



A chronology of nostalgia: memories of former Angolan and Mozambican worker trainees to East Germany

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the chronology of nostalgia expressed by former Angolan and Mozambican worker trainees in East Germany. By shedding light on the different forms in which nostalgia was expressed in interviews with migrants who returned to their country of origin, the article examines the migrants' longing for working abroad prior to leaving and for their home countries while living abroad. The focus lies on the returnees' nostalgia for aspects of their lived experiences in East Germany, a phenomenon I call *Eastalgia*. Struggling economically, socially, and emotionally after their return to Angola and Mozambique, many former worker trainees longed for the consumption opportunities, mobility, organization, and modernity of their East German experience. I argue that labor migrants who returned to Mozambique employ both *Eastalgia* and a glorification of Samora Machel's socialist Mozambique to criticize the current government for its failure to develop the country according to the expectations shaped by their experiences in East Germany. Finally, I compare and contrast different forms of *Eastalgia* in Mozambique and Angola with regard to temporality, locality, individual and/or collective, public and/or private, and restorative and/or reflective longing. The former worker trainees' voices provide new insight into the emotional dimensions of migration and teach us that memories of migrations actively continue to shape the lives of many of the former migrants.

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Introduction¹

Life in the former Soviet bloc is often depicted as gray (Betts, 2014; Fehérváry, 2009; Gorton Ash, 1997; Hoffmann, 2013). The German Democratic Republic, or East Germany, is presented as a land of monotonous rows of prefabricated concrete housing blocks, Trabant cars, barbed wire, and the Wall.² 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 foreign labor in East Germany (Müggenburg, 1996, pp. 14–17; Runge, 1990, p. 15). While these workers were welcomed politically in the interests

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of international socialist fraternity, they often confronted segregation and discrimination (Behrends, Lindenberger, & Poutrus, 2003; Elsner & Elsner, 1994; Krüger-Potratz, 1991; Poutrus, 2005; Zwengel, 2011). My research suggests, however, that this one-dimensional, negative memory of East Germany is not shared by many of those Angolans and Mozambicans who lived and worked there during the 1980s. Temporary migrants came based on bilaterally negotiated government programs that stipulated their integration into various sectors of East German industry. They were to receive professional training alongside work experience in socialist enterprises, to return home as skilled laborers and further the Angolan and Mozambican industrializations on their socialist path to development (Schenck, 2017). Strikingly, the images that Mozambican and Angolan labor migrants painted of their life and work in the drab GDR are often conspicuously colorful.³ Many Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees recount warm friendships, swirling parties, opulent consumption, and youthful hipness during their sojourns in East Germany, rather than the long hours of toil on the factory floor. To this day, the East German flag flies over a park in Mozambique's capital of Maputo, which serves as the headquarters of the main organization of returned worker-trainees, a place in which workers greet each other with 'Freundschaft' (a typical socialist greeting meaning friendship) and knock on the table, as they learned in East German pubs.

In reality, there was more to the migratory experience than 'fun because we were young and we always had money in our pockets' (Gasper, Lunda, personal communication, April 24, 2015). 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 xenophobia increasingly became part of the lived reality of foreign worker trainees (Alamgir, 2013; Botsch, 2012, pp. 553–573; Bröskamp, Farah, & Engelhardt, 1993; Ireland, 1997; Runge, 1990; Schenck, 2017; Zatlin, 2007). Yet, the longing for East Germany remains an important part of worker trainees' memories and an underrepresented aspect of the historical record. 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 migrants remember, but also why.

In highlighting nostalgia, I choose to engage with a particular interplay between memory and emotion. Nostalgia is not only a descriptor, but also an analytical tool that allows us to understand the subtext of an emotional critique of the present. We cannot understand the migrant's *Eastalgia* – defined as their nostalgia for East Germany – without taking into account the full picture of longing that emerges from their life histories. This article therefore introduces a migrants' chronology of nostalgia: it starts with a pre-departure yearning for going abroad, followed by a longing for home while in East Germany, and the subsequent post-return *Eastalgia* for some aspects of life in East Germany. It is important to study how transcontinental migrants remember their subjective experiences of socialist mobility to add to our comprehension of the global socialist moment as recalled from below.

Longing in Mozambique and Angola: post-communist nostalgia, *Ostalgie* and *Eastalgia*

Much work remains to be done to map the landscape of memories related to the rise and decline of the global socialist moment. Thus far, most of that work has been done for Central

Europe and Central Asia, where the study of post-communist nostalgia sparked a literature boom.⁴ *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, (Todorova & Gille, 2010) offers a wonderful overview of what drives this particular form of nostalgia and its relationship to the economy, politics, and time – all three themes that find their echo in the Angolan and Mozambican memories discussed here. Read in this wider regional context, East Germany is but one country in which post-communist nostalgia is expressed. In Germany, it has become such a popular phenomenon that it brought forth its own name: *Ostalgie*, a compound word meaning longing for the East (Berdahl, 1999, pp. 192–211; Berdahl, 2010, pp. 177–189; Boyer, 2006, pp. 361–381). *Ostalgie* describes the continuous relationships of (East) Germans with East German consumer culture, even as most of it is now ironically produced in former West Germany. The term has become a lens for understanding the subtle lingering of East German legacies in a reunified Germany, ranging from an analysis of counter-memory to East German sexuality and the fashion industry (Herzog, 2005, pp. 216–219; Stitzel, 2005). In ‘*Ostalgie international*’ – a collection of academic voices and eyewitness accounts from East Germans who traveled around the socialist world and socialist world citizens who sojourned in East Germany – *Ostalgie* breaks out of its German straightjacket (Kunze & Vogel, 2010). This emerging map of international longing for aspects of socialist life leads us through the varied memory-scapes of people who lived in and traveled between socialist countries around the world. Some of these memories are shared privately; others are publicly displayed as group reminiscences.⁵ Talking about post-communist nostalgia or *Ostalgie* brings into focus outmoded feelings of longing for a past that is often negatively connoted. In an effort by post-socialist regimes to distance themselves from their socialist pasts, the socialist legacy can be silenced, as in the case of Mozambique (Pitcher, 2006, p. 89) or hotly debated, as in the German post-reunification discourse (Clarke & Wölfel, 2011, p. 4). Post-communist nostalgia, *Ostalgie* or *Eastalgia* refer to ways of speaking about the positively experienced aspects of socialist regimes. Nostalgia brings into focus partially remembered reality and the fashioning of a fictitious blueprint of perfection against which to measure the imperfect present; it does not mean that those experiencing *Eastalgia* or *Ostalgie* condoned the entirety of the socialist experiment.

