

FROM LUANDA AND MAPUTO TO BERLIN

Uncovering Angolan and Mozambican Migrants' Motives to Move to the German Democratic Republic (1979–1990)

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ABSTRACT: Migration between select “Third World” and “Second World” countries were often organized around bilateral labor migration regimes. As a result, individuals from Angola and Mozambique who came to work and train in East Germany are categorized as labor migrants; an analysis of workers’ motivations to migrate is missing. On the basis of oral history interviews collected in Angola and Mozambique, this article examines the myriad reasons for which young Angolan and Mozambican men and women temporarily relocated to East Germany. These reasons included economic, educational, emotional, and security considerations. The migrants’ complex understandings from below are discussed through the categories of labor, educational, war and emotional migration, providing an important corrective to the top-down designation as “labor migration.” Rather than abandoning the term altogether as an analytical category, this article suggests that it may serve as a shorthand, provided that scholars take seriously the motivations for migration, rather than obliterate these motivations through an uncritical use of the term. This approach challenges the prevailing conceptions of migrants as passive participants in socialist

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labor migrations, as well as the limited conceptions of labor migration often adopted by outside observers.

A better future,
The one that now I own,
Like a bee I suck roses;
The rest does not matter,
I embraced Germany.
—Regina, February 27, 2007

Introduction¹

Regina's poem expresses the intensity of emotions that accompanied her move from the People's Republic of Mozambique to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in the winter of 1988.² She migrated as a young Mozambican woman to work and receive vocational training on East Germany's factory floors. 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, 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 acclimating to an industrial work routine. Regina's poem is about her individual expectations, dreams and desires; it is about the human aspects of migration.³

This article focuses on a key time in the lives of Angolans and Mozambicans who migrated to East Germany, namely the decision-making process that preceded their migrations.⁴ Multiple reasons led young Angolan and Mozambican men, and to a lesser degree women, to actively sign up, or consent to being recruited, to work and receive technical training thousands of miles away from home. Focusing on this decisive moment in the migrant's lives prior to departure sharpens our understanding of the complex decisions they faced. Such an approach challenges both prevailing conceptions of migrants as passive participants as well as wooden definitions of "labor migration." As the migrants' memories reveal, it was not clear to all young people why they were sent North, and their decisions were often based on hearsay and imperfect information. Economic considerations, which fuel labor migration the world over, predictably played a significant role, sustaining dreams of material independence and servicing filial duties to help

support families in war-torn nations. Yet migrants' motivations were far more diverse. Young people were drawn by the promise of education, of laying the foundation for their own careers through the acquisition of skills while also preparing to aid their native country's development. The motive of escaping the myriad consequences of civil war, from the risks of military service and the violence of combat, to the privations of the conflict economy, also featured prominently. Moreover, 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. In the future migrants' imagination, East Germany came to stand not just for a commercial paradise and safe haven; it was also part of a notion of "Europe" as an imagined space of possibilities that bundled notions of adventure, prosperity and the good life. This article demonstrates that the Angolan and Mozambican migrants to East Germany were as much educational migrants, war migrants, aspirational migrants and emotional migrants as they were labor migrants. Examining the myriad reasons that led the young to board the planes from Luanda and Maputo to East Berlin allows us to question the assumption that this labor migration was primarily about finding work elsewhere, and opens up the historiographical category of labor migration to reflect its complexities on the ground.

In part, international labor migration to East Germany—which in addition to migrants from within Eastern Europe encompassed migrants from Algeria, Angola, China, Cuba, Mozambique, and Vietnam—was justified by official government propaganda precisely by packaging the labor migration as labor and educational migration. Where the "capitalist West," especially West Germany's guest worker program, was said to exploit labor, East Germany emphasized that its temporary labor programs were accompanied by training possibilities, which allowed migrants to return home as skilled professionals and a socialist vanguard workforce. As part of the international proletariat, these new workers were to return ready to aid their home countries' industrialization and help spread the socialist revolution.⁵ Bilateral agreements of "mutual advantage" were negotiated between the governments in the name of "proletarian internationalism" and "solidarity" to assuage East German labor needs while educating a workforce for the developing countries. The agreements that governed the temporary employment and training of Angolan (1985–1990) and Mozambican (1979–1990) workers in East German companies are thus productively read in the broader context of socialist development policies with their economic and ideological components.

On the basis of life history interviews with returned worker-trainees in Angola and Mozambique, this article discusses the push and pull factors

of international migration to East Germany as portrayed from below and demonstrates the spectrum of choices perceived by the migrants themselves.⁶ This approach takes up Fred Cooper's "challenge [. . .] 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."⁷ It entails a commitment to letting the sources speak and to develop their contradictions in the context of the contingencies of fully lived lives, memories, and experiences.⁸ The cited quotations are taken from individual and group life history interviews conducted with Angolan and Mozambican migrant worker-trainees to East Germany, and government officials from all three countries who were involved in the migration projects.⁹ Various voices are heard, selected for their ability to representatively illustrate a general sentiment. Voices like Regina's are to be read not in individual context, but rather for their contribution to a collective history of Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees in East Germany.

When foreign workers are mentioned in the academic literature, they are often passive objects written about through German archival sources or the reminiscences of German actors.¹⁰ In contrast, the voices of worker-trainees are central to the analysis in this article. I neither claim to speak for migrants, nor do I presume that their words speak for themselves. I do not discount truth claims, but I am mindful of the circumstances of production and my role in the process, the identity of the narrator and the goals of the narration.¹¹ Overall, a holistic approach relying on life history interviews allows for the consideration of emotions, dreams, and opinions, enriching the analysis by opening up the inner lives of socialist labor migrations.¹²

Why is all this important? Firstly, I am not aware of any analysis of the circumstances that led to the temporary migration of Angolans and Mozambicans to East Germany as worker-trainees—neither from the perspective of the migrants themselves, nor from a state perspective. A comprehensive analysis of the Angolan labor migration regime is yet to be written. The Mozambican context has not been examined historically from the worker-trainees' point of view. Secondly, in the academic literature on East German labor migrations, young people appear on East German soil from faraway places, as if out of nowhere; the analysis is solely concerned with their stay in Germany.¹³ This article shifts the focus back to how the Mozambican and Angolan migrants presented their decision to migrate, providing crucial context regarding the background of the worker-trainees. Thirdly, focusing on personal perspectives without discounting the geopolitical alliances and the political economy of labor migration proposes a revised reading of the phenomenon.¹⁴ Moreover, this article's focus on the initial impetus for international migration fits thematically into the

long tradition of Southern African labor literature, at the same time that it brings together the disparate biographies of labor history, socialist education history, migration and refugee history, and the history of emotions, showing how labor was intrinsically interrelated with other aspects of peoples' lives. Lastly, this focus makes it possible to use mobile worker-trainees to bring together different histories that occur across disparate spatial registers, linking the East German, Mozambican, and Angolan local, regional and national contexts through labor migration from Africa to Europe, thereby tracing a migration web that formed an interconnected socialist world.

