different viewpoints on gender equality or sexuality, while others took to the streets to fight for the repayment of outstanding wages and benefits. The Angolan workers successfully settled with their government. These losses and gains were two sides of the same coin.

Memories are not exact imprints of the past in our minds. Rather, they distort and shape anew, influenced by what those who remember have experienced after the memory was acquired and by the modes of recall of the memory itself. The painting's cityscape features the Berlin TV Tower and a church, but otherwise it looks more like an American city with skyscrapers than the East Berlin of the workers' migration experience. It is worth pausing on the towering quality of the buildings. Angolan and Mozambican former contract workers look back upon their socialist migration from their twenty-first-century vantage point with eastalgia, a longing that is simultaneously a historical outcome and moral-political critique of their present-day governments. It has a restorative dimension to it, which is expressed in the strong community among returned migrants. It is multicausal and combines a longing for one's youth with a longing for an imagined modernity and materiality of the past, and nurtures ongoing political claim-making. In Dito's painting the observer's eye is caught by a white peace dove to the right of the central figures. It

has a sprig of clover in its beak. It is an immediately recognizable international symbol for peace and, despite being of biblical origin, became ubiquitous in East Germany, particularly through Pablo Picasso's rendition of the theme. Dito's dove symbolizes peace and solidarity between socialist nations, something that many worker-trainees at the time of their migration placed their hopes in but later came to understand much more critically. To me, it also echoes their eastalgic memories and serves as a symbol for the dreams of the young worker-trainees for leading peaceful, happy lives and their willingness to cross continents to pursue these dreams.

In *Remembering the GDR*, global, socialist, and traditional southern Mozambican influences cleverly merge into a single composition, much as the labor migrants' lives have been shaped by their experiences. They became socialist cosmopolitans, mobile along socialist axes from South to North and returned to a life often, but not always, at the margins of Angolan and Mozambican society. This book draws upon my composite reading of individual life histories to paint a collective history of Angolan and Mozambican socialist labor migration to East Germany and its legacies. "The problem with historical events which are intricately interwoven is that, the better to understand their constituent elements, we have to pull them apart," argues Tony Judt. "But in order to see the story in its plentitude, you have to interweave those elements back together again. ... Separatism falsifies one part of the story; its absence has a comparably distorting impact on something else."<sup>4</sup> Following the lives of the workers across temporal, political, and geographical divides brings together what might otherwise be seen as separate. The lives of the labor migrants transcend simplistic dichotomies often connected to concepts such as the Cold War, East–West, and the global South and North. Instead, the protagonists of this story are simultaneously recipients of and contributors to German, Angolan, and Mozambican life. My focus on the workers' experiences and corresponding selection of threads has been intended to create a reading of a Cold War migration from the perspectives of those who migrated and through that experience have come to re-evaluate East German, Angolan, and Mozambican postcolonial and (post)-socialist histories.

## THE SPACES BETWEEN SECOND AND THIRD WORLDS

The interconnected socialist world led to a temporary integration of Africans into the Second World and, via the cosmopolitan travelers, of the Second World into the Third. With the implosion of socialism, these axes of connectivity waned. As the former Secretary General of the United Nations—Boutros Boutros-Ghali—aptly remarked, with the collapse of socialism the Iron Curtain moved southwards, to the middle of the Mediterranean, where it seeks to divide Europe from Africa.<sup>5</sup> An increasingly fast-paced capitalist globalization has not necessarily brought down barriers. We only need to think about legal travel opportunities into the heart of Europe for unskilled Africans. This contemporary comprehension, coupled with a deeper knowledge of the complex web of linkages provided by the socialist world, avoids reinscribing a teleological narrative of increased connections under capitalist globalization. It reveals a socialist globalization process that existed in parallel and yet was intertwined.

