BLACK AMERICANS EN MÉXICO: MOTIVES OF MIGRATION AND METAPHORS OF SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES

by

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ABSTRACT

JAMEL CATOE. Black Americans en México: Motives of migration and metaphors of self-initiated expatriates (Under the direction of DR. ANNE-KATHRIN KRONBERG AND DR. CANDACE MILLER)

The experiences of Black American workers as expatriates have been largely absent from scholarly conversations, resulting in a limited understanding of this growing population and modern-day Black American international migration. Through a qualitative analysis of 10 in-depth interviews with Black American self-initiated expatriates in Mexico, this study uncovers that anti-Black racism serves as a central thread linking various factors that motivated their departure from the United States. Their reasons for expatriation align closely with Richardson and McKenna's (2002) "Refugee" metaphor, challenging previous assumptions about self-initiated expatriate motivations and prompting the need for further investigation. This paper contributes to the international management and migration literature by providing insights into the experiences of minoritized working professionals who left a highly developed nation for an emerging country. The potential role of employing organizations and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Black American expatriates, Black workers, motivations to expatriate, self-initiated expatriates, expatriates in Mexico

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We operate in an increasingly globalized environment where people can work almost anywhere in the world. As of 2020, there were an estimated 281 million people living and working outside their country of origin (United Nations, 2020). The United States is the primary destination for migrants (Edmond, 2020), yet it is estimated that 9 million U.S. citizens have emigrated to other countries (*Consular Affairs by the Numbers*, 2020). Expatriates, a term often used for and by American workers who move abroad, have received a lot of scholarly attention over the past several decades (see: Arifa et al., 2021; Berry & Bell, 2012; Black & Gregersen, 1990; Tung, 1981). Within management, expatriate literature has been criticized for being almost exclusively focused on people from "White, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD)" countries (Henrich et al., 2010, p. 1) and failing to capture the experiences of people with historically and systematically minoritized ethnic and racial identities (Brewster et al., 2021; McNulty & Brewster, 2020). Further, much of the migration literature in other fields tends to focus on migration to developed nations rather than from them, with less emphasis on developing nations as target of migration. In recent years, a growing number of Black Americans, a minoritized ethnic and racial group, are opting to expatriate and move outside the United States, including to developing countries such as Mexico (Gray, 2023). However, we do not know why Black American workers are choosing to leave the 'land of opportunity' to start new lives abroad.

With the evolution of social media and the emergence of the 'Black Travel Movement' over the last decade, Black American global mobility has gained momentum . A search for "Black expat" on Facebook reveals that there are hundreds of public and private groups dedicated to Black Americans who live and work abroad. I have found that many of these groups

were launched amid the COVID-19 pandemic and in the wake of racial uprising in the United States. Anecdotal evidence hints that Black Americans are starting lives abroad to escape racism in the United States (Coleman, 2024; Diakite, 2021), but there is no empirical evidence to support this claim. Other than movements like 'the Great Migration,' the movement of Black Americans out of the South to other parts of the country (Tolnay, 2003; Wilkerson, 2010), the post-war emigration of some distinguished Black artists and professionals to Paris, France during the first half of the twentieth century (Stovall, 2000), and 'the New Great Migration,' the return of Black Americans to the South since the 1970s (Leibbrand et al., 2019), there is little research on Black American migration. While these movements provide historical evidence that Black Americans have been motivated to migrate due to racism, it is unclear what motivates their migration today.

There are a variety of factors that influence a person to leave their home country, but people often migrate to secure a better quality of life (Lee, 1966). Most professionals view expatriation as a career enhancing experience and therefore, many workers may be motivated to go abroad for that reason (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). Other common reasons for expatriation may include the opportunity to earn a higher income and a passion for adventure and travel (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). A desire to escape an unfavorable situation is a less common reason for expatriation (Selmer & Lauring, 2012), but internet content suggests that this may be driving modern-day Black American international migration.

To help deepen our understanding of this phenomenon, I conducted a qualitative investigation of Black American workers who live abroad. The goal of my study was to uncover the factors that influence Black Americans to expatriate. In doing so, I contribute to the literature in three critical ways: to address the deafening silence of race in expatriate research by centering

the experiences of Black American expatriates in consideration of the factors shaping expatriation; determine if existing models and assumptions about expatriate motivations are inclusive and relevant to this population; and bring to light opportunities for future global migration and international management research. Finally, I provide insights that may inform management practices that help to support Black American employees.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

To help give context to the experiences of Black American expatriates, I first provide a brief overview of the literature as it relates to the experiences of Black workers in the United States. Then, I will touch upon Black American migration and describe who gets to be an expatriate and the motivating reasons for expatriation. Lastly, I will discuss where further exploration is needed to understand the nuance of being a Black American working abroad.

Black Workers in the United States

Within the United States, Black people have endured a long history of physical and structural violence. Black people in the United States endure violence mentally in the form of anti-Black racism, and physically at the hands of law enforcement officers whose role was intended to help not harm them. Structural violence occurs when structures adversely impact a group's ability to meet their basic needs and reach a socioeconomic status that is equivalent to the majority (Galtung, 1969). For example, Black workers have faced discrimination in hiring processes, and experienced tokenism, co-worker aggression, and other outcomes due to their race (Wingfield, 2019). Black workers are overrepresented in 'bad jobs,' low-wage and precarious work with no/limited benefits, which means that Black adults generate less wealth over time, accumulate more chronic health issues, and have a lower life expectancy compared to White Americans (Gatta, 2018; Jason & Erving, 2021; Kalleberg, 2011; Misra & Walters, 2022). An earlier study has found that Black adults seeking employment through temporary staffing agencies are presented with fewer and lower quality (i.e., low wage, lower status, and undesirable) assignments compared to White Americans (Bendick, Jr. & Cohn, 2021).

Further, there is evidence of a unique stigma associated with Black Americans compared to other racially similar groups in the United States, like Black Africans and Black Caribbeans.

For example, similarly qualified applicants with Black African names receive more invitations to interview than Black Americans, illustrating that Black Americans are not considered ideal workers (Howard & Borgella, 2020). Black Americans seem to have less social capital within the United States which limits their access to higher paying and higher status jobs in comparison to Black Africans (Imoagene, 2018). Further, the children of Black immigrants in the United States have reported making efforts to distance themselves from Black Americans to offset the negative stereotypes associated with Black Americans and to elevate their socioeconomic status (2018). As such, some Black Americans have developed negative attitudes toward migrants (Carter, 2019).

Black American Migration

Understanding Black American domestic and international migration can help us make sense of the experiences of Black American expatriates.

The Great Migration: A Black American exodus. The most significant and frequently studied migration of Black Americans is known as the Great Migration. Spanning approximately sixty years from 1910 to 1970, an estimated six million Black Americans relocated from the segregated South to the Midwestern, Northern, and Western regions of the United States to escape injustice (National Archives, n.d.; Wilkerson, 2010). The Great Migration is typically divided into two waves, each aligning with the United States' involvement in the Historically, more attention has been given to the movement of Black Americans within the United States than to their international migration. Though Black American international migration is a smaller aspect of the broader global migration trend, it is an expanding phenomenon that reflects rising mobility worldwide.

World Wars. The first phase, from 1910 to 1940, saw individuals leaving rural areas in the South for cities in the Midwest and North such as Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia (National Archives, n.d.). The second phase took place during and after World War II and throughout the Civil Rights movement, during which Black people continued to migrate to major cities in the North and Midwest, while also expanding westward to cities such as Los Angeles, Oakland, and Seattle (National Archives, n.d.). Segregation, racism, and anti-Black violence such as lynchings as well as limited job opportunities, due to a surplus of agricultural workers, and oppressive work were among the factors that drove Black Americans, especially Black men, away from the South (Leibbrand et al., 2019; Wilkerson, 2010). Meanwhile, emerging industries and an abundance of jobs, particularly in the higher-paying industrial sectors, along with other transformative opportunities, drew them to other parts of the country (Tolnay, 2003; Wilkerson, 2010).

Beyond Borders: Black Americans in Post-War France. Concurrently, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century, hundreds of Black Americans migrated to France and established a Black American enclave in Paris (Stovall, 2000). Initially comprised of veterans pursuing their education and war correspondents, Paris developed a reputation as a safe-haven for a diverse group of Black Americans including those with artistic and intellectual distinction such as jazz performer Josephine Baker and writers James Baldwin, William Gardner Smith, and Richard Wright (Jackson, 2003; Lalisse-Jespersen, 2021; Siddiqui, 2022; Stovall, 2000). At the time, many Black Americans saw themselves as "political refugees, living in exiled from an America irredeemably cursed by racism and reaction" (Stovall, 2000, p. 188). The writings of both Richard Wright and William Gardner Smith captured the essence of this shared sentiment and exposed the harsh treatment of Black people in the United States at the time. In his

unpublished essay, “I Choose Exile,” Richard Wright criticized the United States for its unwillingness to treat Black people with dignity and respect (Stovall, 2000). Similarly, in his autobiographical novel, *The Stone Face*, William Gardner Smith tells the story of a young Black American expat in Paris who fled “the violence and racism of his native land” (Stovall, 2000, p. 193). Racial oppression was a unifying force that brought Black Americans to Paris. Living in France was viewed as liberation and a form of resistance against the United States. In Paris, Black American expatriates created spaces for themselves by establishing a network of cafés, restaurants, hotels, jazz clubs, and soul food restaurants that served as ethnic gathering spaces and enabled them to offer Black American culture as a “consumer object” to be enjoyed by others (Stovall, 2000, p. 187). Therefore, respite from anti-Black racism and violence motivated Black Americans to leave the United States much like how it pushed Black people out of the South to other parts of the country the Great Migration.

The New Great Migration: A reverse movement. Since the 1970s, there has been a trend of Black Americans returning to the South from the Midwest, Northeast, and West. This trend includes both “lifetime” Southern-born Black Americans who had relocated to other parts of the country during the Great Migration, as well as “generational” migrants, the descendants of Black Americans who moved out of the South (Leibbrand et al., 2019). This return was influenced by deindustrialization and the high cost of living in the cities that initially attracted Black Americans, along with the comparatively lower cost of living and growth of job opportunities in the South. Additionally, there were shifts in the political and social climate of the South in response to the Civil Rights Movement that made living in the South more palatable for Black Americans (Frey, 2004). From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, this return was led primarily by college-educated individuals who left metropolitan areas like Chicago, Los

Angeles, and New York in favor of Southern urban centers such as Atlanta and Washington DC (Frey, 2004). Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas are the states that have witnessed the greatest growth in the number of Black Americans since the start of the New Great Migration (Pendergrass, 2013, 2017).