Reasons to Migrate

As birds, we passed flying,
crossing oceans, rivers, continents,
On a thunder we fell down in Berlin,
My dream came true
—Regina, February 27, 2007¹⁵

This section turns towards the reasons Angolan and Mozambican women and men left their homes behind to engage in migrant labor in East Germany, as voiced by the migrants themselves. The following four migration types emerge as collective drivers of migration: (1) labor migration, (2) educational migration, (3) war migration, (4) emotional migration. While the state could pressure future worker-trainees to some extent, the vast majority signed up convinced that they had made the best possible choice for a better personal future.¹⁶ The migrants thus retained agency in the face of various structural constraints and were able to take advantage of enabling opportunities. These four categories are not mutually exclusive; rather, worker-trainees were positioned to take advantage of any combination of these types of migration, and gave weight to different factors in their own decision-making process. Fabião, a worker-trainee from Mozambique, summarizes 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.¹⁷

Apart from the complexity of motivations, examined below, it is important to understand the perceived need to migrate abroad in order to pursue opportunities largely closed at home. Whether worker-trainees had never left their home city or had already had experience with travel abroad beforehand, they all set out to explore a culturally, climatically and economically different context, which was to pose challenges and hold rewards for which it was impossible to be fully prepared. It was thus a journey into the unknown; preparing for it required worker-trainees to have thought about their reasons for migrating and have weighted their options.

Labor Migration: "German businesses asked for a Mozambican workforce, but people came."¹⁸

At the government level, the migration regime was conceptualized as labor migration with a vocational training focus. As such, it temporarily brought labor power from the global South to the East to address the labor shortages of an industrialized nation in the heart of Europe. Seen from a historical perspective, this migration might be reminiscent of Africa's great outmigration, the forced transportation of slaves to the Americas, Europe and Asia, and of historical ties between European colonial powers, including Germany, and sub-Saharan Africa, based to a large extent on labor exploitation. Indeed, the generation of the migrants' parents, old enough to have lived through colonization, occasionally voiced reservations about the temporary relocation of their offspring to Europe. When they did so, their fears resulted from the tradition of an historical experience of exploitation: they feared their children could be eaten by the white man, or that they would be sent abroad as slaves, abused for their labor power. These were, however, not the connections that the Angolan and Mozambican migrants drew.

Born mainly in the 1960s, the migrants themselves firmly placed their migratory experience into the context of a socialist world. Part of the attraction of socialism at the time lay precisely in its claim to promoting world revolution, establishing an alternative development path for countries still economically intertwined with their former colonizers, and offering ideological and economic support through the new partnership model

of proletarian internationalism. East German support of southern African liberation movements, including the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), was central to East Germany's image of itself as a revolutionary power. At the same time, this pre-independence support resulted in especially close post-independence ties with the People's Republic of Angola and the People's Republic of Mozambique. Mozambican President Samora Machel (1975–86) described the relationship between his country 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.¹⁹

It is this political mission that former Mozambican worker-trainees imbibed and still employ to make sense of their work experience in East Germany. When asked today about the purpose of their migration, they speak 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 feel a deep personal connection and allegiance, is central to this sense of mission. They portray Machel as the “father of the nation,” who sent them, his “children,” abroad to become the *New Man* to develop the nascent socialist Mozambique.²⁰ This was therefore a personal mission built on trust. Angolan former worker-trainees do not reminisce of the socialist period with the same emotional tone, but they also place their migration experience in this wider global framework. In the words of Angolan José Antonio:

Many young people went to East Germany due to 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 [1975–79] thought about the professional education of those young people and of those people whom they said would be demobilized from the Angolan military forces so that they wouldn't remain unemployed . . . There was a necessity to arrange job training at least . . . for this country to have skilled workers so that our industry could develop.²¹

Thus migrants overall trusted the claims of their governments that they would be sent to East Germany to work and gain education to help develop

their socialist-leaning nations upon their return as a vanguard workforce. Many migrants understood the nature of the program as labor migration prior to their arrival in East Germany. Ilda recounts: "I went to Germany because I knew that our government had made an agreement with the German government in order 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."²² Not everybody was as well informed prior to leaving, and imaginations of what migrating to East Germany meant were diverse. Lino's father knew about the Mozambican school children that 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:²³

The first groups who went to 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 in order 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.²⁴

The quotation reveals that migrants had far from a perfect understanding of the myriad bilateral agreements that regulated migration between these countries, including options for Angolans and Mozambicans to temporarily relocate as apprentice, worker, university student, pupil, 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 their depictions of European life. It is important to keep in mind when reading government agreements pertaining to the labor migration that in all likelihood this information was only partially apparent to potential migrants. Most worker-trainees learned about the reality of daily life of the labor and training program only once on the ground. Hence, these migrants made their decision based on imperfect information, gathered through hearsay and rumors and the experiences of friends and family members, more so than on the basis of official written information—a courageous leap of faith into the unknown.

Labor migration is intrinsically linked to economic migration. We often assume that the primary motivation for blue collar and unskilled labor migrants is the possibility of creating material conditions for a better life.

Adérito, a migrant from Angola, states very clearly that his motivation to sign up was to “have a change in living standards while also continuing my training.”²⁵ For some, like Armando, a worker-trainee from Mozambique, the “unsatisfactory economic situation” he encountered upon returning from his first contract in June 1984 led him to return by December of the same year, despite not having had the intention to return to East Germany.²⁶ Indeed, like Adérito and Armando, many of the interviewees mention economic motivations; nonetheless, they are rarely portrayed as the driving factor behind the decision to migrate. Among the opportunities work in East Germany created, migrants mention the ability to live a comfortable and fashionable life in East Germany, while also supporting their families at home, and laying a foundation for their economic independence after their return. Buying remittances, in the form of goods, played a central role as well. Migrants remitted their income in goods because the East German Mark was not readily convertible, and because goods were hard to come by in the Angolan and Mozambican conflict economies. Patrício describes the economic contrast between his Mozambican and his German life like this:

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 wasn't 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 A.M. 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.²⁷

This vision of East German richness voiced by somebody who had experienced situations of want and hardship at home is often discounted when the living conditions for foreign workers in East Germany are decried and the limited supply of consumer items and restrictions of goods transfers for foreign workers are discussed.²⁸ It is important to integrate the subjective experiences of comfort and consumption from below to shed a different light on the discussion about workers' conditions in East Germany, illuminating both the subjective positions from which historians pass judgments but also the diverging perceptions between East Germans and their guests from the global South.