It is time to look further afield to Africa, where academic studies of post-communist nostalgia are still mostly uncharted territory (Busky, 2002; Drew, 2014; Pitcher, 2006; Pitcher & Askew, 2006).⁶ Herein I focus on the two former Portuguese colonies, Angola and Mozambique, both of which morphed into fledgling socialist republics after independence in 1975 and became East Germany’s key trading partners in Africa as of 1977.⁷ Angola’s ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) signed bilateral labor and training migration agreements with East Germany’s Socialist Unity Party (SED) that brought about 22,000 Mozambican (1979–90) and 2500 Angolan (1985–1990) worker-trainees to East Germany (Miguel, 2005, p. 817; Schleicher, 1994, p. 184). These migrations need to be read against the backdrop of economic imperatives and within the framework of a history of socialist development aid that saw knowledge and technology transfers as central tools with which to support anti-colonial struggles and globally further the socialist cause in politically aligned countries (Gruner-Domic, 1996; Schwenkel, 2013). The nostalgia expressed by former Angolan and Mozambican labor migrants in East Germany falls under the rubric of post-communist nostalgia, as they express longing for three states under socialist rule: East Germany’s ‘real socialist’ government from 1949 to 1990 and the ‘socialist-leaning’ regimes of the Peoples’ Republic of Angola from

1975 to 1992 (referred to as Angola) and the Peoples' Republic of Mozambique from 1975 to 1990, (referred to as Mozambique). I have chosen not to use the German term *Ostalgie* in this article because the longing for East Germany expressed by the Angolan and Mozambican migrants excludes the level of consumerism that marks *Ostalgie* in East Germany. Furthermore, *Ostalgie* serves as a counter-memory in an inner German landscape of competing claims to the past, which does not map onto Angolan and Mozambican political and historic realities.

The article draws mainly on semi-structured interviews with worker trainees and government officials conducted in Angola, Germany, and Mozambique between January 2014 and May 2015. I do not treat memory as separate from history but as a malleable, interactive, and social remembering of the past. As Berdahl pointedly observed, 'memory puts the past into dialogue with the present' (2010, p. 178). *Eastalgia*, then, is in many ways a palimpsest of superimposed memories. While the relatively destitute world from which many worker trainees came influenced their understanding of life in East Germany, their return to their respective war-torn nations equally influenced how they looked back upon their experiences in East Germany. That is to say, their portrayal of their lives in East Germany, as narrated in 2014–2015, were influenced by their childhood and youth in Angola and Mozambique as much as by their time in East Germany and the often negative reintegration experiences that marked their return. Assessing these life histories, it becomes clear that historical memory is an ongoing process of contestation, negotiation, and understanding (Abrams, 2010, p. 23; Tumbly, 2013, p. 7; Vansina, 1980, pp. 262–265).

The worker trainees' stories are important because they reveal an alternative narrative (White et al., 2001, pp. 10–16). In post-unification German literature, foreign workers in East Germany are, to varying degrees, portrayed as victims of state exploitation (Müggenburg, 1996, pp. 14–17; Runge, 1990). The majority of current studies on international labor migration to East Germany draw primarily on East German state archives, filtering migrants' experiences through the concerns of the East German secret police (Stasi) or state ministries and companies charged with organizing and executing the migrant labor program.⁸ These histories portray actors from beyond Germany merely as silhouettes, without concern for their particular voices, stories, and experiences prior to arriving in East Germany and after their return to southern Africa.⁹ Oral history interviews not only enable us to embed the migration experience in a person's comprehensive life history, but also afford glimpses beyond the factory work floor into their domestic and social lives and leisure activities. Worker trainees emerge as learners, consumers, lovers, parents, and travelers. Their emotions, dreams, and opinions enrich our understanding of the history of labor migration and the social lives of socialism. This article introduces marginalized voices into the historical record and shifts the focus from the state to the migrants. This allows us to revise our reading of East Germany through the eyes of Angolan and Mozambican migrants and our understanding of Angola and Mozambique through the eyes of its cosmopolitan citizens.

Finally, interviewing former workers about their memories reveals enduring legacies of their past experiences in their present lives. These range from remnants of the German language to memorabilia and consumer goods from East Germany that have survived to the present. On the other end of the spectrum lies the investment of some former labor migrants in ongoing political demands for repayment of transfers made during their time as workers abroad. For the returned migrants, the past remains a vital part of the present.

Chronology of nostalgic longing

In reading Angolan and Mozambican life interviews, we cannot reduce the migrants' longing to one particular time in their lives. Rather, different stages of nostalgia for a life abroad and longing for home weave throughout their lives. While this article focuses on the worker trainees' *Eastalgia* – that is, the positive memories of their life and work in a socialist East Germany of the 1980s – it is important to recognize other distinct periods of nostalgia. First, there is the pre-departure desire to see the world; a longing for a change and the promise of a better life; and a dream of investing in one's personal and familial future through migration (Schenck, 2016). In addition to narratives of those who had already returned, the idealized letters and photos from family members and friends abroad nurtured this romanticized longing. One interviewee remembered what fed his fantasizing about a better life in East Germany:

In reality, I did not know anything other than the histories that people who had been there and returned told and the donations that the GDR gave Mozambique. Those stories excited me. I also had a cousin there who always wrote letters and sent some photographs saying that life in Germany was good and he advised me to move there. (22, Maputo, personal communication, January 16, 2014)

The longing to live one's life fully, unencumbered by the civil wars that plagued both Angola and Mozambique becomes clear in Ilibio's yearning for 'a calm location where one did not run the risk of dying before having done something with one's life' (Ilibio, Luanda, personal communication April 16, 2015). East Germany turned into a place of longing:

It was definitely fashionable to go to East Germany at the time. ... Amongst these [Eastern] countries [East] Germany had the best reputation ... the living conditions were better than in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and so on. People even said that in terms of development East Germany was the top and supported in return countries like Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and so forth. (Felix, Maputo, personal communication, March 13, 2014)

Imagined as powerful, modern, and with a high standard of living and comfort, East Germany was perceived as a prize.¹⁰ The future worker trainees saw potential in migrating abroad, dreamed about earning money to indulge in East German amenities, and yearned for an opportunity to pursue formal education often denied at home. They perceived their temporary stay in East Germany as both investing in their own and their country's future.