Modern-Day Black American International Migration. Anecdotal evidence hints that there is an exodus of Black Americans leaving the United States, yet little is known about modern-day Black American international migration. I have come across countless blogs, social media accounts, and other online articles featuring Black Americans who have chosen to move abroad (see: Coleman, 2024; Gray, 2023; Hicks, 2021). The Black Travel Movement, a social, cultural, and entrepreneurial phenomenon, is often credited as the catalyst of the rise in Black American expats. The current movement represents a significant shift because, in the past, Black people have faced systemic racism and economic barriers that limited their travel (Dillette & Benjamin, 2021). Travel, including domestic travel, posed challenges for Black Americans due to financial and safety considerations. During the Jim Crow era, "The Negro Motorist Green Book" served as a guide to help Black Americans travel safely throughout the United States by highlighting places that were welcoming as well as those that were best avoided (Edwards, 2020). Today, the internet – especially social media and other user-generated content – acts as a modern-day version of the Green Book, as Black Americans share their travel experiences. Their stories often portray a positive view of their experience visiting various places as Black international travelers (Peters, 2021). As a result of increased exposure and representation, a growing number of Black Americans are choosing to relocate to other countries (Gray, 2023). However, unlike the historic mass migrations of Black Americans, we do not know what motivates them to do so today.

Defining 'Expat'

'Expatriate,' or 'expat' for short, refers to people who move and work abroad (Andersen, 2021). The research identifies two types of expatriates: organization-assigned/assisted expatriates (AEs) and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). Typically, AEs are individuals who are selected and supported by their multinational employer to work outside their home country temporarily (i.e., less than 12 months), but these workers will often stay abroad for years - lengths that suggest emigration rather than expatriation (ILO, 2015). Being an AE is often viewed as a career-enhancing and elevating experience (Andersen, 2021; Stahl et al., 2002). Early expatriate research has largely focused on AEs, who until this day, are mostly White men selected by their organization for international assignments (Hays, 1974; Stone, 1991). People with minoritized identities, such as women, were historically excluded from these opportunities as employers' assumptions did not deem them viable options (Stroh et al., 2000).

SIEs, individuals who choose to relocate abroad for work without the benefit of organizational support (Suutari & Brewster, 2000), do not always set a timeframe for their stay (Tharenou, 2010), and are more gender and racially diverse than AEs (Berry & Bell, 2012)(Berry & Bell, 2012). Cerdin and Selmer (2014) argue that an SIE must meet the following criteria: self-initiate relocation abroad (i.e., without being assigned to a foreign job), intend to maintain regular employment, anticipate a temporary stay, and be a *qualified professional* (i.e., transferable professional skills that can be useful in other countries). The term SIE is used to distinguish this population from other people who move internationally such as students, retirees, immigrants, migrants, and refugees (2014).

Expatriate is a contentious term that is often used to identify racially White people who migrate from the global north and White-majority nations (e.g., North America, Europe,

Australia) and to discount the experiences of non-White workers and people from the global south (DeWolf, 2014; Green, 2009). This racialized distinction between White workers and others helps to portray expats as 'good' or acceptable in comparison to others (Cranston, 2017). Therefore, being an 'expat' is a credential that legitimizes and gives greater access and agency to White people (Ray, 2019). According to the International Labour Organization's categorical definitions, an expat would be considered a 'foreign migrant worker' (ILO, 2015) which would support the argument that expatriate is used for other non-White workers. However, for this study, I employ a definition of "expatriate" based on Doherty (2013) and Al Ariss (Al Ariss, 2010), who defined the term as an individual who has agency in their decision to move internationally, with or without the support of an employing organization. This definition ensures the inclusion of all Black Americans who live and work abroad.

COVID-19: From "Work from Home" to Work from Anywhere

In March 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, companies across the globe transitioned to virtual operations and allowed their employees to work from home (Barrero et al., 2021; Coulson-Thomas, 2020). Working from home was a new experience for most workers and, despite having its challenges, has become the preferred way to work, giving people greater freedom and flexibility (Jaiswal & Arun, 2020). Without a loss in productivity, stay-at-home orders and travel bans meant that most frontline and non-essential workers spent most of their time at home (Coulson-Thomas, 2020). As travel slowly resumed and employees had not yet been asked to return to the workplace, some took advantage of remote work and decided that 'work from home' meant working from anywhere.

Countries that remained open to international tourism throughout the pandemic (e.g., Mexico) provided U.S. American workers with an option to work from anywhere when they

needed a vacation from their homes (Nguyen, 2022). In 2020, there were an estimated 11 million U.S. workers who considered themselves to be "digital nomads," a fifty percent increase from the previous year (Castrillon, 2022). Digital Nomads are people who travel freely and leverage the internet to work remotely (Hensellek & Puchala, 2021; Litchfield & Woldoff, 2023). Additionally, the number of Google searches for "how to move abroad" rose by 29% that year according to the *Where the World Wants to Work* report (Keliher, 2021). As of 2021, the number of American digital nomads had risen to approximately 15.5 million. With work moving online, digital nomads were able to work from anywhere that provided an internet connection, including cafés, libraries, co-working spaces, hotels, and other temporary housing (e.g., Airbnb) enabling them to easily move about while continuing to work. Co-working office space providers like WeWork, establish facilities in cities and popular tourist destinations to give globally mobile workers a place to work and be in community with like-minded others (Chevtaeva & Denizci-Guillet, 2021).

Many self-initiated expatriates are digital nomads who value flexibility and geographic independence. Earlier research has found that international travel (e.g., business, educational study abroad, leisure vacation) can prompt global migration (Poot, 2015). The factors that attract someone to a country for tourism can also instigate an interest in expatriation. In experiencing a new culture and lifestyle, travelers gain insights about a country that inspires and can inform international relocation.

Motivating Reasons for Expatriation

As discussed earlier, an international assignment is often considered a career-boosting opportunity that is crucial for career development/survival (Tung, 1998). Therefore, AEs are often driven by career motives to seek out international assignments. SIEs on the other hand,

typically have greater mobility and control over when and where they move. Therefore, it is suggested that SIEs are motivated by location and reputation – meaning that a particular country is most important. Given the demographic differences among AEs and SIEs, there is a possibility that the motivations for expatriation will differ by gender and racial and ethnic identities.

The Push-Pull Theory of Migration. The *Push-Pull Theory of Migration* (Lee, 1966) is one of the most popular frameworks used to explain migration motivations. Lee (1966) posits that people can be pushed out of one location by unfavorable conditions or pulled to another by conditions that seem more desirable. A precarious economic situation and hostile social and political climate are some factors why someone might feel pushed out of the environment. On the other hand, someone might feel pulled toward an environment by perceived and/or promised opportunities such as personal safety, career advancement, and improved financial opportunities. Further, this theory considers intervening obstacles that may make it challenging for someone to migrate from one country to another. These obstacles could be physical (e.g., bodies of water), legal (e.g., immigration policies), economic (e.g., cost), cultural (e.g., language barrier), or social factors (e.g., hostility and xenophobia) that can impact one's decision-making process or relocation to the target destination (Lee, 1966). However, what it comes down to is that people are motivated to migrate by an expectation that they will be more satisfied elsewhere. Lee's model can be used in the context of both domestic and international migration.

Figure 1 – Lee's Push-Pull Theory of Migration

Metaphors of expatriates. Complementing Lee's theory, Richardson and McKenna (2002) proposed a framework of four metaphors (Architect, Explorer, Mercenary, and Refugee) to categorize the reasons for expatriation. The 'Architect,' is used to describe individuals who move abroad primarily for career progression (2002). In other words, 'Architects' are driven to enhance their resume with new professional experience and skills so that they can secure "better" opportunities later. 'Explorers' are people who get excited by the opportunity to have new adventures and experiences (e.g., traveling and learning) (2002). The 'Mercenary' metaphor is associated with a desire to have a better economic/financial situation (2002). 'Mercenaries' could be pushed to a new country because they are no longer able to meet their financial goals in their country of origin or pulled by the opportunity to earn more money or acquire things that they would not be able to obtain by staying in their current situation. The final metaphor, the 'Refugee' is used to describe people who are motivated to escape negative situations in their country of origin in search of a better life (2002). Negative situations can include poor working conditions, violence, political turmoil, or any situation that puts someone at risk of harm such as discrimination, structural violence, poor gun control, and racism. Black Americans could be motivated by any of these reasons. Given that Black Americans have endured so many negative experiences in the United States, I believe that they are likely motivated by 'Refugee' reasons.

However, since the United States is the number one destination for migration and most people are drawn to a country for socioeconomic reasons like career advancement and financial gains, we do not know if Black Americans are being pushed out of the United States or are being pulled abroad by attractive opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

While there is some research available on Black American migration within the United States (e.g., The Great Migration, The New Great Migration), little is known about the motivating reasons that Black Americans move abroad. Employment and socioeconomic opportunities are the primary reasons that people migrate internationally but, compared to people from other parts of the world, U.S. Americans migrate less frequently for this purpose (InterNations, 2021). Additionally, despite the abundance of U.S. American expatriate literature, scholars have failed to capture the nuanced experiences of Black Americans. More research is needed to understand the reasons why Black Americans migrate internationally. In studying the lived experiences of this population, we will be able to expand our knowledge of international management and migration. More specifically, future research can help us to understand the factors that would push or pull Black Americans - a historically marginalized group from a developed nation - out of their home country, how their identities influence their desired goals. Further, insights gained from future studies may help to inform policy and have implications for management practice. Therefore, I propose to answer the research questions: *What are the factors that motivate Black American workers to leave the United States? To what extent do the motivations of Black Americans abroad resonate with the metaphors used to illustrate self-initiated expatriates?*

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify the factors that motivate Black American workers to leave the United States and to understand the extent to which their motivations resonate with the metaphors used to characterize self-initiated expatriates. To achieve this, I utilize a qualitative approach as this methodology enables researchers to investigate complex social phenomena such as lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of individuals or groups. Therefore, for the aims of this study, a qualitative approach would be most suitable.