In migrating to East Germany, young Angolans and Mozambicans followed a regional tradition of labor migration in southern Africa as rite of

passage. Traditionally, young men migrated to the mines in order to accumulate the funds to pay the bride price and through marriage assume the role of adult men in their home communities. The topic of economic freedom was still important to this new generation of worker-trainees. Saving for marriage was no longer their central concern, but rather building a life independent of their families or place of origin. In the words of a Mozambican migrant:

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.²⁹

Historically, especially in southern Mozambique, contract labor migration to the South African Rand promised the accomplishment of these goals. Pedro originally wanted to go to South Africa because that was the only opportunity he knew about for making 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 left from 1985 until 1989.³⁰ Seen through the eyes of the worker-trainees who went to East Germany, the comparison seems favorable in retrospective:

My father went to South Africa, my uncles, my grandfather. All the men in my family went to South Africa, I went to 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, only I had been able to afford much more than him. The work in the mines is also harder and paid worse.³¹

Another important aspect of the economic migration is the desire to support either a larger extended, or more often, a nuclear family. A female worker-trainee remembers:

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 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.³²

These interview excerpts show the complexity of economic push and pull factors: while East German wages and products pulled worker-trainees, the weak labor market and economic difficulties at home pushed people out. In following the common reading of this program as labor migration, we come to understand the geopolitical and economic factors influencing the migrants' decisions.

There are many aspects that allow for placing this movement of people firmly into the labor migration context.³³ Young people changed continents to serve contracts in light or heavy industry where they worked in shifts, attended vocational school and lived in company dormitories. The company and the representatives of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) and the MPLA-PT and FRELIMO governed the official framework in which the worker-trainees moved. On paper, they had the same rights and duties as East German workers of the same rank. In practice, the experiences in and around the factory floor varied widely, from those receiving a first rate education and advancing through the ranks even to the level of master craftsman, to those worker-trainees exploited as unskilled labor in hazardous and unattractive jobs. Some themes such as recruitment, labor conditions, housing, level of integration, surveillance, pay and economic remittances resonate with regional labor literature about African migrants to the South African, Rhodesian and Zambian mines.³⁴ Yet there are also differences. The East German migration regime is a post-war idea and, for Angola and Mozambique, it really only marked the long 1980s, hence avoiding an explicit tie to a colonial legacy. It covers a longer distance and inserts the African migrants directly into a predominately white, closed European society. It connects the global periphery to the semi-periphery (to speak in Immanuel Wallerstein's terms), thus shifting the profit away from the traditional center in the West towards the East while maintaining similar North-South economic dependencies.³⁵ Lastly, it is embedded within extensive bilateral economic relationships encompassing economic and scientific-technical cooperation, combining aspects of development aid with commercial ventures. While East Germany sought to secure access to raw materials and markets for its products, Angola and Mozambique imported machinery, advisors and educational possibilities *in situ* and abroad. East Germany's initial vision was to aid these young nations through trade, technology transfer and skills education, an approach which increasingly failed as the 1980s progressed. As all three countries struggled, their relations shed their ideological trappings and became more openly self-interested.

While the label "labor migration" thus serves to place this migratory regime into a wider regional history, it does not adequately allow for an

understanding of the complex reasons that led worker-trainees to leave. It also does not adequately depict the bilateral agreements that explicitly placed the labor migration into a framework of skills training. Only in combining multiple approaches—an economic approach, focusing on labor history; an approach that focuses attention on socialist education and notions of development; and an approach that analyzes the impact of war and emotional factors—can we fully understand worker-trainees' decisions to migrate, and can we adequately depict how labor was interrelated with other aspects of migrants' lives. The emerging picture allows us to trace how their mobile lives bring together different locally rooted histories on an international stage.

Educational Migration: "I felt selected for the days to come and everything was a project of the future."³⁶

The socialist world, understood from the point of view of the young Angolans and Mozambicans, delineated opportunities for personal and collective advancement through training, ranging from military and party training courses to entire vocational and higher education degrees, and opportunities to travel the world. Thus, most migrants understood this particular opportunity to travel to East Germany as worker-trainees as their turn to enjoy the fruits of the socialist international connections their home countries established. The fact that their training was to be vocational was secondary, only relevant in that it was not the higher education or continued schooling of which many migrants dreamed.

Socialism opened up new avenues of international mobility. University students, workers, apprentices, party cadres and children travelled from Angola and Mozambique to East Germany while consultants, teachers, military advisors, and youth brigades travelled the other way. The worker-trainees were implicated in this mobile exchange as the most numerically significant group of transnational migrants.³⁷ Estevão, who ultimately decided to work in East Germany, places his experience in the larger educational Cold War context of the time, highlighting his choices to engage with the socialist international world as it presented itself to him:

At that time, there was this opening. Our 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 in order 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.³⁸

Like Estevão, worker-trainees occasionally chose between various training options, the most frequent being in Cuba or the Soviet Union, either for continued education or military training. It could also happen that migrants were on the list for other educational programs in socialist countries, but due to bureaucratic processes beyond their understanding, found themselves unexpectedly in the 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 frame their vocational training in Germany across various industries, including mining, agriculture and industrial production, as learning for the future in a double sense: they acquired skills for their personal professional development and for contributing to the national development of their countries. The temporary nature of their migration was thus implicit in the clear direction and sense of mission of their migration. The worker-trainee’s emphasis on the educational aspect of the program forms a counter-narrative to portrayals decrying East Germany’s political emphasis on education as a paper strategy. Some scholars maintain that the East German foreign labor program was a labor migration that only employed the terminology of job training as development aid to set itself apart from the West German guest worker program, decried in East Germany as capitalist exploitation.³⁹ There is some justification for this; towards the second half of the 1980s, the conditions for foreign worker-trainees’ vocational training rapidly deteriorated. 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 their own formal education; the governments of both Angola and Mozambique hoped to address the severe lack of skills by educating citizens abroad and importing educational personnel.⁴⁰ Thus, taking the vocational training aspect seriously is not an attempt to whitewash the program, but reflects both the worker-trainees’ own understanding of their migration and the sending countries’ interests. David remembers proudly:

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 1988.⁴¹

For most worker-trainees it seems crucial to frame their experience in retrospect as educational. Emphasizing vocational training distinguishes their experience from earlier labor migrations undertaken in the context of colonial forced labor and slavery. Moreover, it echoes official government propaganda at the time, emphasizing the national need for skilled cadres. The temporary migration to East Germany remains a formative part of the migrants' personal careers and professional biographies. Former worker-trainees have processed their experience as (failed) job training and work experience, an episode that marked the early years of their professional lives. An emphasis on education in the interviews might also stem from a need to justify the validity of their training in the context of failed job placements upon return. Returning skilled workers were to be placed in appropriate jobs, reflecting the planned economy, but this system deteriorated together with all three national economies. With the turn towards market-economies, the job search was left to the returning workers' own initiative. The gap between supply and demand revealed the inutility of the trainings they had received. To complicate matters further, many 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. In retrospect, Fabião is 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.⁴²

Fabião raises an important distinction, namely that of learning technical know-how and soft skills. Many returned migrants highlight the personal benefit from having lived abroad and having successfully adapted to German (work) culture. At the same time, they acknowledge that the vocational training received could only be applied in a few areas, such as coal mining, textile work and the harbor industry. Technical knowledge did not transfer as easily as imagined at the planning table.