This book, like Dito's painting, renders obvious that even though we cannot say exactly where the socialist world started and where it ended, socialism created new spaces between countries that we need to study from all involved angles, including Latin America, Asia, and Africa, as well as Europe and the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Too often, the communist world is equated with the Iron Curtain, borders, and barbed wire, and its collapse with the eradication of said barriers and the inexorable spread of liberal capitalism. The convergence of history in geographically distant socialist countries was no accident, nor was it a path-dependent development that came out of prior colonial entanglements. Instead, it was intentional. The study of the socialist world, then, is also the study of an aspirational world—an imagined better future—on which the worker in Dito's painting is concentrating. Such study allows us to zoom in on a time period in which Africans and their counterparts around the socialist world imagined an alternative to colonial and capitalist development and acted on these imaginings to shape the fraught realities of countless lives. Taking the socialist world seriously as an analytical concept means studying the history of the many possibilities that contemporaries envisioned. It demands that we take seriously the manifold dreams and desires of workers, students, diplomats, technical experts, union members, journalists, and military personnel and pay attention to the many small, haphazard, and ambiguous ways in which the grand notions of socialist internationalism influenced the lives of transnational sojourners.

As part of scholarship dedicated to revealing the scope and functioning of the socialist world, this transnational labor migration story can never be confined to a national container, told as only East German, Angolan, or Mozambican history. Betty Banks, Robin d'Avignon, and Asif Siddiqi have thought about a very similar historical space created between continents and called it the "African-Soviet modern." The space they seek to demarcate with this designation is characterized by "an asymmetrical combination of aspiration, materiality, and practice that was rooted in diverse African states and in the Soviet Union."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Eric Burton, Anne Dietrich, Immanuel Harisch, and myself have, along with the authors in our edited volume, devoted attention to the study of the "encounters, moorings and (dis)entanglements ... between people from various African states and East Germany."<sup>8</sup> Both works remain somewhat imbalanced as they take countries in the north, the Soviet Union and East Germany respectively, and seek to explore their relationships with various African countries. These are, however, important starting points for mapping the socialist world along axes connecting Africa and Europe. Elsewhere, I have called for the construction and deconstruction of a "Black East" to bring to the fore the manifold roles of African actors from Havana to Vladivostok.<sup>9</sup> While this writing of black histories (and their integration into what remain mainly white histories) remains an important project across Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, studying the socialist world as a series of migration axes goes one step further in attempting to write interconnected, entangled histories. They cannot be told without giving weight to different geographies and their attendant histories.

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, socialism served as a doctrine of economic development but also of nation-building. Moreover, it functioned as theory to critique and overcome colonialism. Looking back from today, the socialist world seems fleeting. Its teleology of a future-oriented notion of progress has forfeited much of its attractiveness. On both sides of the transnational exchange, the bureaucrats in the socialist world were interested in state planning and production, infrastructural development, in scientific expertise, in skilled labor, in linguistic and cultural knowledge, and in political know-how. Socialism also provided a point of engagement between the various newly independent states on the African continent and the various states in the Second World such as the Comecon members but also Yugoslavia and China. The Soviet Bloc was not the only major player in the socialist world. There was competition within the Eastern Bloc for the hearts and minds of the global South. Tens of thousands of people across the

Second and Third Worlds, who contributed to building transnational axes between socialist countries, adopted socialist dreams, and filled the planned cooperation with meaning. This was, as we have seen, far from a smooth process. It included misunderstandings and unexpected developments as well as constant reminders of asymmetrical relationships. Histories of (dis)entanglements within the socialist world are bound to be complex, messy, contradictory, and ambiguous. In short, in this respect they were everything the planners involved envisioned them not to be.

Just as Dito's painting combines Mozambican and East German elements to tell a hybrid story, the study of the global socialist world cannot be undertaken from one place alone but must be studied in transnational and translocal ways that consciously contribute to coloring the contours of an alternative socialist world, drawing closer together Africa and the East. This promises multi-layered, connected histories rooted in specific places and histories, hopefully without losing sight of the global entanglements and disentanglements of which they form a part. The flattened histories that result from understanding the socialist only from the Second World's perspective can be dangerous for Africa. Not only can the continent be painted as passive recipient of socialist aid and expertise, but also as the place from which people left. This detracts from seeing the continent as the origin of transformations, as a site of knowledge creation and adaptation of socialist ideas and practices. An example of this is the migration literature about Africans who moved to the Second World. Literature on African students all over the Eastern Bloc rarely traces their experiences back to the continent. Literature on labor migrations within the socialist world is primarily studied through the archives across the "East," and, in the case of the German literature, remains siloed in a national frame. Examining the socialist world adds nuance to a bifurcated twentieth-century African temporality, divided into colonial and postcolonial periods.<sup>10</sup> It also challenges simplistic depictions of the continent as a passive victim of Cold War geopolitics. Instead, it draws our attention to the complex and ambiguous work of building nation states from colonial structures in an asymmetric world. In so doing, the study of the socialist world gives the continent a meaningful place in a profoundly global encounter.