Context

The spotlight often shines on the influx of foreigners to the United States via the U.S.-Mexico border, but many U.S. Americans have crossed the border and now call Mexico home. As seen in Figure 1, Mexico is the top destination for United States migration, attracting more than twice as many U.S. Americans as Canada, the second most popular country for U.S. migration and the United States' northern neighbor (United Nations, 2020). There are more U.S. citizens living in Mexico than in any other region of the world, it is estimated that over 1.6 million Americans now reside in Mexico (U.S. Department of State, 2023). U.S. American migration to Mexico is not a new phenomenon (Schafran & Monkkonen, 2011). There are several well-established U.S. American diaspora enclaves in Mexico such as the lakeside town of Ajijic in the state of Jalisco and San Miguel de Allende, a colonial-era town in the mountainous state of Guanajuato (Rogers, 2018). As a result of receiving U.S. American expatriates many towns experience cultural shifts as host country nationals accommodate the needs and demands of their new neighbors (Schafran & Monkkonen, 2011). When I searched the term "Black Expat" on Facebook, I found a group for Black Americans in Mexico with 6.8k members. Additionally, there were local groups for the Riviera Maya (encompassing Cancun, Playa Del Carmen, and

Tulum) with 4.5k members, Mexico City with 2.8k members, and Merida with 2.3k members. These groups suggest that these are key centers of Black American expatriate life in Mexico.

Area of destination	Migrant Population (2020)
WORLD	2,996,223
AFRICA	40,539
ASIA	454,065
EUROPE	799,438
CENTRAL AMERICA	861,487
Mexico	799,248
SOUTH AMERICA	154,000
NORTH AMERICA	276,930
Canada	273,226
OCEANIA	179,509

Figure 2 – "International Migrant Stock 2020," United Nations, 2020

Data

The data used in this study focuses on a subset of interviews obtained from an ongoing investigation encompassing a convenience sample of 30 participants worldwide. Therefore, I will describe the data collection process that I followed for the larger investigation and then describe the subset of participants included in the current study. Although the broader study involved participants located across the globe, the decision to isolate the Mexican subset was motivated by the goal to delve deeper into the unique cultural, societal, and contextual factors shaping experiences within this specific demographic. This focused approach allows for a nuanced exploration of themes and patterns, enriching our understanding of the Black American expatriation and global migration phenomenon. The data utilized in this study comprised 200 pages of semi-structured, in-depth interview transcripts, formatted with an 11-point font, and single-spaced. Approval for this study was obtained from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Institutional Review Board. The study adhered to ethical guidelines including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants did not receive compensation for their involvement in the study.

Data Collection

Although I began data collection for the larger study in May 2023 and paused collection in September 2023, the subset of interviews used in this study was collected from May 10 – July 30, 2023. Several social media platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (now X) were used to advertise the open call for interview participants. I posted a message (see Appendix F) along with a recruitment flyer (see Appendix E) in expat Facebook groups with the consent of group administrators and posted the flyer on my personal page. In some cases, my posts were subsequently (re)shared by my connections and group participants. Prospective participants completed a brief eligibility screening questionnaire (see Appendix D) and reserved a mutually convenient time for their interview via Calendly, an online scheduling automation platform. As each interview was scheduled, I confirmed eligibility and canceled interviews with individuals that failed to meet the criteria. Before the start of each interview, I shared that the purpose of the study was to learn more about the experiences of Black American expats living and working abroad, obtained verbal informed consent from all participants, and ensured confidentiality. All interviews were conducted in U.S. American Standard English, but some participants also used Spanish to express their experiences authentically. Zoom was chosen for all interviews due to its availability through the institution and accessibility for remote participation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face but only the audio was recorded. Recording stopped after the interview and demographic information and pseudonyms were collected via a web-based questionnaire (see Appendix C).

Interviews

This subset of interviews had an average length of one hour and 44 minutes but ranged in duration from 68 minutes to 133 minutes, with a total of 17 hours and 18 minutes of audio

recordings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather rich, in-depth, data on participant's experiences and perceptions related to living and working in the United States, making the decision to relocate, and their experiences in their host country. I developed the interview guide (see Appendix B) following a review of the literature and best practices for interviews, as recommended by Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006), aiming to explore key topics relevant to the research objectives. This means that each interview began with broad open-ended questions like *"Can you begin by giving me some background about yourself and your professional trajectory?"* and *"How would you describe your quality of life in the United States?",* before diving deeper into specific questions such as *"What has it be like living in [Mexico] as a Black American?"* and *"In what ways do you believe that the experience of living outside of the United States impacts your career and socioeconomic mobility?"* before concluding with *"What else would you like to share about your experience that we have not yet discussed?"* Although one of the goals of this study was to understand how their racial/ethnic identity impacted their motivations, I do not explicitly ask about this. Further, intentionally waited until later in the interview to ask about their primary reasons for leaving the United States to establish a baseline of potential motivators and avoid influencing how they responded the direct question when prompted. The interviews were transcribed using the auto-transcription feature available on Zoom and subsequently underwent a thorough cleaning process to ensure accuracy, a task carried out collaboratively by myself and a trained undergraduate research assistant.

Participants

I recruited the participants in this study using convenience sampling to facilitate access to a geographically dispersed and otherwise hard-to-reach population. A total of 10 self-identifying

Black American adults, 8 women and 2 men, ages 30-72 (average age of 45) participated (see Appendix A). All participants are college -educated and hold bachelor's degrees or higher. Prior to moving abroad, all of the participants experienced living in the United States as adults. At the time of the interview, all participants were engaged in some form of work, and all but one were self-employed. They left the United States as early as October 1997 and as recently as October 2021. Seven out of 10 participants relocated between August 2020 and October 2021.

Analysis

Analytical Process. I employed both inductive and deductive approaches to analyze the interview transcript data. My analytical process (Figure 2) modified the six-step Thematic Analysis framework, which enables a researcher to explore, identify, and interpret themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and consisted of three phases of analysis. This process began with me familiarizing myself with audio files and interview transcripts. The first phase was an inductive process that initially involved line-by-line open coding of hard copies of the interview transcripts. After an initial pass of all transcripts, the data files were uploaded to NVivo (Release 14.23.4 (61)), a qualitative analysis software licensed by UNC Charlotte, and the handwritten codes were transferred to the platform. I then gave each transcript a second pass to add and modify codes. This process resulted in 220 codes such as, "Black worker problems", "Anti-Black violence", "Black expat community", "U.S. Politics", "Motivation to expatriate", "remote work", and "Why Mexico". In later stages of focused coding, more detailed codes included "American first, Black second", "better than where I came from", "economic refugees", "Rat Race", "feeling dehumanized", and "mattering and feeling valued". Additionally, analytical memo writing helped me to delineate the relationships between the codes. This was an iterative

process that required going back and forth multiple times between the codes, data, and memos to refine the emerging themes. These codes were used to name and define the prominent themes.

After I identified factors that motivate Black Americans to expatriate, I decided to take a deductive analytical approach for the second and third phases to sort the data into categories that maintain alignment with the research questions and theoretical framework (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). During Phase 2, the themes were coded as either "push factor" or "pull factor," as informed by the *Push-Pull Theory of Migration* (Lee, 1966), and Phase 3 involved coding the push/pull factors as either 'Architect', 'Explorer', 'Mercenary', or 'Refugee' based on the metaphorical taxonomy proposed by Richardson and McKenna (2002).

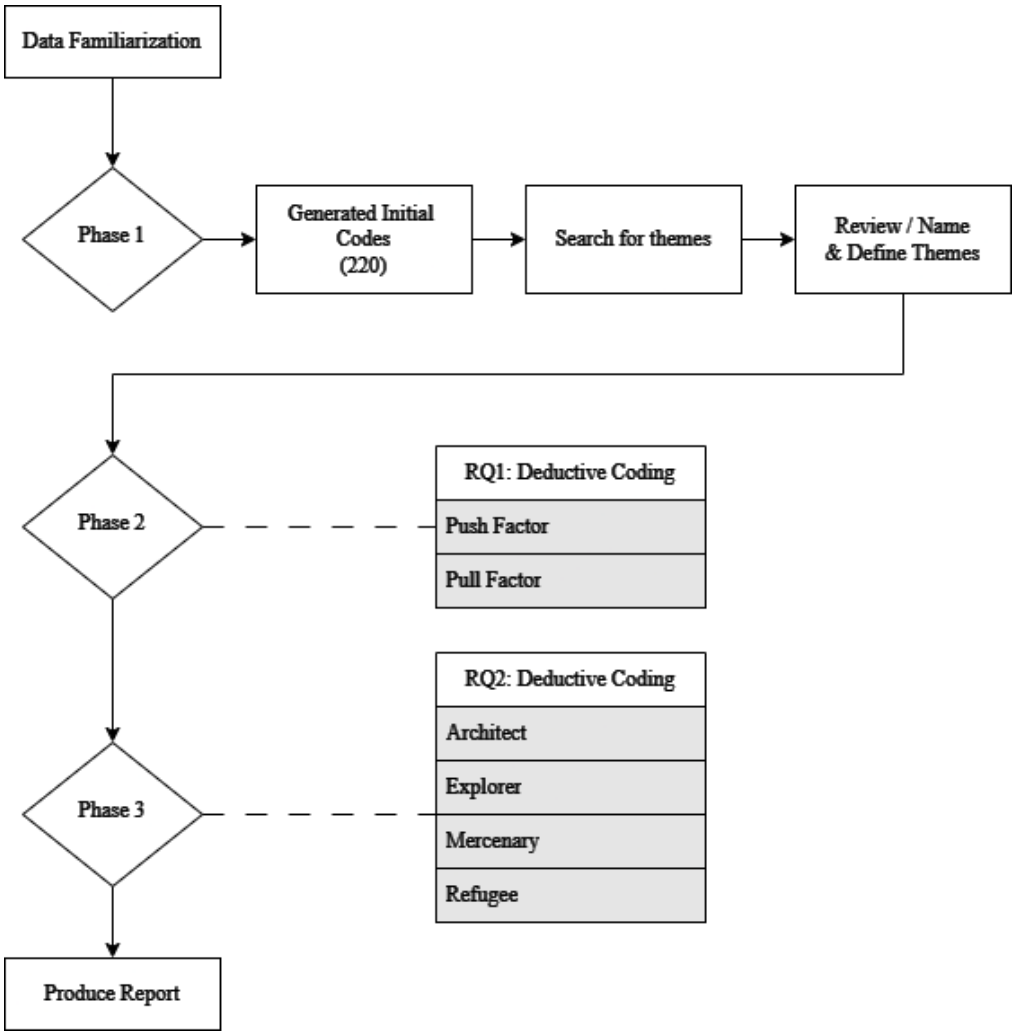

Figure 3 – Analytical Process

Reflexivity. Whether they want it or not, researchers are always part of the subject they study and influence it to an extent. Past experiences, gender, ethnicity, age, interests, abilities, and personal preferences play an important role in determining the point of view of the research. Thus, objectivity in critical analysis is de facto unattainable: "A phenomenon has as many truths as the individuals experiencing it" (Airey & Tribe, 2005, p. 7).