The educational alternatives open to many young Mozambicans and Angolans at the time were limited. The option to migrate to East Germany

is often presented as the only choice. Guiro remembers: “I was already unemployed for about a year and then I heard about the possibility of going to 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.”⁴³ For women, the options were often more limited, as it was harder to gain access to education in its various forms. Lidia describes what kinds of challenges young women like her faced:

First, I have to say that 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 that 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.⁴⁴

Women were less likely to attend school at home 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.

Overall, the difficulties in accessing education and job formation at home were many, 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 they were unable to do at home. 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 party training was as much part of spreading the global socialist revolution and acting in solidarity with Third World countries struggling to emerge from colonial relations, as it was economically and politically motivated.⁴⁵ East Germany hoped to send back skilled workers to Angola and Mozambique, on whom it could then rely for industrial projects with East German involvement in both countries.

War Migration: “The military was an awful place to be. They scraped your head and collected baskets of fresh blood.”⁴⁶

Born into the 1960s, a globally tumultuous decade that saw violent divisions emerge between the global North and South in the context of liberation struggles, but also new linkages forged in the name of solidarity,

the lives of the young Angolan and Mozambican migrants were marked by war. In both Angola and Mozambique the anti-colonial struggle turned violent. In Angola fighting against the Portuguese broke out in 1961, in Mozambique in 1964. Independence in 1975 ended the wars for independence, but did not bring the desired peace; Angola was engulfed in civil war from 1975 until 2002, and Mozambique from 1977 until 1992. Post-colonial Mozambique and Angola's civil wars were as much proxy theatres of the hot Cold War as expressions of regional, national and ethnic power struggles.⁴⁷ The MPLA's and FRELIMO's close ties with the East even prior to independence put them into a framework of "Third World Liberation Marxism-Leninism."⁴⁸ Iconic freedom fighters like Che Guevara, Franz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Hoji-ya-Henda and Josina Machel were the new heroes. The majority of people did not have the ambiguous fortune to become shining stars on the firmament of (inter)national heroes and merely suffered from these wars. Living through such extended periods of warfare affected every citizen; even though the theatres of war shifted over time, the danger of the omnipresent draft and economic deprivation formed the backdrop of everyday life. The memories shared from below do not reflect the ideology of the time; rather than striving for an heroic death, a strong desire for safety—their own and their friends and family members—was uppermost on the young people's minds. In this context, it comes as no surprise that a primary motivation for young migrants to temporarily relocate to East Germany was to evade the consequences of war at home.

Migrating to East Germany was thus a way for young Angolans and Mozambicans to escape the many impacts of the wars on their lives. The fear that many young people felt was not abstract but based on very real experiences of death, violence, displacement, and hunger. This meant many an interruption of their education and childhoods. "To speak the truth, most people who left the country at that time were motivated by fleeing the war, military service and more," claims Augusto from Angola.⁴⁹ Many young people had already abandoned the 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 recruitment 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 overstrained and spaces were hard to obtain. Limited employment opportunities existed in these conflict economies and young people struggled to envision a future back home.

While oral history interviews are replete with references to fleeing the war, the government archives are silent on this point. The East German

government did not think of their country as a safe-haven for those potential fighters whose duty it was to advance the socialist cause in their home countries. Unsurprisingly, the labor regime was neither intended nor promoted as a refugee program. At first sight, reading a labor migration as war migration might seem like a contradiction. This state-organized program is in many ways the opposite of the irregular migration, porous borders, clandestine human smuggling, and focus on pure survival often associated with refugee migrations. The majority of officially recognized Angolan and Mozambican refugees tended to settle in neighboring countries, whereas this program enabled migrants to legally traverse continents and enter an extremely policed state with walled borders.⁵⁰ Yet, when it comes to the motivations of the migrants, there was often no difference between a young person deciding to migrate to East Germany and one deciding to migrate to a neighboring country or elsewhere; only the opportunities that presented themselves to these migrants varied.

Many worker-trainees migrated internally before fleeing to Germany. Inocêncio colorfully describes his life in rural Manhiça, in Mozambique, as marked by war and death: "The desire to flee was more exciting to me than sex with a nymphomaniac."⁵¹ Finally, in 1984, after finishing seventh grade, his uncle brought him to Maputo to continue his studies at secondary school, from where he later went to Germany. Like Inocêncio, many tried to make their way to the provincial capitals and ultimately to the capitals Maputo or Luanda to continue their education and live a relatively more secure life. Family networks facilitated this internal mobility; the fortunate ones lived with relatives.

Often, worker-trainees had already experienced traumatic events, which further strengthened their desire to evade military service. Zeca, from the district of Maganja da Costa, in Zambézia province, was prevented from going home by fighting and stayed in the provincial capital of Quelimane instead. He remembers 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."⁵² He arrived in Maputo by plane in February or March 1987 and stayed with his older sister in Maputo 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 [collection center]."⁵³ In Mozambique, future worker-trainees were collected in regional collection centers, first in the Mozambican provinces, and finally in Maputo, where they were exposed to what many describe as a quasi-military style preparation. At that point,

some of those selected assumed 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 echoed the theme of random recruitment. While many of the Angolan interviewees did serve in the military for significant periods of time prior to migrating, most Mozambicans did not. Moisés, from Mozambique, recalls recruitment to East Germany as “a light at the end of the tunnel” because it allowed him to avoid military conscription.⁵⁴ A few young Angolans were able to sign up straight from school, just like the majority of Mozambicans. Ilidio, who migrated with his brother, is among these cases:

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 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 independence 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 in order 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.⁵⁵