Once the young migrants found themselves thousands of miles to the north, they longed for what they had left behind, both geographically and temporally. Migrants' memories of home were filtered through their last interactions with their families, the occasional letter, and the news that reached their dormitories. For many, the sense of an 'original' home started to blur. Their reminiscences of their homelands do not take up much space in their life history narratives. Mostly, the narratives initially comment on a well-organized welcome and the confirmation of their expectations. Luís recalls his feelings: 'I was happy. Germany was a developed country with a stable economy. I was happy to leave Africa for Europe' (Luís, Luanda, personal communication on April 20, 2015).

Yet after that initial excitement abated, the adjustment period was often marked by homesickness and alienation. Miguele remembers: 'The first three months were really difficult because we had language problems and our social interactions were limited and very reserved' (Miguele, Luanda, personal communication, April 27, 2015). During this time, migrants missed the family and friends they had left behind and longed for the warmer

climate and familiar foodstuffs of southern Africa. Some female interviewees expressed their nostalgia through a discourse on food:

My favorite city was Berlin. I liked to go to the tower [the legendary East German TV tower at Alexanderplatz] because we could buy lots of African foods stuffs there. It was very expensive but we could get nearly everything. We remembered Angola at the Berlin tower! In that special shop with all the African food we really had a great time and every time we went to Berlin we first went to the tower. (Luiza, Luanda, personal communication, April 16, 2015)

'Longing for Angola' did not necessarily entail longing for all of what was left behind. Most migrants were glad to have escaped the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique and the impact such conflicts had on their daily lives. Their longing for home, then, was of a deeply personal nature as they longed for family members, friends, familiar foodstuffs, weather and their home.

The third phase of longing discernible in the life histories is a powerful post-return longing for their lives abroad. One would expect stories of labor exploitation, racism, and tight regulations infringing on personal freedom – themes familiar from the state archives and some German historical analyses – to dominate the interviews. Instead, most interviewees remember their time in East Germany in a distinctly more positive light.¹¹ Importantly, these memories are based on real emotions and real material differences between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany at the time. For some, these memories also seem to be motivated, in part, by a current dissatisfaction with the present and serve as inspiration for an alternative future.

The East German past through Mozambican and Angolan eyes: 'a world full of roses'

From the perspective of African worker trainees in East Germany, nostalgia is expressed through what Susan Buck-Morss (2000, p.ix) calls 'the dream of the twentieth century,' a dream that '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.' This dream was integral to both socialist and capitalist modernization projects. 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 with the heralding of a postmodern world. Yet such a narrative stubbornly lives on in the imaginations of many worker trainees. Their lived experiences 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, East Germany was a model to the workers of what the socialist future might hold for their own nascent, socialist countries. Their understanding of development echoes the post-Enlightenment modernization project where place was often substituted for time. One could travel to 'backward' places to understand earlier forms of development. Consequently, traveling to Europe meant traveling to the future of those 'backward' places. As global travelers, Angolan and Mozambican worker-trainees not only changed their geographic location, but could also time travel along the imaginary linear road of development on the map of modernization.¹²

The transcontinental flight to Berlin catapulted worker trainees from emerging socialist countries' multifarious issues to one of the most wealthy, real socialist states. These issues included: the host of negative effects of Portuguese mass exodus on their economies and infrastructure, internal rivalries, regional power battles, cold war geopolitics, and civil wars.

Traveling to East Germany also meant escaping the violence of the hot cold war, ironically by arriving in a divided city, one of the fault lines between East and West. Witnessing organized infrastructure and an industrialized consumer culture, migrants often describe their physical arrival in East Germany as their first plunge into peace and 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. (Jaime Faque Suldane in Klemm, 2005, p. 105)

Underlying numerous *eastalgic* memories is the dream of a specific form of modernity, socialist development. Many worker-trainees were introduced to the concept of socialist development at home, and their commitment was solidified during their time in East Germany. They were fascinated by the trappings of East German real socialism, including entitlements such as housing, health care, public transport, and secure working conditions with reliable wages. But they were rudely awakened from the dream after returning to their war-torn nations, which turned away from socialist state-led development during the post-cold war era. The migrants experienced the civil wars at home as crucial factors in derailing their individual careers and the larger goal of economic development through industrialization to which they sought to contribute their labor power. Returnees were left with a bitter taste in their mouths confronting the failure of the socialist path to development both personally and as a nation. Believing that the industrialization of Angola and Mozambique was to bring about a better, more equal, and more developed society than the colonial experience of their parents' generation, for many a young worker-trainee, temporary migration to East Germany played a dual role. They at once sought individual gains in terms of education, experience and wages, but they were also conscious of their political role as a vanguard workforce for the collective. This is especially evident in the Mozambican interviews, which may be because the Mozambican program started in 1979, at a time when the socialist ideals enjoyed more credibility than in 1985, when the Angolan program began.