Through my educational training, I have completed several courses on qualitative research and analysis and have gained hands-on experience with qualitative data collection and analysis, under the supervision of scholars who are trained in disciplines such as communication and sociology before the commencement of this current study. This research is grounded in the critical interpretivism paradigm, an epistemological perspective that recognizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge and emphasizes the significance of subjective experiences and cultural contexts (Scauso et al., 2018). The critical interpretivist paradigm posits that reality is not objective but socially constructed, shaped by cultural, historical, and contextual influences (Scauso et al., 2018).

My interest in expatriates started long before I came to research this phenomenon. I was first introduced to the "expat lifestyle" in 2018 when I traveled to Colombia and Mexico for the first time. After visiting these countries, I joined various expatriate groups on Facebook to learn more. Although I have spent significant time in Mexico and have visited multiple Mexican states, I have never lived outside of the United States. My identity as a middle-aged Black American man from New York City who has lived in multiple cities and states across the United States has prepared me to understand, to a good extent, the nuances of Black American participants' experiences in the United States. Additionally, with my familiarity with Mexico, particularly Mexico City and the states of Quintana Roo, Spanish language ability, and personal

relationships with many Mexican nationals, I am able to make sense of their experiences abroad from an informed perspective. I believe that my identity, demeanor, and ability to demonstrate a genuine interest in the stories of each participant allowed me to easily establish rapport with participants and to probe further where necessary. My evidence of this comes from the fact that multiple participants felt comfortable enough to eat and drink, lay in bed, and, in one instance, remove their wig.

Given that the interviews were scheduled for two hours, and I wanted to be mindful of participants' time, I did not take any restroom breaks. At the beginning of the interviews, I did extend the offer to all participants that we could stop for a break if they felt the need. A few participants did this. However, given the lengthiness of the interviews, I do feel that I may have rushed through some of the later parts of some interviews and missed opportunities to dig deeper. This was apparent during the analysis phase as I noticed that some participants presented points that I failed to follow up on. Since I am grappling with the idea of moving abroad myself, I may have spent more time probing at parts of the interviews related to their experiences abroad rather than their experiences in the United States (the focus of this current study). However, if so, this was done inconsistently. To prevent bias, I tried to assume the role of a naïve coder and frequently checked in with myself to ensure that I was not analyzing the data from the lens of my motivations. Since the reasons that I may choose to expatriate are not very similar to those that I have emerged in this study, I feel that I effectively remained neutral in my analysis. Going forward, I plan to limit the interview length to about 60 minutes to ensure that attention and maintained and to provide as comfortable of an experience for both me and the participant. Additionally, I plan to gain the support of the research assistants to help with the coding process and achieve greater reliability and validity.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to uncover the factors that motivate Black American workers to expatriate and to understand how well Richardson and McKenna's (2002) metaphors illustrate the experiences of this population. In this study, multiple factors that influence Black Americans' decision to expatriate emerged. All, except one, expressed feeling pushed out of the United States. First, I will identify the factors that pushed participants to leave the United States. Then I will delve into the factors that pulled them or influenced them to live in Mexico. Finally, I will assess how their motivations resonate with the illustrative metaphors of self-initiated expatriates as proposed by Richardson and McKenna (2002).

Push Factors

This study finds that the Black Americans in Mexico decided to expatriate as a result of feeling pushed out of the United States by anti-Black racism. While this shows up in the form of concerns about political tension, safety, and workplace oppression, a pervasive anti-Black sentiment was at the core of their decision.

Donald Trump and political tensions. All the Black American expatriates in this study were impacted by the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States. For most, the political climate of the United States leading up to, including, and following his term in office, caused distress and influenced their decision to expatriate. Alicia a 48-year-old woman was working as a high school teacher in Texas when she finalized her plans to leave the country:

> *"I had always had a desire to move abroad, but that, compounded with a national conversation about whether healthcare is a right or a privilege – and I've got an issue with the fact that we're even having that conversation – led me to search for and accept a job abroad prior to the 2016 presidential election. I noticed changes taking place. Eventually, I reached a point where I thought, 'I don't want to do this anymore,' as I didn't feel that it was a safe place for me apart from being a Black person and a Black woman. That's what made me say, 'I'm over this, I'm going to go somewhere else.'"* – Alicia (Mexico City)

Donald Trump's election as president intensified the political polarization in the United States and exacerbated social divides across the country (Abeshouse, 2019). For Alicia, the shift in the discourse around access to healthcare and ongoing concerns about her safety, made her think that the United States was no longer the best place for her to live. Another participant who was also living in Texas at the time, Warren a 35-year-old man who was working in the restaurant industry, witnessed a surge in the uninhibited expression of racist attitudes and behaviors which played a role in his decision to be abroad:

> *"I lived during the Trump era, which incited a lot of racism and [it seemed that] people felt it was okay, just to be that way. It's one of those things like, 'Wow, I really survived that.' I think that we, as Millennials, are going to have a lot of stories to tell our kids and grandkids about what we had to put up with. So yeah, I'm glad to be away from the States, the toxicity, and constant bombardment of political news."* – Warren (Merida)

Destiny a 30-year-old woman from Brooklyn, New York, who had been working in human resources, shared a similar sentiment about the political climate and depressing media coverage that marked President Trump's tenure:

> *"There was so much political turmoil, with the constant news cycle focused on what was happening with [Donald] Trump or the political landscape in America as a whole. There was always so much happening, and it began to bog me down. It's not that these things don't exist in Mexico, but I almost have a shield away from it."* – Destiny (Playa Del Carmen)

For these two participants, their experiences during President Donald Trump's tenure were associated with political tensions and related media coverage that made living in the United States more difficult. As described by Warren, the political situation was one that some Americans felt that they had to endure while others, like Destiny, attempted to escape it by leaving the country. Expatriation allowed Black Americans to distance themselves, both physically and mentally, from U.S. politics.

Nivea, a 55-year-old-woman from Washington, D.C., who worked as a communications consultant on the "periphery of politics", forecasted a political uprising and was determined to move her family out of the United States before it unfolded:

> *"I was working in communications, on the periphery of politics. I've tried not to get deep into politics, but during the Trump 2020 campaign, there was a convergence of craziness. In February or March of 2020, I predicted that we were going to have an insurrection attempt because all of the markers were there – the language, the discourse – I knew it was going to happen. I announced to my immediate family, my parents, and my best friends that we needed to get out of the country before November 2020. In August of that year, we all moved to Mexico."* – Nivea (Puerto Morelos)

Due to her proximity to U.S. politics, Nivea foresaw negative consequences stemming from the rising political tensions. Her prediction of a possible "insurrection" raised safety concerns and uncertainty, prompting her to convince family and friends to move to Mexico before the next presidential election. In doing so, she hoped to avoid any potential backlash that would result from the election.

Within this study, the political climate of the United States during the Trump administration, along with strife leading up to the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections influenced Black Americans to leave the United States. Although the participants were not directly involved in politics, they felt that the political tensions jeopardized their well-being. As conveyed by Warren, living in the United States meant that Black Americans had to endure environmental conditions that had a remarkable negative impact. In some cases, Black workers uprooted their families to find respite from the pressures of American politics.

Anti-Black hostility, George Floyd, and safety concerns. The United States' long history of racism and violence paved the way for the anti-Black injustices we witness today (Taylor, 2019). The highly publicized deaths of Black people, Black males in particular, at the hands of law enforcement officers, along with the Black Lives Matter movement, further

perpetuated social divides along political and racial lines (Pew Research Center, 2023). As alluded to earlier, this type of media coverage was frequent at the time many of the participants were deciding to expatriate. Otis a 53-year-old man from Louisiana whose career has involved community organizing and organization development work, as a liaison for universities, described his experiences traveling the United States after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor:

> *"During the summer [2020], George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were killed, I went on a road trip through 12 states, including Kentucky and Minnesota. I visited Louisville to support Breonna's family and spent time in Minneapolis where George Floyd had lived. I was also active in the Black Lives Matter protests in Chicago. What I noticed in my travels is that when I got 15 minutes outside of a city, there was only hate. Pick a city, any city, and it's just hate. If you take the biggest city out of any state, you're left with Mississippi, 'Make American Great Again', and the caravans. I was like, 'I can't live like this. I can't LIVE like this.' And so, I decided I needed to get out of the country."*- Otis (Puerto Morelos)

Otis felt that there was a pervasive anti-Black sentiment in most of the United States, an attitude that he associated with the state of Mississippi, a site that received a lot of attention during the Civil Rights movement as a hotbed for racism and anti-Black violence. Witnessing George Floyd's death in the media was a pivotal moment that provoked Black Americans to be concerned about their continued safety and to actively prepare for their transition to another country. Warren, the only other male participant in this study, also felt particularly impacted by these deaths:

> *"I saw the killing of George Floyd on TV, which really hit home for me because he was from Houston. Millions of people around the world watched this man get killed by an authority figure in front of everybody's eyes. It was disheartening and gut-wrenching. I asked myself, 'Why am I even putting up with this? Why am I choosing to live in the United States?' Along with being apart from my wife, who was in the U.K., this incident is what made me decide to take a bold step and book a ticket to leave the country."* – Warren (35, Merida)

Witnessing the murder of another Black man on television made Warren fearful of his safety in the United States and motivated him to look for places where he could live with less worry. Before leaving the United States, Faith, a 43-year-old actress and native New Yorker, decided to do "winter in a warm place" to escape the cold weather in the northeast. She spent time in New Orleans and was determined to spend the colder months in U.S. cities with higher temperatures. However, in 2020, following the death of George Floyd, she decided to expatriate: *"The George Floyd murder happened, and I was done. I was like, 'America is no longer for me.' I was seriously looking for other places, like Africa."* The murder of George Floyd triggered Black American workers to question their belonging, safety, and desire to remain in the United States. This incident was pivotal in many Black Americans' decision to expatriate.