This sentiment of never being safe, even after having regularized their paperwork with the military or having achieved an exemption through connections, is echoed in many interviews. It demonstrates the culture of fear and the arbitrariness with which young Angolans and Mozambicans felt confronted on a daily basis, 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, decided thus 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.”⁵⁶

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, from where he managed to flee. The government insisted he take up his work in the same area. He continued feeling unsafe and was transferred to work with consumer cooperatives in January 1982. He encountered the same risks when travelling to various districts such as Chundo and Mubaute and he concluded:

It wasn't a good option to work politically in the country. That is when the opportunity to gamble for technical-professional training arose. 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 17th of June I received the news, with the help of the director, that the group would leave on the 21st of the same month. I left Quelimane for Maputo and there, just like in Zambezia, I couldn't walk around much because I could not be seen . . . I was lucky and left Maputo for Germany on the 27th of August of the same year and arrived in Germany the next day to fulfill my contract.⁵⁷

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 and women's myriad motivations for mobility if we are willing to abandon the strict division between the terms *migrant* and *refugee*. A refugee, according to international law, is a person fleeing armed conflict or persecution, while migrants are those choosing to move to ameliorate their lives. As Alexander Betts convincingly argues, upholding this distinction has important policy ramifications and therefore analytical value for the study of international relations.⁵⁸ Listening to these migrants, it becomes clear that it is not a historically useful analytical framework. These young Angolans and Mozambicans were moving to evade armed conflict as much as to ameliorate their lives and to play another patriotic role. As workers-trainees they were to serve the state on the factory floor rather than on the battlefield. The governments took their citizens' willingness to migrate for labor and

education for granted, but their motivation to escape the war was rendered invisible. Silenced in the archives, it is no less real an impetus for mobility.

Emotions and Migration: " . . . this was my chance to see Europe."⁵⁹

The study of emotions contributes to understanding the human side of migration by revealing the inner lives of the migrants.⁶⁰ Emotions pervade the sources, and cannot be separated from labor and economics, educational concerns, or wartime migration. Whether it is the desire for material resources, the striving for vocational training, or the fear of war experiences, migrants' decisions always resulted from the interplay of rational and emotional drivers. The last section implicitly dealt with strong negative emotions such as insecurity, loss, trauma and hopelessness that young people confronted as a result of war. In contrast, Regina's poem, quoted at the beginning of this article's main sections, arrestingly introduces migrants' positive emotions, hopes and dreams, an area which this section further elaborates. In the case of the worker-trainees, positive emotions and aspirations drove migration specifically in two areas: emotional and aspirational migration. The emotional bonds that sustained the first type of migration range from friendship, to family ties, to love, partnership, fatherhood and motherhood; they reveal the individual in relation to social units, most prominently the family. Aspirational migration, on the other hand, tends to be self-centered and focused on feelings of hope, accomplishment, self-realization, and independence.

Romantic relationships were the most common emotional drivers of migration. Lúcia introduces us 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."⁶¹ She was already trained as a nurse and had spent two years in military service. In order to join her husband, she needed to leave their child with family in Mozambique and relinquish her ability to determine her profession. Officially, only single individuals were accepted, precisely to avoid questions of family reunifications. Worker-trainees were paid separation compensation. In return, they were expected to leave their family attachments behind. The practice, however, diverged from the plans. African couples signed up not infrequently at the same time, keeping their relationship status a secret, and visited each other regularly while in East Germany. Many more couples were formed abroad between worker-trainees. One of the legacies of the program is that couples among former worker-trainees continued to form after their return, on the basis of a shared horizon of experiences. This was also true for relationships between

foreigners and East German citizens. Once landed in East Germany, new sets of emotional ties formed between young male worker-trainees and East German women. Those that morphed into serious relationships, marriages, and shared parenthood, functioned as emotional pull factors for re-migration after the first contract was up.

The emotional relations that bound the worker-trainees to East Germany and within East Germany can be divided into home networks and host networks. Home networks encompass relationships whose ties reach back to the home country, such as the birth family, neighbors, friends and partners. Host networks include those relationships that emerged while in East Germany with locals and other foreign workers, friends, host families, romantic relationships and children. All these relationships changed over time, but worker-trainees remained constantly invested in these networks, contrary to the single, unattached people the government expected.

Next to romantic relationships, other forms of emotional ties to East Germans served as pull factors. Fernando, a product of the many links between Mozambique and East Germany in the area of 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 in order to return to see his adoptive family:

Well, I have a different story. 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. We were four children. . . . After we returned to our country we continued to live our lives and later, because of this communist thing, this opportunity appeared to go to Germany in order to work. 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. Hence I then went to Germany.⁶²

Some of the 900 Mozambican school children who studied at Friendship School decided to return to the familiar and signed up as worker-trainees after their unhappy return to Mozambique in 1988. The products of German school education and vocational training, they had become estranged from their own cultural context and habituated to work routines and technical skills not easily transferable to their home context. They felt better equipped to brave their future in Germany than in Mozambique.⁶³

Aspirational migration emerges as the second emotive motivation complex. Migrants dreamed of travelling to Europe in search of adventure; desired to live an independent life as young adults; hoped for a better life,

both in the immediate future in East Germany and in the long term after their return back 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 in order to succeed with this opportunity to go to East Germany."⁶⁴ For Luzia, from Angola, leaving was a rite of passage:

Honestly speaking, 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. [By migrating] I was guaranteeing a future for myself and my children. . . . Even though I was still a child, I wanted to live another experience and, taking into account the political situation in the country at the time, the decision was really simple.⁶⁵

Some worker-trainees were tourists of sorts, wanting 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."⁶⁶ Migrants like Lázaro were keen on adventures abroad and motivated by seeing places they had heard and read about for themselves:

Well, I thought, actually, I didn't think, 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 . . . I did not think twice before deciding. . . . Only my mother thought about me and cared whether I returned or I didn't, whether they'd kill me there or not, but as the decision was mine, I spoke to her to let me go . . . If I stayed here I would just be suffering, but there I had the hope that things could change.⁶⁷

Aspirational migration thus took the form of a vague hope for a better future or, in the case of Zefrino, a very concrete notion of what to accomplish. A Mozambican artist who had trained under Naftal Langa since he was fourteen years old, Zefrino remembers:

When I reached seventeen years, he [Naftal Langa] told me that he also had been to Germany to show an exposition and he encouraged me to register my name in different locations so that I could go there and buy some materials. He had bought the tools with which he worked in Germany. This is how I grew up always with this idea in my mind that I needed to go to Germany.⁶⁸

Regina frames 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.⁶⁹

Aspirational and emotional migration reasons are especially important in framing the role of gender. 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 during the long twentieth century.⁷⁰ Thus, it is not the desire for independence in itself that is noteworthy, but that it was expressed at a time when communist regimes discovered the female proletariat. Under the emancipatory aegis of socialism, these women had the opportunity to migrate to East Germany like their male age mates.⁷¹

When talking about aspirational migration, the Angolan and Mozambican migrants tend to portray their decision in individualistic terms. The ideal of the 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, voiced when explaining the geopolitical narrative of this migration. For the migrants, this was a lived tension between individual desires and collective duties, between the socialist state's invasive role in their lives and their ability not to lose sight of their individual motivations.