Moreover, both *Eastalgia* and *Ostalgie* revolve around consumption. For Lopes, East Germany equated economic freedom to choose what to consume: 'We had money in our pockets and were able to buy what we wanted' (Lopes, Luanda, personal communication, March 17, 2015). Inocêncio remembers East Germany as a consumer paradise because he could afford *Western* consumer goods: 'It was in Germany ... where I walked my first steps in paradise in Nikes and Jeans like a black American' (Inocêncio Domingos Honwana in Klemm, 2005, p. 100).¹³ 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. (Miguel, Luanda, personal communication, April 27, 2015)

Miguel's depiction contrasts with the familiar image of state socialist economies as places of scarcity and the inevitable, long consumer lines. The quotes demonstrate that the experience of poverty or abundance of consumer culture in state-socialist East Germany is relative and depends on the background of the observer. Most East Germans judged the offer of consumer items compared to West Germany and believed themselves to be living in a context of scarcity. But foreign worker trainees whose reference point was the global South,

such as Angola, Mozambique, or Vietnam, experienced the opposite (Schwenkel, 2013, p. 249). The ongoing longing for their East German consumer experience continues to be fueled by the current marginalization that many workers face today.

Unlike *Ostalgie* for East Germans, *Eastalgia* for the Angolan and Mozambican workers is not primarily located in their relationship with East German consumer goods.¹⁴ Quite a few still possess some German memorabilia, having invested the bulk of their earned wages in the form of East German goods that they could carry home. After their return, most workers could not access the portion of their wages that had been withheld from them and struggled to find employment in Mozambique's fragile, post-conflict economy and Angola's ongoing war-economy. They had to sell most of the East German goods they imported to finance their own and their families' survival. Gone was the comfort of products such as TVs, fridges, stoves, motorbikes, and, more importantly, the status that owning such goods conveyed.¹⁵ The workers' relationship to their East German goods was, on the whole, severed by the demands of survival. What remained was *Eastalgia*. While these goods at first gave returned workers a higher social standing compared to their neighbors without migrants in the family, this differentiation was short-lived, and worker-trainees had to adapt to more uncomfortable and precarious conditions at home. The merging of financial and social status in Angola and Mozambique gave returned workers a feeling of having been deprived of both social position and economic well-being. This feeling of disappointment and anger fuels the ongoing claims against both the Angolan and Mozambican governments. This is especially the case in Mozambique, where the workers had a stronger sense of socialist nation-building going into the program and, consequently, their disappointment upon returning home was more severe. Moreover, the Mozambican government's redress of the situation was less effective. *Eastalgia* can be seen as a form of escapism, as it allows former migrants moments of respite from the daily frustrations of those on the Angolan and Mozambican margins, just like consumers of *Ostalgie* mentally escape the dominant unified Germany without leaving it (Berdahl, 1999, p. 206). Among some, it also engenders the energy to demonstrate against the government and claim restitution.

Another aspect of *eastalgic* longing has to do with mobility. As 'socialist cosmopolitans' (Hüwelmeier, 2011, pp. 439–440), returning labor migrants were situated in a way that allowed them to read their surrounding world with an expanded understanding of political, social, and economic possibility. This enables them to envision alternative futures in response to the very real political, economic, and social challenges that confronted them upon their return. State-socialist labor migrations were part of what Christina Schwenkel (2014, p. 236) calls 'socialist mobilities.' The circulation of people, knowledge, goods, capital, and weapons among socialist bloc countries created a sphere of exchanges that spanned the globe. Migration exchanges created a landscape of memories with shared experiences, yet how these experiences were interpreted depended on one's vantage point in the net linking the 'Global South' to the 'Second World,' as demonstrated by the commonalities between *Eastalgia* in Mozambique and Angola and *Ostalgie* in Germany.

Gaspar contrasts what he remembers as a time of mobility in a society that supposedly restricted his freedom of movement to his present-day freedom experienced as stasis. Angolan and Mozambican worker trainees like Gaspar were mobile inside East Germany and, after unification, in broader Europe. His mobility in East Germany was made possible through reliable wages and functional public infrastructure, both factors absent in his present life in Angola:

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, I have not left this place [Luanda] and that makes me feel as if I am imprisoned. (Gasper Lunda, personal communication, April 24, 2015)

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, compared to their geographically and economically less mobile lives led back home. Tracing similar experiences for former Vietnamese labor migrants to East Germany, Schwenkel (2013, p. 255) argues that 'disengagements and ... processes of becoming disconnected' are as integral to modern globalism as entanglements. This broader point is certainly true for many of the Angolan and Mozambican returnees; yet, their physical inability to travel back to Germany does not mean that all social entanglements have ceased.

Nostalgia for one's youth is a common feeling, irrespective of political context (Boyer, 2006, pp. 366–372). Many interviewed worker trainees in Angola and Mozambique frame their sojourn overseas in terms of life stages. Regina speaks of 'Germany, the cradle of our birth,' alluding to the stark impact the temporary stay had on the identity formation of some workers.¹⁶ 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' (Augusto Luanda, personal communication on April 12, 2015). For many worker trainees, especially those who left as teenagers or in their early twenties straight from school, the transcontinental journey can be seen as a journey into adulthood and financial and geographic independence from their families.¹⁷ For Gaspar, being young in East Germany also meant being cared for to the extent that he could be careless:

I consider it a pleasure to have been young in 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 ... When I lived in Germany, I spent my nights at discos, but today things have changed ... It was a question of adolescence. When you are young, you have few responsibilities. 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. (Gasper, Lunda, personal communication, April 24, 2015)

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 became 'Germanized' and, in turn, they 'Angolized' and 'Mozambicanized' East Germany. Today a generation of Afro-Germans can trace their fathers to Angolan and Mozambican worker trainees and many Angolan and Mozambican families have a German speaker in their midst. Though in most cases all 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. Nostalgia is an emotional – and some would say rational – response to the changes in environments that migrants experienced. Longing stems from suffering separation from a child, from a spouse or a lover, from friends and colleagues; it is also a result of the very real differences between the living conditions, infrastructure, and wealth of the sending and receiving countries. Both Angola and Mozambique were engulfed in protracted civil wars during the time of the worker trainee program, which left both places in crisis and close to societal and economic collapse.¹⁸ As socialist cosmopolitans, returnees

continue to long for the unfulfilled promise of modernity they worked toward in the 1980s. While they decry the lack of egalitarian development at home, they do not necessarily wish to return to socialism, but merely to accessible higher living standards.