Although the murder of George Floyd was a major factor, some participants left the United States before this incident yet expressed very similar reasons. For example, Monica, a 54-year-old serial entrepreneur and single mother who relocated to Mexico from Florida, decided to expatriate on the heels of the deaths of several Black male youth, such as Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin, and the Parkland school shooting:

> *"Overall, my top reason for leaving was because of violence, which gave me so much anxiety. I remember thinking that when we'd go to the movie theater, I'd scope out where I was sitting, where the exit was, and things like that. When I went to a restaurant, I'd ask myself, "Where am I sitting? Do I feel like a sitting duck if I'm just outside on this sidewalk?" These thoughts were just coming to my mind, and maybe I'm over the top, I don't know, but what I knew was that I had to recognize the anxiety that I felt. My goal was really about my child. I did not want to raise my child in the [United States]. I have a Black son and it was a big issue for me to stay there. There was a lot… there still is a lot of violence and gun violence in schools. I remember feeling very vulnerable and I said, 'I want to take him out of this environment.'"* – Monica (San Miguel de Allende)

Ongoing violence and worries about safety, particularly the safety of Black males, drive Black Americans' motivation to depart the United States and relocate to Mexico. Although the media

was plagued with stories of Black males who had died at the hands of law enforcement officers, the safety of Black bodies was a concern, regardless of gender. As evidenced by Alicia's comment, the participants in the study believe that living abroad is safer for Black Americans:

> *"The reality for me, as a Black American woman, is that I am not safe anywhere. I could just as easily disappear off the street here as I could in any other place on earth. I'd didn't start to put that together until I had been here for a while and was like, 'Oh yeah, this is better than where I came from.'"* – Alicia

Many participants expressed that their family and friends who are still living in the United States were concerned about their safety in Mexico. Although Mexico does not have a reputation for safety, they feel that living in Mexico comes at decreased risk. Patti, a 72-year-old retired marketing professional and international business professor from Michigan, spoke of incidents of gun violence in the United States to defend her decision to remain in Mexico for nearly 27 years with family and friends:

> *"All I hear [from family and friends who remain in the U.S.] is, 'Isn't it bad in Mexico?' to which I reply, 'Mexico has 31 states and a federal district, where are you talking about?' I'm from Michigan, where they just had a killing at Michigan State [University]. There's been how many mass shootings in the United States? There's been 300 or so mass shootings thus far this year."* – Patti (Guerrero)

For context, Patti's interview was on July 19, 2023, by which point there had been more mass shootings in the United States than the total number of days that had passed that calendar year (The New York Times, 2023). More mass shootings occur in the United States than in most other developed and developing countries (Silva, 2023). Mass shootings and other violent acts are both senseless and unpredictable causing many Americans, not just Black Americans, to be concerned about safety. In a study of global mass shootings, it was found that mass shootings in the United States "were more likely to involve workplaces, employment/financial problems, and relationship problems" and occur in public spaces and schools (Silva, 2023, p.317).

Overall, the general sentiment among participants was that Black bodies are not valued, respected, or treated well in the United States. Several participants described their treatment in terms such as 'less than human', 'second-class', and 'criminal.' Faith, who had originally considered expatriating to Africa, said that in the United States, she had become accustomed to *"being seen through a lens of 'something is wrong with [her] because [she was] a Black woman in America."* Lauryn, a 32-year-old lawyer and entrepreneur, who also lived in Texas, shared her thoughts on why Black workers are choosing to expatriate:

> *"I feel like there's an exodus going on. I think the predominant reason that most of us are leaving the Western world in masses, especially now, is because of how we get treated. There are so many other countries and we've realized that there are people who can treat us better."* – Lauryn (Merida)

The pervasive anti-Black attitude in their home country created a hostile environment that caused many Black people to fear for their safety and to search for places where they believed that they would be safer and treated with respect and dignity.

Oppressive workplaces. Tension because of U.S. politics often spilled over into the participants' professional lives, creating negative experiences at work. The sentiment among participants in this study was that working in the United States was not enjoyable and terms like 'rat race', 'hamster wheel', 'burn out', and 'soul-sucking' were used to describe their experience of the work culture. A lack of work-life balance created significant conflict in their personal lives and took a toll on their overall well-being. Even with all participants boasting college educations, with several holding advanced degrees, and having held professional careers, they express dissatisfaction with their work experiences in the United States.

Before a tragic car accident nearly cost him his life, Otis expressed that he felt trapped in low-wage work, *"When I got my first [pay] check, I cried. I cried because I looked at the check*

and I got $400 for two weeks' worth of work." Along with being in a "bad" job, Otis lived in rural Minnesota, a community he describes as *"97.7 percent White – they voted for Trump in both elections – it was as redneck as you can get, and it was foreign to me. I'm on a farm and I'm from the city; I didn't know no shit like that. I didn't know how I was going to get out of that situation. I couldn't live like that; I just did not see a future [for me]."* Otis was fortunate to survive and recover from the accident. He views the accident positively because it forced him to reconsider his relationship with work and to reevaluate life more broadly. Although he was able to save $30,000 by working around the clock and not maintaining a permanent home, he shifted his attitude about work and living in the United States following that post-work incident.

Like Otis, the environment and work income factored into Destiny's decision to expatriate, she shared: *"I felt very much, like, disenchanted with the U.S. and everything that was associated with living there, such as the constant being worried about engagement with police or the cost of living. I was tired of working so hard and not being able to afford a one-bedroom apartment."* Despite making what would be a livable wage in some parts of the United States, her income was not enough for her to live comfortably in New York City. Destiny said that she had considered looking for new opportunities and other sources of income, but she felt that she worked too hard to not have anything to show for the effort.

Work also had a detrimental impact on their quality of life in other ways. Many participants expressed that overwork was a part of the American work culture and that the interference of work in their personal lives contributed to their desire to leave their jobs and the country. Alicia experienced burnout working in the United States:

> *"For me, as an educator working in the U.S. was thankless. The expectations for what I was responsible for always grew. Yet, there was very little support for me to make these things happen. So, I'm being held to this very high standard, and I am not being supported properly. There are expectations, unfair, I believe, about*

> *the amount of time I should be dedicating to the job. Like, if you don't take work home with you, the way the job is designed, you cannot possibly do it well, even do it adequately, without taking work home. So, working in the U.S., for me, was kind of non-stop. When school was in session, I worked all the time. And so that meant my work-life balance was non-existent, and I was married, and I had kids. So, it was pretty soul-sucking… I was burnt out in education, and I wanted to leave."* – Alicia (Mexico City)

The stress from job demands and the inability to have more control over their private lives were among the factors that motivated Alicia and some of the other participants to expatriate. They believed that expatriation would be a solution for their lack of work-life balance.

Their racial identity makes Black workers hyper-visible in the workplace. Because Black professionals often are one of the few people, if not the only one, with their racial identity in the organization, their presence is notable in the workplace (Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). In some instances, this hypervisibility results in mistakes by Black workers being penalized more frequently or severely than their white counterparts (Wingfield, 2019). Although she worked in a diverse environment, Lauryn felt that workers of color received disparate treatment in the workplace and shared: *"Even though we had diversity, there was still stigma and discrimination, especially against people of color. For example, even though my white [male] colleague was constantly late, I was reprimanded despite only being late one or twice."* Similarly, Warren said, *"I had a manager who was always on my case, which I didn't understand. Even a colleague was like, 'I don't know why she's on your case like that.' I believe it was because of my race. It was just one of those things where it was like, I couldn't do anything right."* This type of treatment by managers often leaves Black workers in the United States feeling ostracized in the workplace (Wingfield, 2019).

India, a 36-year-old woman who previously had a managerial role at a well-known tech firm in Seattle, recounts incidents where other workers questioned her presence and contacted local authorities to have her removed from company premises:

> *"Despite being a manager and having 180 employees, I would go to work and people would be like, 'Do you work in this building?' I'd say, "I'm going to a meeting right now!' and then, here comes security. Another time, I didn't have my ID and they called the police. My [white] manager had to run down to vouch for me."* – India (Cozumel)

India feels that because she was a Black woman it was assumed that she was not an employee who worked in certain spaces, *"Sometimes, I would be standing outside at [company], and people would say, 'the warehouse is that way.'"* Black workers are often limited to certain roles within employing organizations and their credibility gets questioned as they move further up the hierarchy (Wingfield, 2019). At some point, her identity was perceived as a problem for the company, and she realized that she needed to transition out of this environment:

> *"I'd put my hand out to shake people's hands, but they'd shake my assistant's hand instead. Eventually, my bosses were like, 'It's causing a challenge for us building relationships. Maybe we should put her on the backend and have her advice the person who will be the face of it.' I was just like, 'Oh, I've got to get out of here.' I never even seen race as an issue or hurdle until I began to move up. Race never came up… navigating these experiences never came up until I began to move up, and I began to look like someone who did not belong in that role."* - India (Cozumel)

In this study, the participants described several factors in and out of the workplace that inspired them to not only leave behind their jobs but the country. With all of them having worked with multiple employers, they perceived that these experiences were a systemic issue of anti-Black racism in the United States. Instead of continuing to subject themselves to this type of treatment, many moved towards entrepreneurship and self-employment as expatriates.

Pull Factors

This subsection delves into the motivations that inspired the participants to go to Mexico. Typically, in studies related to push and pull factors, the pull factors contract with the circumstances that lead them to leave their home country. While this is also true in the current

study, two overarching themes underscored their relocation to Mexico. These themes shed light on their shared choice of a host country and what attracted them to Mexico.