Conclusion

This is the beginning of my dream,
I foresee a better future!
—Regina, February 27, 2007⁷²

Like Regina, many young Angolan and Mozambican men and women left for East Germany, expecting an important step in their personal lives and conscious of their contribution toward building a skilled labor force accustomed to work in socialist planned economies. Their nations', their family's and their own expectations of the return of the migratory experience influenced their decision-making. As worker-trainees, they were to constitute a national vanguard workforce, serve as their family's providers of East German goods, and become the masters of their own fortunes. The majority of young people weighed their options at home and abroad and decided to volunteer for East Germany. The decision-making process was complex.

The migrants' voices demonstrate that the designation of the program as "labor migration" can only be used as a shorthand. Those who left were labor migrants in that they worked abroad for pay. They were economic migrants who used their comparatively high wages to finance a consumption-centered life under communism and to remit East German consumer items to their home countries. Nonetheless, their migration was motivated by much more than gainful employment. They were also primarily educational migrants who placed great importance on the training component of the bilateral agreement, wanting both to invest in their personal careers and in the development of their home countries. In addition, many were war migrants—whether refugees, internally displaced persons or draft dodgers—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 of these motivations for migration are interrelated. Together, they expand the aperture of our analysis beyond what the limitations of the labor migration framework permits.

Labor migration is a top-down designation, a bureaucratic category that has often also been employed as an analytic category. The oral record provides a corrective to this reading and demonstrates that the bottom-up perspective of this migration is more complex. This in turn allows for a revision of our use of the term "labor migration." Rather than abandoning it altogether, we need to stress its role as an umbrella term, and reveal other aspects obliterated by its uncritical use. In bringing together labor history, the history of socialist education, the history of the civil wars, and the history of emotion we fill in the picture that emerges from the interviews. Migrants moved for many different combinations of reasons, and to reduce these to a single one is a misrepresentation of the nature of this migration as experienced from below.

This article articulates some of the ways that individuals instrumentalize migration from below while the state instrumentalizes migration from above. Their reasons are only partially superimposable. A certain tension between both visions becomes evident when listening to the migrants' voices. In an attempt to marry the organized, collective nature of the state-sponsored labor and training regime with their own life history, the worker-trainees mostly embed their decision to migrate in narratives about individual and personal life development and career plans while they explain the rationale of the program within the larger context of the economic development of their home countries. The view from below further

affords us a glimpse of the complexity of decision-making that defies dichotomous categorizations. Mobility in southern African labor literature is often perceived as playing a crucial role in local responses to coercive environments, whether warfare, slavery or forced labor. 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 towards education, towards adventure, towards love and towards 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. What results are descriptions of ambivalent and complex lives, driven by rational considerations and emotions, vague hopes and concrete disappointments.

The interviews also reveal the ordinariness and extraordinariness of this migration of Angolans and Mozambicans to East Germany in the 1980s. Within the framework of these bilateral agreements, unskilled Africans officially migrated directly 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. The migrants spent a formative time of their lives in East Germany and to varying degrees carry with them this legacy until today. They keep alive their memories and a distinct identity as former workers to East Germany. What remains is a group of Angolans and Mozambicans who were socialized into being members of an interconnected socialist world. Upon their mass return home in the early 1990s, they realized the misalignment between their East German job experience and Angolan and Mozambican realities, but only slowly did the asynchronous nature of their international socialist socialization in a post-socialist world become apparent.

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Notes

1. I would like to thank Emmanuel Kreike, Zachary Kagan-Guthrie, Iwa Nawrocki and Eugenia Herbert for their helpful comments. This research is part of my PhD project, provisionally entitled "From Africa to the German Democratic Republic and Back: Uncovering the Life and Work Histories of Transcontinental Mozambican and Angolan Contract Workers," which examines the lives of Angolan

and Mozambican men and women who received professional training and labored in the former German Democratic Republic. I would like to acknowledge the Research Fellowship at the National Library of Portugal (FLAD-BNP), the Mercator Fellowship and Princeton University for their field support. I am also grateful to my colleagues at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Humboldt University in Berlin, and the directors and staff of the Angolan National Archives in Luanda, and the Portuguese National Library in Lisbon for providing advice and institutional homes during my research.

2. 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. The original is in the possession of the poem’s author; a photo remains with the author of this essay. This is my translation from Portuguese, as are all interview quotations cited. I tried to stay true to the migrants’ original voices in the translations but edited for understanding where necessary. I choose to identify Regina and all worker-trainees cited in this article only by their first names for reasons of privacy.

3. A note on verb tenses: I employ the *present* when discussing worker-trainees’ memories and the *past* when discussing their past experiences.

4. I use the term *migrant* in this essay to emphasize that the young people worked and trained in a country different to their country of birth. In international law, the term is used to distinguish the mobility of people who migrate on their own impetus from people like refugees and displaced persons who flee persecution, violence and threats to their lives. In light of the complexity of the lives discussed here, upholding the distinction between refugee and migrant becomes difficult. Further, in the context of bilateral programs that managed every aspect of the migration process—from the journey itself to the living, working and training arrangements of migrants in their host country, the duration of stay, the pay and working conditions, and the return trip—it is difficult to speak of migration purely out of the migrants’ own volition and without the involvement of external compelling factors. Some scholars distinguish further between voluntary and forced migration, an area discussed also in the context of Southern African labor migrations. This is not a productive dichotomy because my interviewees, like the vast majority of historical actors, face structural constraints while retaining some agency. Rather, migration takes place on a spectrum. Perhaps this points to the need to develop a new category for people who leave their home country to migrate to a socialist country on the basis of such bilateral contracts.

5. 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, 2 (1996): 204–30. 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), 110–117.

6. I employ the term *worker-trainee* to highlight the connection between work and vocational training. Initially, few of the new arrivals identified as workers, something which changed over time. However, in framing the migration experience in retrospect, work takes a backseat in the interviews. Interviewees speak extensively of the vocational training aspect, of their free time and the importance of their private lives.

7. Frederick Cooper, "African Labor History," in *Global Labour History: A State of the Art*, ed. Jan Lucassen (Bern: P. Lang, 2006), 116.