In retrospect, East Germany appears in the brightest of colors, assuming in some interviews a lionized 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!' (João, Luanda, personal communication on April 21, 2015). This remains a hypothetical situation and therefore one that can be freely imagined. The country of their memory is forever lost and perhaps never existed in the way they evoke it. The temporal return to the migrants' youth is impossible; the transcontinental journey unaffordable; and East Germany ceased to exist. In many interviews, the loss of paradise and the loss of youth go hand in hand.

The migrants' chronology of nostalgia allows us to understand the human side of migration by revealing a specific emotional aspect of workers' memories related to their migration experience. By understanding the role of nostalgia in the decision to migrate, we can appreciate the ambiguities inherent in the migration experience, which includes the excitement of being abroad existing alongside a longing for familiar aspects of home. We can further understand the effects of migration in the lives of individual migrants and wider society, especially in the case of Mozambique.

Back to the future: Mozambican post-communist nostalgic critiques of the government

This section examines the Mozambican form of nostalgic longing, which critiques the present-day government in two ways: first, through an evocation of *Eastalgia* by comparing the former worker-trainees' lived reality after their return to Mozambique, and second, through a longing for President 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 once propelled its citizens abroad to gain technical training in the East to constitute a vanguard workforce for the construction of an industrialized People's Republic.

Mozambican former worker-trainees, collectively and colloquially known as *Madjerman*, deploy positive memories of East Germany in order to criticize the Mozambique in which they presently live.¹⁹ References to their lived experience of East German modernity serve to criticize what they perceive as the failed Mozambican modernization project. Where post-reunification histories often see decay and underdevelopment in East Germany, Luís sees 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. (Luís, Maputo, personal communication on September 2, 2011)

Luís employs an anachronistic comparison, emphasizing both the decay of Maputo and the modernity of East Germany's cities to give weight to his criticism of what he sees as Mozambican 'underdevelopment.'

Madjerman also highlight an idealized, past East German society in order to criticize the current Mozambican government's failed integration of approximately 12,300 (Müggenburg, 1996:18) workers who were repatriated in the early 1990s in response to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This becomes clear in Adevaldo's accusations:

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. (Adevaldo S.F. Banze in Klemm, 2005, p. 43)

We know that memories shared in oral history interviews are mediated through the present. If the injustices of the East German labor environment remain suppressed, 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.

The critique of the present FRELIMO government also incorporates a personified, nostalgic longing for an idealized President Samora Machel and the young, socialist post-independent Mozambique with its high hopes for development and equality. Juma relayed the point of view of many returned workers:

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. (Juma, Maputo, in Davis & Schenck, 2015)

Ideas of a transformation led by the socialist state in Mozambique were, as elsewhere, forward looking. President Samora Machel's [1975–1986] visions for an alternative Mozambican socialist modernity left a deep impression on many a young Mozambican migrant, several of whom had met President Machel personally. Idolized by many interviewees as the father of the nation, Samora Machel was also a highly contested figure, and his push toward socialism was not always benign (Hall & Young, 1997; Le Fanu, 2012, pp. 187–193; 215–221). The uncritical glorification of Samora Machel is a sentiment that many worker trainees who returned to Mozambique share with other Mozambicans (Le Fanu, 2012, pp. 187–193, 215–221; Pitcher, 2006, p. 106).

Examining black nostalgia for apartheid is instructive for understanding *Eastalgia* in Mozambique. Jacob Dlamini (2009, pp. 6, 12, 13) acknowledges that it is both

'illuminating and unsettling to hear ordinary South Africans cast their memories of the past in such a nostalgic frame; yet

[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.

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 workers' memories seriously and acknowledging the richness and complexities of Mozambican life in East Germany challenges a master narrative of East German exploitation of a faceless mass of foreign workers. Moreover, Dlamini contests a teleological narrative toward a better future by rewriting an understanding of time from below that diverges from the official periodization dividing Southern African history into a negative experience of the colonial past and a positive experience of the

post-colonial present. He suggests the colonial past is not uniformly remembered as bad and that positive memories are also valid and can work as a subtle critique of the present.

Listening to the returned workers, we also see that their experiences were not uniformly remembered as challenging and that they are employing their *Eastalgia* as political criticism. Even as FRELIMO turned away from socialist revolution, workers nevertheless continue to long for their past lives under East German socialism. They continue to hold the government accountable through various public measures, ranging from legal recourse to regular demonstrations through the capital. Against all odds, many returned worker trainees still believe in Samora Machel's socialist revolution, wait for the government to make good on its promise to provide them with appropriate work and repay their wages, and remain ready to serve their country on the factory floor.

Eastalgic memory-scapes in Angola and Mozambique

Kathleen Stewart (1988, p. 227) 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.' Hence, there are similarities but also differences between the nostalgic longings in Angolan and Mozambique. Both groups share important similarities. Angolan and Mozambican migrants grew up in late Portuguese colonies and nascent, independent African countries during violent independence struggles; both went to East Germany during their youth to work and train; and both returned steeped in East German socialism just as their home countries left socialism behind. Based on a similar horizon of experiences, we can assume that the nature of nostalgic longing is similar, and it is in many ways.²⁰

Yet, while Angola and Mozambique share a similar colonial legacy and histories of violence related to internal, regional, and global cold war power games, they remain different countries with distinct economic, political, cultural, social, and emotional contexts. Needless to say, even within the same spatial and temporal contexts, we find different responses to the past. A country level analysis is necessarily a rough generalization. In what follows, I analyze how expressions of *Eastalgia* differ in the two contexts.