Mexico was the only option. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the participants transitioned to Mexico between August 2020 and July 2021, amid the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global shift towards remote work during the pandemic was the catalyst for the rise in popularity of the digital nomad lifestyle and led to an increase in self-initiated expatriates (Cook, 2023). Many of the participants shared that the COVID-19 pandemic created an avenue for them to try working remotely and come to prefer working while living abroad. Although briefly closing its shared border with the United States to non-essential travel, Mexico, unlike most other countries, continued to allow entry of foreigners through its international airports (Brown et al., 2020), making it a popular destination for Black American expatriates. However, some of the participants in this study indicated that Mexico was not their first choice for relocation.

> *"I could only stay [in the United Kingdom] for six months as an American citizen, and obviously, my wife couldn't travel to the States because Trump had locked down the country. So, we began looking for countries to live in. All European countries were locked down, Caribbean countries were locked down, even a lot of parts of Africa were locked down. So, we're just like, you know, it's like the whole world is at a standstill, so 'What do we do?' I'm with the person I love, I don't want to be without her. And then, like something just told me, 'Let's have a look at Mexico.' … we realized that Mexico was like one of the few countries that was open; the only country actually."* – Warren (Merida)

Newlywed Warren relocated to Mexico because COVID-19 limited the options where he and his wife could live together while they waited for approval to gain their dual U.K./U.S. residency. Like Warren, other participants who left the United States during the pandemic did say that they considered other countries such as Colombia and Thailand. Faith, for example, considered

Cartagena, a popular coastal city in Colombia, after sourcing suggestions from other Black American expats:

> *"I was asking around, like, 'What's another nice place that you've been to that's beachfront, you know?' because I like beachfront. Some people said, 'Cartagena is a gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous place.' … and I, as a single woman, I didn't feel safe. I feel safe in Mexico."* – Faith (Playa Del Carmen)

Therefore, it is possible that had other countries remained open, or there been less uncertainty about the duration of pandemic-induced travel bans, some participants might have chosen to go to countries other than Mexico.

Better quality of life. Regardless of the factors that pushed them to leave the United States, the participants in this study broadly were drawn to life abroad because it promised something, a departure from the life that they wished to leave behind. Whether they wanted to find a reprieve from political tensions, escape violence, or create a new relationship with work, they believed that living outside of the United States offered a more desirable lifestyle.

Although only two participants were living in Merida, the capital of the Mexican state of Yucatan, several participants mentioned that the city was a consideration because of its ranking as "the safest city in Mexico." Merida was named second safest in North America behind, Quebec City, Canada, on a list that did not include any U.S. cities within the top 50 (Copeland, 2019). Five other participants still opted to live Yucatan peninsula, within a few hours' drive from Merida, but on the coast.

> *"I looked for where was available that I could go, places I could afford, and where it would be hot. After my first 'winter in a warm place,' [New Orleans] wasn't hot enough for me, I knew that I wanted to be somewhere warmer, someplace hot. So, I decided to consider Mexico. Cancun offered cheap flights, which caught my attention. I thought, "Where can I go in Mexico?" Then I heard about a city dubbed 'the safest city in North America.' Although I didn't end up there, it made me seriously consider Mexico despite the negative propaganda about its safety. Eventually, I settled on Playa Del Carmen, Mexico, because Merida, the 'safest*

> *city,' was still a half hour away from the beach, and I really needed to be at the beach. It makes a difference to me."* – Faith (Playa Del Carmen)

For Black Americans, like Faith, choosing to live in Mexico's Riviera Maya, in proximity to pristine beaches and within a couple of hours from the "safest city in Mexico," provided both a piece of paradise and peace of mind. It was the tranquility and sense of safety that Monica (San Miguel de Allende) experienced at the beach in Mexico that helped her to determine that Mexico was a good destination for her and her son: *"When [my son] turned one, we did our first international trip, a remote beach location in Mexico, and I just remember being in the space where it was just felt so much safer and calm. I thought, you know, being here just feels better somehow."* Expatriating to Mexico would help Black Americans get away from the chaos of the United States and live lives that were less stressful.

> *"I have heard a total of six sirens since I've been in [Mexico]. When I go back to the [United] States, by the time I get from the airport to my mother's house in New Orleans, I've heard six sirens. If I'm in New Orleans or Chicago, the sirens are ringing all night and it's the helicopters, radios, people, and the gunshots. That energy in the States is just too much for me. And then, at this point, it's too expensive. In the States it would cost me to wake up, it costs me to breathe. Every time I would give someone money, I would think about what I can with that [in Mexico]. I'll work whenever I can so that I don't have to go back to the States to live."* – Otis (Puerto Morelos)

In addition to safety, *geoarbitrage*, the practice of leveraging economic disparities and currency exchange rates (Holleran, 2022), is a factor that enabled Black Americans to experience 'better' lives abroad. The high cost of living, along with a lack of livable wages, made it difficult for a couple of participants to afford the type of housing that they preferred in the United States. A strong U.S. dollar along with a lower cost of living in Mexico meant that Black Americans would have access to opportunities that were usually out of reach in the United States.

Despite earning what would be considered a middle-class annual salary, an income that could be livable in many parts of the United States, Destiny felt that it was not possible to live independently in New York City.

> *"I lived with my boyfriend and his family. They owned a 2-family house, so we lived in the basement area. It was very dark and uncomfortable, but at the time, it was what was affordable. Even with me making around $68,000 a year, it still felt like I was living paycheck to paycheck. I thought that maybe if I earned more [in the $75,000 range] that I'd have some options, but that didn't feel like a real viable option."* – Destiny (Playa Del Carmen)

The perceived affordability of Mexico, particularly when earning U.S. dollars and spending in Mexican pesos, was attractive to Black Americans who wanted to find peace of mind and live comfortably. Since the cost of living in Mexico is lower than in the United States, Black Americans in Mexico felt that they could work fewer hours per week and maintain the quality of life they desired. Working and spending less meant greater work-life balance and more opportunities to pursue personal interests such as travel.

> *"I was supposed to go on a multi-country trip where I would spend a few months in different places before I settled on where to live. I would have spent some time in Mexico, then time in Indonesia and Thailand. I had some friends in Mexico who were like, 'If we find you a place, will you stay?' 'It depends.' And then it was like, 'How do you feel about $200-250 per month?' I was like, 'I feel that's great!' If my cost of living is that low, I could still go to Indonesia or Thailand whenever I wanted."* – India (Cozumel)

Metaphors of Expatriation

The Architect. The metaphor of an 'architect' is used to describe self-initiated expatriates who identify career advancement as the driver of their expatriation (Richardson and McKenna, 2002). In their study of academics, Richardson and McKenna found that many "actively engaged in career-building activities" (p. 72) and believed that their international experience would bolster their career prospects upon return to their home country. In my study, Patti was an outlier among participants. The 72-year-old retiree has been living in Mexico since

1997 and was the only participant to share that her reason for leaving the United States for was career advancement. After working for several years in the marketing industry, Patti had planned to pursue a doctorate degree in international business, but the faculty mentor she anticipated working with "challenged [her] to get some experience in international business, and then meet him back at the university in a year or two." However, while gaining experience in Mexico, her advisor died unexpectedly, and Patti decided to extend her stay.

> *"I was so much influenced by my mentor. He told me that to really learn a foreign culture, you had to stay there a minimum of five years. Americans come thinking that they know it all and truly do not know anything. You have to learn before you can lead. So, it was his influence. After he died, it was like, 'I'm going to follow what he told me.' ... But if I'm going to be a teacher of international business, how can I learn it in one year? I have to be truly immersed in the culture and the business practices to learn. It was his challenge."* – Patti (Guerrero)

To continue to stay in Mexico, Patti and her spouse established a Mexican company to employ themselves. The business, a boutique hotel and restaurant, operated for about six years before it was lost. "Mexican mafia came in one day, 15 gunmen, and put guns to our heads. I was forced to sign over the [business] and leave the property. I lost a half-million-dollar investment." Along with losing the business, she and her spouse lost their temporary residency and were deported. Although the goal was to go abroad to gain some international experience to help propel her academic career, she believes that the time away made it difficult for her and her spouse to reestablish themselves in the United States.

> *"We had been away from the States for some years. My credentials, States-wise, hadn't worked in a long time. I was married to a corporate lawyer, same with him. And while we started to send out resumes in the States, I wasn't getting any response. Given [that] everything we owned in the world was [in Mexico], it was easier to restart there than in the States."* – Patti (Guerrero)

Upon return to Mexico, Patti and her spouse established another company, *"and it turned out to be a successful venture in the long run."*

Leveraging international experience for career advancement is the primary reason that individuals who fit the 'Architect' metaphor become expats (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). Patti's relocation to Mexico to "learn to lead" and her decision to stay beyond the 1-2 years suggested by her advisor, is evidence that she was pulled to Mexico to enhance her career. Prior research has found that although academics may also be drawn abroad for other reasons, they are primarily motivated by career advancement (Richardson and Mallon, 2005). Although time away did not help Patti launch her academic career in the United States, she seemingly does not regret her decision to expatriate to Mexico. However, her experience demonstrates a potential risk for self-initiated expatriates who seek career advancement upon return to the United States.

The Explorer and Mercenary. In my analysis, the 'Explorer' and 'Mercenary' metaphors as defined by Richardson and McKenna (2002) did not emerge as primary factors of self-initiated expatriation. However, these metaphors would likely align with their motivations to stay abroad, particularly in Mexico or another developing nation. Nearly all participants in this study had international experiences before they decided to expatriate and expressed that they enjoyed travel, which is common among individuals who expatriate. As demonstrated by India, a lower cost of living in Mexico did open the door for her to travel more often, she had already begun considering a move abroad before realizing that spending less on housing would present an opportunity to do more travel. Affordability was a pull factor for several of the participants, and moving would allow them to spend less on their living expenses, however, it did not appear that anyone left the United States because moving to Mexico would yield financial benefits (i.e., increased income). Many of the participants own and operate their businesses or continue to

work for U.S. companies to be able to earn U.S. dollars. Therefore, the participants were not identifiable as mercenaries.