8. The memory of the worker-trainees expressed in the interviews has undergone changes in interpretation and memory of past events, influenced by their later life experiences and the conditions of recall. Oral history can be read for content as much as for feelings and speaks to the past and the present. The public and private, past and present memories of the worker-trainees will be examined in more detail in my dissertation.

9. I conducted a total of 268 interviews in Mozambique, Angola and Germany with former worker-trainees, government officials and other African migrants to East Germany. These range from informal to formal interviews, individual to group interviews. In addition, peoples' tin trunk archives containing photo albums, letters, contracts, reports and memorabilia inform my analysis. I also consulted newspapers, tapes, and government documents in libraries, archives, and ministries in Angola, Germany, Mozambique, Portugal and South Africa.

10. Jochen Oppenheimer, "Mozambican Worker Migration to the Former German Democratic Republic: Serving Socialism and Struggling under Democracy," *Portuguese Studies Review* 12, 1 (2004): 163–187; 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*, eds. Karin Weiss and Mike Dennis (Münster: LIT, 2005); Andreas Müggenburg, "Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der ehemaligen DDR: Darstellung und Dokumentation," *Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für die Belange der Ausländer* (Berlin: Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1996); Eva-Maria Elsner and Lothar Elsner, *Zwischen Nationalismus und Internationalismus: über Ausländer und Ausländerpolitik in der DDR 1949–1990* (Rostock: Norddeutsche Hochschulschriften Verlag, 1994); Gruner-Domic, "Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration."

11. My thinking on oral history has been influenced by Jan Vansina, "Memory and Oral Tradition," in *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History*, ed. Joseph Calder Miller (Hamden CT: Floestone, Dawson, 1980); Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets and History," *History and Theory* 39, 4 (2000): 11–22; Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001); Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Valerie Yow, "Ethics and Interpersonal

Relationships in Oral History Research,” *The Oral History Review* 22, 1 (1995): 51–66; David M. Oshinsky, “Oral History: Playing by the Rules,” *The Journal of American History* 77, 2 (1990): 609–614; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Donna De Blasio et. al., eds. *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009); Alistair Thomson, “Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History,” *The Oral History Review* 34, 1 (2007): 49–70.

12. In this, I draw inspiration from: Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires an Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

13. 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*, eds. Jan C Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 271–281; Annegret Schüle, “‘Proletarischer Internationalismus’ oder ‘Ökonomischer Vorteil für die DDR?’ Mosambikanische, angolansiche und vietnamesische Arbeitskräfte im VEB Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei (1980–1989),” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 42 (2002): 191–210.

14. For a thorough analysis of the geo-political and economic background, see Oppenheimer, “Mozambican Worker Migration”; 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).

15. “Avidor Alemão,” [sic], Regina, 2007, second stanza.

16. After the bigger scale structural and economic labor histories of the 1970s and 1980s the microhistorical focus during the 1990s emphasized worker’s agency within the framework of emancipatory history writing; for examples, see Charles van Onselen, *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotswe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991); Allen F. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); Jeanne Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877–1962* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).

17. Fabião, interview by author, 13 March 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

18. 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, 2005), 76.

19. *Neues Deutschland*, 4 March 1983, cited in Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1985* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1995), 20.

20. The task of developing the *New Man* was central to socialist societies. President Samora Machel framed his understanding of the 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 *Colecção estudos e orientações* 14, Departamento do Trabalho Ideológico da FRELIMO ed. (Maputo: 1982), 4. My own translation. On the concept of the New Man in Angola, see Delinda Collier, “A “New Man” for Africa? Some Particularities of the Marxist Homen Novo within Angolan Cultural Policy”, in *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, eds. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Laza (New York: Routledge, 2012); Christine Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola: South-South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976–1991* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), Ch. 4.

21. José António, interview by author, 8 March 2015, Luanda, Angola.

22. Ilda, interview by author, 30 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

23. The Friendship School (*Schule der Freundschaft*) educated 900 Mozambican children for part of their secondary school and a two-year professional training program with the aim of returning an elite group of skilled technicians and political cadres to Mozambique. For further information consult Tanja Müller, “‘Memories of Paradise’—Legacies of Socialist Education in Mozambique,” *African Affairs* 109, 436 (2010): 451–470; Tanja Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique* (Lanham, MD: 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 *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World*, ed. Quinn Slobodian (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 188–210.

24. Lino, interview by author, 13 May 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

25. Adérito, interview by author, 23 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

26. Armando, interview by author, 29 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

27. Patrício, interview by author, 27 January 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

28. Muggenburg, “Die ausländischen Vertragsarbeiter in der Ehemaligen DDR,” 13–15.

29. Anonymous 3, interview by author, 16 January 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

30. Pedro, interview by author, 7 March 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

31. Patrício, interview by author, 27 January 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

32. Irene, interview by author, 31 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

33. Aníbal Fernando Lucas, “Mao-de-obra Moçambicana emigrante na ex. República Democrática Alema, 1979–1990,” *Licenciatura em História*, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2002; Gruner-Domic, “Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräfteemigration in der DDR”; Schüle, “Proletarischer Internationalismus”; Kuck, “Für den sozialen Aufbau ihrer Heimat?”

34. For classic studies of southern African labor literature drawing on life history interviews see T. Dunbar Moodie, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine*. For literature taking into account the cultural and everyday experiences of labor migration, refer to Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c.1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994); Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001); Keletso Atkins, *The Moon Is Dead! Give Us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993).

35. For an analysis of East and West German development policies vis-à-vis the developing world, see Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era*, 5.

36. Zeca, interview by author, 29 May 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

37. In the Mozambican case: more than 1,200 East German citizens, teachers, agro-specialists, consultants, nurses, and miners came to work in Mozambique. 900 Mozambican children were sent to the *Friendship School* in East Germany, at least 750 Mozambican apprentices and an unknown number of Mozambican university students studied in Germany. The most important migration, however, consisted of laborers with temporary contracts in the period 1979–1990. East German records account for a total of 21,600 signed contracts; see Döring, ‘Es geht um unsere Existenz,’ 143. The Mozambican labor ministry today estimates that approximately 17,000 worker-trainees migrated to East Germany; Armindo Mapasse, *Chefe do Departamento de Estatística, Ministério de Trabalho*, interview by author, 15 May 2014, Maputo, Mozambique. 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.