The Mozambican worker-trainees engage in a *multi-temporal* form of nostalgia: Their fantasy is turned backwards, toward the unreachable. They cannot turn back the time to their youth when they left a Mozambique preparing for the socialist revolution with the goal to learn the skills to serve Mozambique's economy upon their return. Out of reach is that time when they lived a relatively worry-free existence of material comfort in East Germany. They are acutely aware of the present as a product of their past. Identifying as *Madjerman*, a self-ascribed and externally imposed identity, 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 that will start upon receiving enough money to allow them to establish a comfortable material life once again. They dream of putting to use the skills they acquired abroad to further the development of Mozambique and make them feel dignified through work. To a certain extent, they dream of an 'East-Germanized' Mozambique.

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, this identity does not hold much value for them in the 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 payments, their fight is a more technical one. The presence of two rivaling associations by the same name does not extend beyond the capital. In-country 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 *eastalgie* longing is directed at their sojourn abroad, where they enjoyed a better life than after their return home. The *Jardim 28 de Maio* in downtown Maputo – colloquially known as the Park of the *Madjerman*, the *Madjerman* Headquarters, *Madjerman* Republic, or the University of the *Madjerman*, depending on the context – is portrayed as a physical safe space, where, according to *Madjerman* activist Juma, 'the rules and regulations of Mozambique no longer apply and we live according to our rules (Juma Madeira in Davis & Schenck, 2015).'²¹ These are diasporic claims. This distinction is, of course, fictional. The occupation of the park is only possible because the Mozambican government turns a blind eye to it. Nevertheless, this location is the expression of a strange displacement, an incongruent simultaneity echoing their identity, neither fully Mozambican nor quite German, but *Madjerman*.

The Angolan workers, on the other hand, are quite firmly rooted in an Angolan identity; even those Angolans who live abroad invoke their patriotism and allegiance to their *Angolanidade* in their protests. This might be due to the fact that many Angolans stayed less than the contract period of four years in East Germany between 1985 and 1990. At the time, East Germany was becoming increasingly xenophobic and the economy suffered. The timing of Angolan migration did not help them identify with East Germany's society to the same extent as Mozambique's *Madjerman*, particularly those of the first generation from 1979, some of whom stayed 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; the migration therefore had less of an emotionally formative impact. Finally, more Angolan than Mozambican migrants I interviewed subsequently attempted to migrate again, mostly as asylum claimants to a unified Germany or Portugal. Therefore, their comparatively short East German stint did not assume the lighthouse function it did for many Mozambicans.

Eastalgia in Mozambique is also *multi-vocal*, created between personal and collective memory, and serves to reinforce a *Madjerman* identity.²² Individual reminiscing occurs in the form of taking out and displaying photo albums, friendship books, magazines, and other memorabilia from East Germany in the houses of *Madjerman*. Such acts serve as a vehicle for maintaining congruity between their past and present understandings of themselves by tying their experiences abroad to their lives back home. They also share memories when they meet informally in friendship groups or at formal gatherings. Reminiscing together, then, becomes a means in itself, a communal act of belonging. Pride and disappointment accompany this form of *Eastalgia*. Pride at having migrated and disappointment upon the failed reintegration of many an undervalued migrant who received training in skills the country did not need.

As a result, communal longing for East Germany becomes a relational concept. It situates individuals in a countrywide web, linking *Madjerman* across time and space. Regardless of the origin or generation of a particular worker, their *Madjerman* identity links them together. Sometimes business relationships are forged, but mostly the web is used to communicate

about the status of present-day activism. This network tentatively spreads beyond the nation, including former workers and allies residing in Germany.²³ Not so in Angola where, again, a much smaller number of worker trainees were sent to East Germany and where a formalized, countrywide support structure does not exist. Given the politically repressive nature of the country, the Angolan diaspora in Europe has been more visibly engaged in protests. 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 in Angola is private, but in Mozambique it is at once *private* and *public*. A few *Madjerman* have published essays as part of an essay competition sponsored by a German ambassador in Maputo, and two have written books about their times in East Germany (Alberto, 2014; Petro, 2003; Klemm, 2005). Moreover, there is a nascent public discussion that takes place in the ICMA, the German cultural center in Maputo, and beyond with exhibitions and theater pieces examining German-Mozambican relations, photo books, and a graphic novel.²⁴ Through their artistic contributions and literary presence, the *Madjerman* have slowly carved out a space for their history within a national history. Nothing similar appears to exist in Angola or about Angolan worker trainees.²⁵

Nostalgia longing for the *Madjerman* is also public in that it is political. The public anger voiced in the regular demonstrations of activist *Madjerman* in Maputo arises from the *Madjerman's* dispossession, disempowerment, and disappointment with the state as a provider of public goods or wages and their subsequent alienation from post-socialist Mozambican development practices. While in this context *eastalgi*c longing might be read as escapist, false consciousness, naiveté, or simply a feeling of longing, I read it as social critique – albeit a partly hidden one. *Eastalgia* is thus profoundly political with its dreams of modernity, development, and consumption.

Svetlana Boym (2001, p. xvi) distinguishes between *restorative* and *reflective* nostalgia, the former emphasizing reconstruction, and the latter simply a longing from which no further action needs to follow. Therein lies the major difference between the Mozambican and Angolan case studies. While both engage in reflective nostalgia that involve 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.

Conclusion

The shared object of longing among Angolans and Mozambicans I interviewed is modernity as the promise of well-being, equality, progress, political stability, and economic development. The former worker trainees envision this against the background of their lived experiences during the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique and their (mostly) failed reintegration into post-conflict economies that led to their marginalization. Few former worker trainees I interviewed have become part of Mozambique's new middle classes, and the Angolans only fared marginally better. In this context, drawing on positive memories of East Germany must be seen in relation to the overwhelmingly negative reintegration workers experienced.

Eastalgia provides the means for critiquing persistent inequality and precariousness. The dictum of forgetting the ruling party's socialist past, which Anne Pitcher (2006) skillfully analyzed for Mozambique, leads to a double negation of the past. There is little self-knowledge in the public realm about the socialist past, outside official party interpretations. Even these official party interpretations are silenced now as part of the process of reinvention

from the parties that have stayed in power since independence (Borges Coelho, 2013). Yet, Pitcher (2006, p. 263) 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. The returnees also continue to draw on their experiences under socialism to motivate their present day demands; yet they do not draw just on comparisons with the Angolan and Mozambican past but also on comparisons with real socialism in East Germany. Their nostalgia is at once part of a global socialist sphere of ideas and very localized.