The Refugee. In this study, Black Americans were pushed out of their home country by political turmoil, violence, and intolerable work conditions, and pulled abroad by the possibility of living a better life. “Search of a better personal and/or professional life” is characteristic of expatriates who fit the ‘Refugee’ metaphor (Richardson & McKenna, 2002, p. 71). Therefore, the metaphor of the ‘Refugee’ best illustrates the most common reasons for expatriation among Black Americans in Mexico. Expatriation allowed Black Americans to find refuge from situations in the United States and to establish themselves in an environment where they could experience a new life. All the participants in this study expressed that they have no intentions to return to the United States permanently. This declaration tells me that moving to Mexico is a welcomed improvement to the lives that had in the United States.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to identify the factors that motivate Black American workers to leave the United States and understand the extent to which the metaphors used to characterize self-initiated expatriates apply to Black Americans in Mexico. My analysis finds that anti-Black aggression, political tension, violence, and oppressive work dynamics were the dominant factors that pushed Black Americans out of the United States, while the opportunity to live better lives drew them to Mexico. Overwhelmingly, the participants in the study expressed that escape from their previous life, the hallmark of the 'Refugee' metaphor, was a factor in their decision to expatriate, which contrasts Selmer and Lauring's (2012) quantitative study of self-initiated expatriate academics (n = 428) that found 'Refugee' reasons were uncommon.

Global mobility scholarship within management has largely focused on one narrative of expatriates that may not be relevant for other groups that transition across borders such as refugees (Szkudlarek et al., 2021). The participants in this study used language that parallels the 'Refugee' metaphor, which mirrors the refugee experience, with one explicitly identifying as a refugee. The refugee parallel is an important distinction because it deviates from the "elite," often White male professional, narrative (McNulty & Brewster, 2020) that is common within the field and opens the door to expatriates who do not fit the prototype. Black American expatriates' affinity with the refugee experience should not be surprising given the long history of discrimination, racism, and violence in the United States. Further, the deaths of Black people in the United States, especially Black men and boys, at the hands of law enforcement officers would likely enable Black Americans to satisfy the requirements to receive refugee status per international law (UNHCR, n.d.).

Some of the factors that drive Black American expatriates away from their home country, such as political turmoil and violence, are reminiscent of the narratives of asylum seekers at U.S. borders. However, while there are similarities between the 'Refugee' and individuals with refugee status due to involuntary displacement, the experience of being a Black American differs, at least in the context of the current study, because these participants voluntarily left a developed nation and chose to relocate to a developing nation. This direction of migration positions the Black American with greater privilege and access than if the direction of the migration were reversed. As argued by Szkudlarek and colleagues (2021), when nuances such as the context of the refugees are considered, our steadfast assumptions and international theories are challenged. Therefore, the experiences of Black Americans, individuals with minoritized racial identities, might be relatable to Black expatriates who come from other WEIRD countries yet different than those who come from Black majority nations. This suggests the necessity to consider individual-level factors, including identity and perceptions, along with macro-level factors in studying expatriates.

The oppression that the participants encountered in the workplace such as disparate treatment and hostility are among the problems that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and affirmative action policies and programs were adopted to remedy (Anderson, 2005). Although it did not emerge in the interviews, I ponder whether organizational DEI initiatives could have had an impact on their decision to go abroad. In other words, if workplaces were better at cultivating environments where every employee feels welcomed, valued, and empowered to succeed, could this help counteract societal challenges and improve the retention of Black American workers? If employing organizations were effective at creating conditions

where employees felt supported, perhaps the workplace could buffer the impact of the non-work forces that push Black Americans to leave the United States.

Multiple participants voiced that the work culture of the United States was a competitive "rat race," that demanded a lot from them with very little reward and created unnecessary stress in their personal lives. The pressure to achieve more, earn more, and rise up the corporate ladder was a never-ending cycle that made work-life balance seemingly impossible to obtain. Some participants expressed that a lack of work-life balance, and an inability to have control over their time, was detrimental to their well-being and strained their relationships outside of work. All but one participant was self-employed at the time of the interview because they desired greater work-life balance. Leaving the United States and moving to Mexico, allowed Black American professionals to leverage the foreign exchange rates and the lower cost of living in their host country, giving them the opportunity to have control over their work so that they could create harmony between their professional and personal lives.

Implications. The findings of this study have several implications for both theory and practice. Firstly, identifying the push/pull factors of migration and linking the reasons why Black Americans have expatriated to the metaphor of the 'Refugee' challenges previous assumptions about self-initiated expatriates and highlights the need for more research on this population. Specifically, the discrepancy between the current findings and that of Selmer and Lauring (2012) leads to additional questions: Are the scope conditions of Richardson and McKenna's (2002) metaphors limited to academics? If not, then what other factors (e.g., expatriate identity, host country, time) make the findings of my study strikingly different than those of Selmer and Lauring (2012)?

I posit that this contradiction comes from the lack of representation of Black Americans in Selmer and Lauring's (2012) study, a critical factor. Selmer and Lauring used an email list of academics at Scandinavian universities to identify a convenience sample of expatriates with 'foreign-sounding names' for inclusion in their study. Since Black Americans are underrepresented in academia, and scholars have argued that expatriate research focused primarily on White, male, and elite workers, I assume that there were few, if any, Black Americans included in the Selmer and Lauring study. Additionally, Black Americans who are motivated to escape anti-Black racism or work-related oppression, might be reluctant to move from one WEIRD country to another. The Black American distinction is important because non-American Black expatriates, particularly those from WEIRD countries, could be from nations that have less civil unrest than the United States and therefore, its citizens have lower motivations to escape.

On another note, many Black Americans experience these issues daily yet continue to stay in the United States. Why is it that these individuals are motivated to leave when others are not? As I perceive it, a recent increase in Black American tourism and the visibility of Black American travel experiences on social media (i.e., The Black Travel Movement) increased the likelihood that Black Americans would consider expatriation. As Black Americans engage in international travel themselves or experience other nations vicariously when they see other Black Americans living their best lives abroad, Black Americans are likely also to consider relocation as a possibility. Beyond decision-making, it is also important to consider why Black Americans are staying including economic resources, accessibility of remote work, foreign language ability, and relationships that tether them to the United States.

Since this study found that escaping anti-Black racism and violence is one of the primary push factors of Black Americans in Mexico, expatriate and migration research has yet to delve into the experiences of race and violence once they have transitioned to their host country. The participants in this study stated that they feel welcomed, valued, and human, or as phrased by one participant, "perfect, whole, and complete," for the first time in their lives. This sentiment makes them want to share their experiences with family, friends, and other Black Americans. In some cases, they have already influenced others to join them abroad, adding to the growing number of Black Americans in Mexico. However, do Black Americans perceive that they are safer in Mexico in the United States once the honeymoon is over and the novelty of being abroad wears off? Does their perception of their host country change over time? What new challenges and vulnerabilities, if any, do they face in their host country? By answering these questions, we can expand our knowledge about the experiences of expatriates with historically minoritized identities and provide insights that might help Black Americans make informed decisions about expatriation.

Finally, this study extends our understanding of Black American migration, more specifically, the Black American international migration, and may provide insights that can help us understand the phenomenon of Black American international migration more broadly and across various contexts. Additionally, although the circumstances are different, the modern-day Black American migration phenomenon mimics the Great Migration in that Black Americans are concerned about racialized violence and personal safety while relocating in pursuit of better lives and work experiences. The United States does not have a mechanism in place to track emigration, and thus it is difficult to determine if there is an exodus of Black Americans.

Additionally, as this is a newer phenomenon, more research is needed in this area to help us understand the impact of Black American migration and integration on the host societies.

Limitations. While this study offers valuable insights into the experiences of Black Americans who live and work abroad, several limitations should be acknowledged: First, the sample size in this qualitative research consisted of only 10 participants with a specific context. The small sample size limits the depth of analysis, and the ability to draw robust conclusions, or apply the findings to other settings. Although the findings may be relatable, applicability to a broader population may be limited. Consequently, the unique characteristics of the sample and the context in which the research was conducted should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. Second, as with all qualitative research, the nature of the study inherently involves subjectivity. The reliance on self-reported data may have introduced response bias. Participants may have provided socially desirable responses, may have inaccurately recalled their experiences, or want to justify their decisions as sensible after the fact, leading to potential misinterpretation of the data. Further, interpretations of data are influenced by the researcher's perspectives and experiences. Despite my efforts to maintain reflexivity and minimize bias, the findings may still reflect my biases to some extent. Third, I noticed that one participant (Patti) had different motivations for going abroad (i.e., gaining international experience) and staying abroad (i.e., economic opportunities and violence), which hints that expatriate motivations can change over time. All-in-all, the limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation of the study findings and highlight opportunities for future research. Future research should address these limitations by employing multiple methods of data collection and employing larger samples and conducting studies in varied contexts to enhance the robustness and generalizability of findings.

Future research. While this study provided valuable insights into factors that motivate Black Americans to expatriate, the discussion demonstrates that new questions have emerged, several questions remain unanswered, and the limitations suggest a need for further investigation. Therefore, this section outlines potential directions for future research: This study focused on Black Americans' motivations to go abroad, but future research could delve deeper into their motivations to stay abroad. Investigating this topic may provide a more comprehensive understanding of Black American expatriates and its implications. The findings in this study were based on data collected from Black Americans in Mexico. Future research could extend the analysis to other contexts or populations to assess the generalizability of the results. Exploring Black Americans who are in other parts of the world may reveal variations in their motivations and experiences and shed light on contextual factors influencing Black American international migration. Additionally, it is not known if this sentiment is unique to Black Americans or if other ethnic groups, particularly those with minoritized ethnic identities, in the United States, are also leaving the country due to these reasons. The current climate of the United States may be one that people seek to escape. However, future research should investigate the general attitudes and motivations of U.S. American self-initiated expatriates.

This study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing a snapshot of Black American international migration. Longitudinal studies would allow researchers to examine changes in motivations and experiences over time, identify potential causal relationships, and help us understand the trends related to Black American international migration. Additionally, future research should explore topics such as the relationship between perceived organizational support (e.g., DEI initiatives) and Black American motivations to expatriate; the impact of Black American expatriates and American enclaves on their host society; and how Black Americans

navigate their racial identify, adjust, and build social capital in the new society. The future research directions outlined above offer several opportunities to expand upon the findings of this study and advance our understanding of Black American expatriation. By addressing these research gaps, scholars can contribute to the ongoing discourse and make meaningful contributions to the field of international migration.