38. Estevão, interview by author, 9 April 2015, Luanda, Angola. For work on Cuba’s politics of education regarding Angola and Mozambique, refer to Christine Hatzky, “‘Latin-African’ Solidarity—the Cuban Civilian Mission in Angola, 1975–1991,” *Iberoamericana* 5, 20 (2005): 159–164; Christine Hatzky, “Bildungspolitik und Transnationalismus im Postkolonialen Angola: Dimensionen und Herausforderungen der Kooperation mit Kuba,” *Africa Spectrum* 43, 2 (2008): 245–268; Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola*; Hauke Dorsch, “Rites of Passage Overseas?: On the Sojourn of Mozambican Students and Scholars in Cuba,” *Africa Spectrum* 43, 2 (2008): 225–244; Hauke Dorsch, “Black or Red Atlantic?—Mozambican Students in Cuba and their reintegration at Home,” *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 136 (2011): 289–310; Hauke Dorsch and Katrin Hansing, “45 Jahre Süd-Süd-Solidarität? Cubanische Mediziner in Afrika, Afrikanische Studenten in Cuba,” *Ila* 291 (2005): 10–13.

39. Schüle, “Proletarischer Internationalismus,” 191; Gruner-Domic, “Zur Geschichte der Arbeitskräftemigration, 4.

40. Both Angola and Mozambique relied on socialist countries to educate and train 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, consult Hans Mathias Müller, *Die Bildungshilfe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995). For an overview of East German-Angolan aid through education refer to Bettina Husemann and Annette Neumann, "DDR – VR Angola: Fakten und Zusammenhänge zur bildungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit von 1975–1989" and Ilona Schleicher, "Berufsbildung und Wirtschaftsbeziehungen DDR-Mosambik," in Bettina Husemann and Annette Neumann, "DDR – VR Angola: Fakten und Zusammenhänge zur bildungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit von 1975–1989," both in *Engagiert für Afrika: Die DDR und Afrika II*, eds. Ulrich van der Heyden, Hans-Georg Schleicher, and Ilona Schleicher (Münster: Lit, 1994).

41. David, interview by author, 17 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

42. Fabião, interview by author, 13 March 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

43. Guiro, interview by author, 21 April, 2015, Luanda, Angola.

44. Lídia, interview by author, 7 September 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

45. Müller, *Die Bildungshilfe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*.

46. Patrício, interview by author, 27 January 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

47. For the Cold War context, see Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Klaus Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die "Dritte Welt"* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2012); Vladimir Shubin, "Unsung Heroes: The Soviet Military and the Liberation of Southern Africa," *Cold War History* 7, 2 (2007): 251–62. For the Mozambican context, consult Stephen Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique* (Pinetown, South Africa: 30 degrees South, 2014); Gerhard Seibert, "The Vagaries of Violence and Power in Post-Colonial Mozambique," in *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*, eds. M.E.de Bruijn, J. Abbink, and K.van Walraven (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Klaus Storkmann, "Fighting the Cold War in Southern Africa? East German Military Support to Frelimo," *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 9, 2 (2010): 151–164; William Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). For the Angolan context, look at Gerald J. Bender, "The Eagle and the Bear in Angola," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 489 (1987): 123–132; Christopher Saunders, "The South Africa-Angola Talks, 1976–1984: A Little-Known Cold War Thread," *Kronos* 37 (2011): 104–119; Vladimir G. Shubin and Andrei Tokarev, "War in Angola: A Soviet Dimension," *Review of African Political Economy* 28, 90 (2001): 607–618. Comparative works include: Natalia Telepneva, "Our Sacred Duty: The Soviet Union, the Liberation Movements in the Portuguese Colonies, and the Cold War, 1961–1975" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2014); John D. Rusk, "Warfare and Human Rights in Angola and Mozambique," *Africa Today* 34, 4 (1987): 33–42.

48. Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, "Introduction," in *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, eds. Samantha Christiansen and Zachary Scarlett (New York: Berghahn, 2012), 1.

49. Augusto, interview by author, 12 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

50. Alexandra Kaun, "When the Displaced Return: Challenges to 'Reintegration' in Angola," in *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 152, UNHCR, 2008; Nadejda Marques, "Struggling through Peace: Return and Resettlement in Angola," *Human Rights Watch*, 15, 16 (2003): 1–29; K.B. Wilson, "Internally Displaced, Refugees and Returnees from and in Mozambique," *Studies on Emergencies and Disaster Relief*, Report No. 1 (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1994); Stephen C. Lubkemann, "Migratory Coping in Wartime Mozambique: An Anthropology of Violence and Displacement in 'Fragmented Wars,'" *Journal of Peace Research* 42, 4 (2005): 493–508; Mario Joaquim Azevedo, *Tragedy and Triumph: Mozambique Refugees in Southern Africa, 1977–2001* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); David McDermott Hughes, "Refugees and Squatters: Immigration and the Politics of Territory on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 4 (1999): 533–552.

51. Inocêncio Domingos Honwana in Klemm, *Moçambique–Alemanha*, 95.

52. Zeca, interview by author, 17 March 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

53. Ibid.

54. Moisés João Maconha in Klemm, *Moçambique–Alemanha*, 205.

55. Ilídio, interview by author, 16 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

56. Armando, interview by author, 29 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

57. Jacinto, interview by author, 5 June 2014, Beira, Mozambique.

58. 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.

59. Lázaro, interview by author, 29 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

60. 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, 1 (2011): 117–124; Barbara Rosenwein, "Worrying About Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, 3 (2002): 821–845; Nicole Eustace, et. al. "AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions," *American Historical Review* 117, 5 (2012): 1487–1531.

61. Lúcia, interview by author, 5 September 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

62. Fernando, interview by author, 1 September 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

63. Augusto, interview by author, 13 June 2014, Nampula, Mozambique; Ursula Trüper, "Die Fremden vom Internat in Staßfurt," *Welt am Sonntag*, 20 May 2007.

64. Gaspar, interview by author, 24 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

65. Luzia, interview by author, 16 April 2015, Luanda, Angola.

66. Lázaro, interview by author, 29 August 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.

67. Anonymous 3, interview by author, 16 January 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

68. Zeferino, interview by author, 3 March 2014, Maputo, Mozambique.

69. Regina, "Ida, 03 de Janeiro de 1988," *Prosa*, Concurso de texto literário de Decreação [sic], Alemanha e Moçambique, 2007, 1.

70. Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

71. The Ministries of Labor invited single men and women to partake and sent mixed worker-trainee groups to East Germany. Despite the official emancipatory line, gender discrimination was pervasive. Some industries, such as textile and coal, were deemed more suitable for a specific gender. The program further discriminated against pregnant worker-trainees, who faced the choice between abortion and a forced return home, along with the consequences of returning without a concluded education. Mothers who signed up for the program were left to organize childcare in their home countries individually; they depended upon family networks, mothers and sisters, to temporarily raise their children, so as to enable them to migrate.

72. "Avidor Alemão," [sic], Regina, 2007, fourth stanza.