The migrants' chronology of nostalgia allows us to understand the human side of migration by revealing a specific emotional aspect of workers' memories related to their migration experience. By understanding the role of nostalgia in the decision to migrate, we appreciate the ambiguities of the migration experience, in which the excitement of being abroad exists alongside a longing for familiar aspects of home. We can further understand the effects of migration in the lives of individual migrants and wider society, especially in the case of Mozambique.

Angola and Mozambique did not industrialize according to plan and therefore had little use for the labor power of many returnees. Yet the migrants' stay abroad influenced their home countries in unexpected ways. Why *Eastalgia* remains prevalent has much to do with the profound differences in development experienced by migrants, the experience of loss in their countries of origin vis-à-vis their receiving country, and as the nature and timing of migrant projects. The *Madjerman's Eastalgia* cannot solely be understood as reflective dreaming of an idealized time of safety, consumerism, and emotional relationships. Importantly, the migration experience becomes the motor for criticizing what the *Madjerman* perceive as Mozambique's failed development while envisioning an alternative future more than twenty-five years after their mass return. In the process, they also conjure up an alternative past that idealizes Machel's promise of a socialist utopia. By contrast, the majority of 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 also a legacy of the Angolan and Mozambican migrations. In East Germany, they encountered the future they once envisioned for Angola and Mozambique; their *Eastalgia* expresses their longing for East Germany, and the loss of an Angolan and Mozambican future as socialist welfare states that were never to be. The migrants' lives form part of their national histories. Through their migration and continued longing for their lives abroad, they keep the memory of the global socialist moment alive in their home nations and reunified Germany.

Notes

1. An early draft of this article entitled 'Diverging Memories of Mozambican Labor Migration to the GDR: The State's Nightmare and the Magermans' Dream,' won the Lusophone Studies Association Graduate Paper Prize at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, San Diego, November 21, 2015. Herein, I define *Eastalgia* as the returnees' nostalgia for aspects of their lived experiences in East Germany.
2. See Cook (2005, p. 38) for reflection on the reimagination of the Trabi in post-unification Germany.
3. This article is colored by memories about experiences in a world I cannot replicate and do not wish to validate socially, politically or otherwise. I am not invested in glorifying a socialist

project in East Germany, Mozambique or Angola and neither do I set out to suggest that the East German dictatorship was virtuous.

4. For an introduction to the literature on Eastern Europe, see (Boym, 2001; Todorova & Gille, 2010; especially Ch. 6). Gille ('Postscript,' 2010, p. 286) rightly observes that 'post-communist nostalgia is [...] a misnomer.' It would be wrong to assume that nostalgia for some aspects of communism speaks to a wish to reinstate a previous regime. In Angola and in Mozambique, just as in other Eastern European countries, nostalgia for a socialist past is not a binary discourse; an ambivalent attitude toward the past prevails.
5. By private memories I mean migrants' stories that are shared within the family or within an interview, where it is clear that migrants speak for themselves as individuals. Public memories are those shared, for instance, in autobiographical writings, the press, or with groups of *Madjerman* in public spaces.
6. Pitcher and Askew (2006) discuss Africa's socialist legacy. Pitcher (2006) examines Mozambican memories of socialism. Dlamini (2009) offers an important reinterpretation of nostalgia for South Africa under apartheid. The literature of African socialism and post-socialism and the literature of African nostalgia have yet to be connected in a more thorough fashion. Nothing like the scholarly attention paid to Eastern European post-communist nostalgia has emerged.
7. East Germany started an export offensive in 1977 with its three African priority partners Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. It reached its climax with the signing of the treaties on friendship and cooperation in 1979 (See Döring, 1999, p. 10; Döring & Rüchel, 2005 for a broader examination of the relationship between Mozambique and East Germany; Madureira, 2011, for a discussion about Angola's relationship with East Germany). Agreements regulating labor and education exchanges were also signed during Erich Honecker's visit to Mozambique in February 1979 to sign the treaty of friendship and cooperation. (*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 (Döring, 1999, p. 163). The Mozambican Labor Ministry estimated that approximately 17,000 workers migrated to East Germany (Armando Mapasse, personal communication, *Chefe do Departamento de Estatística, Ministério de Trabalho, Moçambique*, 15.05.2015). The exact numbers of Mozambican workers who came to East Germany are most likely lost since the original documents at the Mozambican Labor Ministry are said to be destroyed. The East German bureaucracy counted every new contract, regardless of how many contracts were served by the same worker. For a description of the Mozambican workers' lives see for instance Ulrich van der Heyden, Wolfgang Semmler, & Ralf Straßburg, 2014.
8. For discussions of workers' experiences based on a reading of archival records, see Oppenheimer, 2004; Kuck, 2003; Gruner-Domic, 1996; Mac Con Uladh, 2005; Muggenburg, 1996.
9. The following studies make use of oral histories either with workers or with East Germans: Schüle, 2003; Schwenkel, 2013; Guerra Hernández, 2011; Kern, 2011; Lucas, 2002; Ulbrich, 2009; Marburger, 1993.
10. Vietnamese worker trainees also subscribed to the imagination of an East German socialist utopia. See Schwenkel, 2013, p. 248.
11. It is important to recognize the collected oral histories as products of a unique intersubjective, performative encounter, influenced by the personalities, genders, ages, class and educational backgrounds of the interviewees and the interviewer (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, pp. 98–125; Mould, 2009, p. 87). The fact that I am German thus played a role in the interviews. Some interviewees seemed concerned not to offend me, for instance downplaying racist encounters, while others took this opportunity to 'open my eyes' to a racist and bigoted country. While the nostalgic view of East Germany might be enhanced by my positionality, similar points of views are expressed in press statements to non-German media. Further, in the Mozambican case this particular form of longing also materializes in home décor or the role the Park of the *Madjerman* plays in their daily lives and in political argument.