Studying East German history in this framework contributes to reversing its fate as a border region, a mere footnote to world history.<sup>11</sup> This book has embedded East Germany into a global socialist world from the perspective of labor migrants who to a certain degree appropriated a tightly controlled migration regime for their own goals and subverted East

German ideas of labor migration in the process. The vivid world that springs from the pages of the book belies Thomas Lindenberger's statement that "the thin stream of migrant or contract workers from the Global South [...] working in the GDR and the GDR's engagements in international trade, economic aid and humanitarianism [...] have contributed very little to the actual globalization at large."<sup>12</sup> Operating with a more expansive understanding of globalizations in the plural and as multi-layered and multiscalar processes, this book has demonstrated the large and small ways in which labor migrants have structurally and spontaneously contributed to bringing distant parts of the global socialist world together. It has also shed light on the ongoing legacies that continue to bind post-socialist Angola, Mozambique, and Germany.

Painted more than three decades after the return of most of the workers, Dito's image echoes many of the central tenets to which the young worker-trainees subscribed and, on some level, continue to subscribe. It is a nostalgic vision, a syncretic expression of the Mozambican Afro-socialism and East German socialism. The painting is evocative of socialist celebrations of progress through work but interprets this anew, skillfully interweaving Mozambican and East German elements. In so doing it emits a hopeful, future-centered quality while at the same time appearing as a dream once dreamed.

The labor program transformed young Angolans and Mozambicans into workers and socialist cosmopolitans. They contributed with their labor power to the East German and to the Angolan and Mozambican economies (albeit not always in expected ways). Their transnational sojourn taught those East Germans who interacted with the friends from abroad about the small stuff of the everyday as lived elsewhere: Angolan and Mozambican bands, dishes, words, and ways of praying. It taught Mozambicans and Angolans not only the German language, work ethic, customs, and socialism as practiced in Central Europe, but also about the unintended, such as notions of gender equality and possibilities of consumption. The post-socialist reverberations of the program have led people in Angola, Mozambique, Germany, and elsewhere to continue to reflect on the meanings and debts incurred through this entanglement. *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World* has plotted the perspectives of labor migrants based on their memories. There remains much scope to trace other forms of migrations, of mobilities, and of (dis)entanglements. Hopefully, in so doing we can continue the project of mapping the transnational world that was created in the space in between the Second and the Third Worlds.

## NOTES

1. Dito, interview conducted by the author, Maputo, Mozambique, March 7, 2014.
2. One example of socialist chromatism is the trio of male faces of different colors in profile depicted on a postcard sent out as invitation to the 1951 World Festival of Youth and Students, which features on the cover of Quinn Slobodian's *Comrades of Color*. See also Quinn Slobodian, "Socialist Chromatism: Race, Racism and the Racial Rainbow in East Germany," in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 23–39.
3. Personal conversation with Dito Tembe, WhatsApp Maputo-Potsdam, November 6, 2021.
4. Tony Judt with Timothy Snyder, *Thinking the Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 43.
5. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "The Marginalisation of Africa," in Nikolaos A. Stavrou (ed.) *Mediterranean Security at the Crossroads: A Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 24–5.
6. The socialist world was at once an "expanding and fracturing" world, as Paul Betts and James Mark remind us. If we think of the Yugoslav–Soviet or the Sino–Soviet split it becomes apparent that "overly crude notions of an intractable two-camp model of world affairs are not very helpful," James Mark and Paul Betts, "Introduction," in *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization*, James Mark et al., eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 5.
7. Betty Banks, Robyn d'Avignon, and Asif Siddiqi, "Introduction: The African-Soviet Modern," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 41, no. 1, 2021, 3.
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