Conclusion. This study identifies factors that push Black American workers from the United States and pull them to Mexico, as well as attempts to understand how Richardson and McKenna's metaphors characterize Black American self-initiated expatriates and illustrate their motivations to go abroad. The findings provide empirical evidence for what was believed anecdotally and expose an uncomfortable reality that the scholarly and business communities should give more attention. Political tensions, violence, and anti-Black racism, including experiences of oppression in the workplace, are driving some Black Americans away from the United States and the workforce. If most Black American expatriates are like the participants in my study, I predict that Black Americans and other professionals with historically minoritized identities will increasingly opt out of the United States, leaving our workforce without these highly educated 'Refugees.'

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Age	Gender	Expatriated	Employment	Occupation	Education	US Home State
Alicia	48	woman	Jul-2016	Self-employed	Financial Educator/Coach	Bachelor's Degree	Texas
Destiny	30	woman	Jul-2021	Self-employed	Travel Curator	Bachelor's Degree	New York
Faith	43	woman	Jan-2021	Full-time	Thespian; Presentation Specialist	Bachelor's Degree	New York
India	36	woman	Oct-2021	Self-employed	Entrepreneur	Master's Degree	New York
Lauryn	32	woman	Feb-2021	Self-employed	Lawyer & Entrepreneur	Professional Degree	Texas
Monica	54	woman	May-2018	Self-employed	Tourism Entrepreneur	Bachelor's Degree	Connecticut
Nivea	55	woman	Aug-2020	Self-employed	Communications Consultant	Master's Degree	District of Columbia
Otis	53	man	Jan-2021	Self-employed	Weaver	Bachelor's Degree	Louisiana
Patti	72	woman	Oct-1997	Retiree; Self-employed	Entrepreneur & Educator	Doctorate Degree	Michigan
Warren	35	man	Feb-2021	Self-employed	Sales & Food Industry Manager	Bachelor's Degree	Texas

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Career and work experiences

1. Can you begin by giving me some background on your professional trajectory?
   a. *If needed, prompt participant to describe their educational background.*
   b. *If needed, prompt participant to begin by describing their first employment experiences and continuing to the most recent.*
2. What do you do for a living now? How did you get into this line of work?
3. Tell me about your experiences working in this country?
4. Describe your workplace? What stands out the most about this workplace?
5. Can you tell me about your relationships with co-workers?
6. Can you describe the work culture in this national context? Is it different from the work culture that you experienced in the U.S.?

Motivating reasons for expatriation

7. How would you describe your quality of life in the U.S. before you left?
8. Why did you decide to leave the U.S.?
   a. *If necessary, rephrase: What influenced your decision to leave?*
9. *Who did you discuss your intentions to leave the United States with? How did they feel about your decision?*

Navigating personal and professional life abroad

10. Tell me about your experience living outside the United States?
11. Can you describe how you adjusted to this new country? What has that process been like?
12. How do you feel about your relationships with nationals?
13. How has it been to work in this country?
14. How does your work experience in this country compare to your experiences in the United States?
15. What has it been like living in this country as a Black American?
16. In what ways has living in the host country been easier for you?
17. In what ways has living in the host country been more challenging?

Navigating professional life & impact of working abroad

18. *If working for a company in the host country:* What has it been like being a Black American worker here?
19. *If working for a company in the host country:* What types of strategies or techniques have you used to navigate work? relationships with colleagues? nationals?
20. In what ways do you believe that the experience of living outside the United States impacts your career and socioeconomic mobility?

Wrap-up

21. What would change, if anything, about your experience in your new country?
    a. *Is there anything that you wish you could do differently?*
22. What's next for you?
    a. *How long do you intend to stay in this country?*
    b. *What is your plan for returning to the United States?*
23. What else would you like to share about your experience living and working abroad that we have not yet discussed?

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Pseudonym: [fill in blank]
2. Current Age: [fill in blank]
3. Which of the following best describes your current gender identity? [multiple choice]
   - Cisgender male/man
   - Cisgender female/woman
   - Transgender female/woman
   - Transgender male/man
   - not listed
   - I prefer not to say
4. Which of these best describes your current sexual orientation: [multiple choice]
   - Asexual
   - Bisexual
   - Gay/Lesbian
   - Heterosexual/Straight
   - Pansexual
   - Queer
   - Not listed
   - I prefer not to say
5. Marital Status: [multiple choice]
   - Single/Unmarried
   - Divorced/Separated/Widowed
   - Married
   - Prefer not to say
6. Number of Children: [fill in blank]
7. Ethnicity: [fill in blank]
8. When did you leave the United States (month/year): [fill in blank/calendar]
9. Country of Residence: [Drop down menu]
10. Current city: [fill in blank]
11. Highest level of Education:
    - Less than a high school diploma
    - High school diploma or equivalent
    - Some college (no degree)
    - Associate degree
    - Bachelor's degree
    - Master's degree
    - Doctorate degree
    - Professional/Other Degree
    - I prefer not to say
12. Home state: [multiple choice; I prefer not to say]
13. Languages spoken: [fill in blank]
14. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? [Multiple choice]
    - Full-time (more than 30 hrs)
    - Part-time (less than 30 hrs/week)
    - Unemployed
    - Self-employed
    - Home-maker
    - Student
    - Retiree
15. Occupation: [fill in blank]
16. Which of the following best describes your current annual income (in US dollars):
    - Less than $10,000
    - $10,000-24,999
    - $25,000-49,999
    - $50,000-74,999
    - $75,000-99,999
    - $100,000-124,999
    - $125,000-149,999
    - $150,000 or more
17. Which of the following best describes your current political orientation?
    - Conservative/Right-wing
    - Moderate/Center
    - Liberal/Left
    - I'm not sure
    - I prefer not to say

APPENDIX D: SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

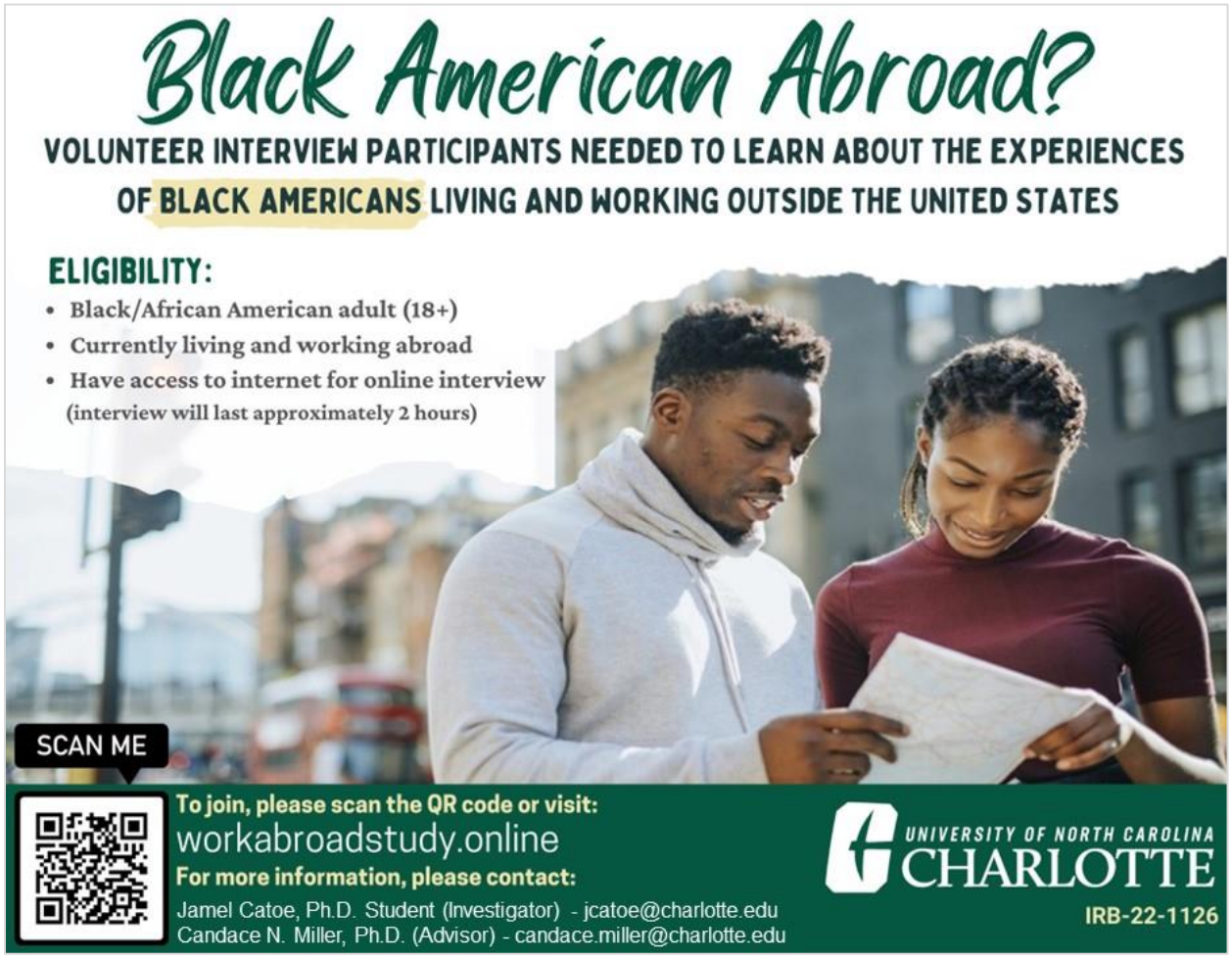
- Are you currently living outside of the United States?
  - Yes
  - No

- Are you currently working (employed or a business owner)?
  - Yes
  - No

- Do you identify as Black/African American?
  - Yes
  - No

- Will you be at least 18 years of age at the time of the interview appointment?
  - Yes
  - No

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT FLYER



APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT SOCIAL MEDIA POST LANGUAGE

Hello, everyone! I am a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am looking for Black American expatriates who would be willing to speak with me about their experiences living and working abroad. If you are willing to share your thoughts with me, please visit: https://workabroadstudy.online to sign-up. If you have any questions, please send me a direct message. Your time and insight will help me to complete my thesis and I would greatly appreciate your help!