12. In the case of post-communist Eastern Europe, citizens experienced time travel without any geographical relocation; post-communist state construction removed citizens from the state socialist regimes under which they once lived. Those who long do so for a lost time under an extinct regime – a time that might seem in retrospect less disorienting for some. The worker trainees on the other hand experience diasporic longings. They experience diasporic longing in a classic sense in that they long for the comforts of home while abroad. This form of longing for home exists alongside the joy of living abroad, having time traveled and geographically distanced themselves from the deprivations and chaos that marked life back home under civil war. The other form of diasporic longing the Angolan and Mozambican migrants expressed was the desire to go abroad. For them, longing for another geographical place was equivalent to longing for a different level on their imagined road to progress. When they long to go abroad, they long for infrastructure, employment, regular wages, health care benefits, education, and consumption possibilities they never received at home. Their ongoing disappointment stems from a feeling of having been betrayed by history and the perception of having been robbed by the state of dignity, income, and a chance for upward social mobility.
13. This cultural reference whereby an African young man living in the East likens himself to a black American might seem paradoxical when read through his references to consumer goods, but African-Americans have a tangled and complicated history with the Soviet Union and Germany. The global communist moment opened up new opportunities for people of color worldwide. Several hundred black Americans came to Russia in the 1930s answering the Soviet Union's call for technical expertise. Fleeing from a repressive Jim Crow United States and the Great Depression, artists and experts acquired gainful employment. Importantly, they were drawn to a society that had the reputation of being less racist than the United States, 'in search of the Soviet promise of a better society' (Carew, 2008, p. 1). Their areas of expertise contributed to the economy of the Soviet Union. It was in the Soviet's interest to train African-Americans as cadres in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism not only to reach the black American working class, but also blacks worldwide. The presence of African-Americans visually underscored the Soviet Union's attempt to build a new democratic society in which people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds united to pursue the dream of freedom. Though the majority left in response to the request that they take citizenship in 1937 and to Stalin's purges, some stayed. Many of their daughters married African students who came to Russia starting in the 1960s and returned with them to Africa to continue the mission of their fathers by aiding African development. These lofty missions often ended in separation and the return to Russia of many Afro-Russians. Many remarried Eastern-European men (Carew, 2008; Introduction and Ch. 12; Blakeley, 1986). African-American GI's came to Germany in larger numbers during World War II and fathered a generation of mixed raced children with German woman, predominantly in the American occupation zone (Greene & Ortlepp, 2011). For a history of Afro Germans in the Third Reich, see Campt, 2004.
14. Paul Betts skillfully examines how the affective relationship between people and things in their everyday occurrence makes up the heart of nostalgically remembered history in East German personal accounts (Betts, 2003, p. 182).
15. The centrality of consumer items and the status the migrant acquired through European goods remains a historical continuity in Southern African labor migrations. The fathers and grandfathers of some of the migrants I interviewed worked in the South African mines and invested most of their earnings in goods central to their households like cloth, clothes, shoes, sowing machines, plows, bikes, tractors, and cars (First, 1983; Harries, 1994; Kreike, 2004; Moodie, 1994; Newitt, 1995, pp. 482–516). Decades later the products still consisted of what was deemed important to establish one's own household, including not only tables, chairs, dishes, bedding, motorbikes, and cars, but also vinyl disks, stereo equipment, TVs, movies, and books.
16. *Alemanha minha Pátria* (Germany – my fatherland), IMG_7807.jpg poem by Regina February 2, 2007, original in Regina's possession, photo in my possession.
17. Migration has played a well-documented role as a rite of passage in southern Africa, especially for young men migrating to the Rand (Harries, 1994) but also for women (Bozzoli & Nkotoso, 1991). For example, Mozambican migrants worked in South African mines to earn lobola (bride

price), turning returnees into fully married male members of their communities (First, 1983; Harries, 1994; Moodie, 1994). 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. Many workers still lack the resources to get married traditionally to their partners.

18. The literature on the Angolan and Mozambican wars is vast. See for instance Birmingham, 2016; Emerson, 2014; Finnegan, 1992; Shubin & Tokarev, 2001; Brittain, 1998. For comparative discussions, see Ciment, 1997; Birmingham, 1992.
19. There is no standardized spelling. 'Magerman,' 'Madjermanes,' 'Madgermanes' or '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 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 (Klemm, 2005, p. 17; Lázaro, Maputo, personal communication August 29, 2011). 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 class ½ designating people. The Ji-ma class for things is especially used with words that are borrowed from other languages, in this case 'Djerman'.
20. The Vietnamese laborers' memories about East Germany set out in Alamgir and Schwenkel (in press) and Schwenkel (2013) suggest that the Angolan and Mozambican *eastalgic* longing is echoed in Vietnam as well. This points to a larger shared experience of people from conflict zones understanding 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 war.
21. The central gathering place in Maputo, replicated throughout other provincial capitals in Mozambique, is the *Jardim 28 de Maio*, situated in downtown Mozambique near the Labor Ministry. The park continuously draws *Madjerman* from all walks of life. It also serves as the bureau of the umbrella organization of returned workers in Mozambique, the Association of Mozambican Former Workers in Germany (ATMA) (Canjale, 2007).
22. For a comparative discussion on the concept of nostalgia as relational concept see Boym, 2001, p. xvi.
23. 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 with regard to demonstrations in Berlin and Maputo.
24. For an exhibition about Mozambican-German relations, see Jens Vilela Neumann, <http://vilelaneumann.com/english/?projects=the-exhibition>, accessed 14.11.16. For photo books, see Wandel, 2012; Bourquin, n.d. For a graphic novel that skilfully illustrates the Mozambican labor migration experience, see Weyhe, 2016. East-German writers also wrote about Mozambican guest workers, e.g., Scherzer, 2002.
25. For a general reflection on the role that socialism played in the Angolan art scene, see Siegert 2014, 2016.

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