How Can Design Thinking Transform Diversity Initiatives For Architectural Trade Organizations In The United States?

Leroy Stewart

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HOW CAN DESIGN THINKING TRANSFORM DIVERSITY INITIATIVES FOR ARCHITECTURAL TRADE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES?

Doctoral Research Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
National Louis University, Tampa Campus
College of Professional Studies and Advancement

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration
Custom Concentration

By
Leroy David Allen Stewart

February 2022
HOW CAN DESIGN THINKING TRANSFORM DIVERSITY INITIATIVES FOR
ARCHITECTURAL TRADE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES?

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Dissertation Committee Approval:

Marguerite Chabau, Ph.D. 2/26/2022
Marguerite Chabau, Ph.D., Chair Date

Kathleen Cornett
Kathleen Cornett, Ph.D., Member
ABSTRACT

This study intended to assess design thinking as a variable regarding its utilization as a tool to increase the number of African American architects in the United States. The research was grounded in the speech given by Whitney Young to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1968, and the initial partnership between the AIA and the National Organization of Minority of Architects (NOMA) in 2001 to increase the number of African American architects to 15,000 by 2030. Through the qualitative methodology, via descriptive phenomenological analysis (DPA), fourteen participants, all of whom were African American licensed architects, were interviewed to gather insights regarding design thinking and four areas of focus, which were outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship. The analysis revealed that design thinking can be a catalyst in the areas of outreach and education for developing solutions intended to increase the number of African American architects in the United States, a goal the professional associations committed to achieving.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for through Him all things are possible. To my parents, Rev. Leroy Stewart Sr, aka “Pops” and Marilyn Stewart, who are not here but with me in my heart. Thank you for inculcating a passion for learning and service. To my brother in architecture, Ishamali Weathersby, you may not be here, but your words have carried me in my darkest days. Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself in this field. Those days in architectural studio gave me many gems to think on. To Kenneth Casey, one of my first mentors; thank you for instilling in me a business ethic and ethos not only in architecture but in life. Thank you also for a quote I continue to live by: “It is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.” To Vincent Paglione, thank you for seeing through a troubled and angered student to realize my potential and help me in undergrad at the University of Illinois-Chicago. To my baseball coach, and Marine, “Chuck” the first man who instilled discipline and follow through in me. I know you are looking down from above telling me, “Good job Stewart!” To my senior year drafting teacher Mr. Ernest Aitchison, a member of the Army Corp of Engineers, who taught me the definition of discipline: “Discipline is doing something you don’t want to do and liking it!” Finally, I dedicate this to Black youth throughout the Diaspora who have been told they cannot. YES, YOU CAN, DARE TO DREAM, AND DARE TO BE!
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Architecture is a profession that impacts the built environment the world over. Architects create the buildings in which we live, work, and exist. To be recognized as a licensed architect, the profession requires extensive education, experience, and the completion of an intense examination. Within the United States, licensed architects number more than 110,000 (“IPAL,” 2018). Subsequently, the numbers of African American architects comprise 2% (2,325) of the profession (“The Directory of African American Architects,” n.d.).

Since the 1968 speech given by Whitney Young (Young, 1968) to the American Institute of Architects (AIA), in which he addressed the lack of inclusion of African Americans within architecture and the lack of diversity in the organization, increasing the number of African Americans in architecture has been a goal of the AIA. While the term minorities can refer to other demographic groups such as Hispanics, Asians, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queers (LBGTQ), this study will follow Whitney Young’s exhortation and focus on the inclusion of African Americans in the profession of architecture. The recognition of small numbers of African Americans in architecture presents an opportunity for research. This study sought to explore the use of design thinking as a tool to increase the number of African American architects. This increase would improve membership diversity and assist both the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) and the AIA Diversity and Equity committee in achieving their vision for membership diversity.
Problem Background

Architecture is a profession that influences the built environment given its role in the creation of buildings that compose the environment. According to the U.S. Census website, the population of the United States was approximately 329 million people (“U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts,” 2020). Of that population, 12.6% are African American. However, of the 110,000 licensed architects in the United States (“IPAL,” 2018), approximately 2,325 are African American (“The Directory of African American Architects,” n.d.). A recent survey identified 16% of architecture firms were African American architecture firms out of 78% of firms that were White (“The American Institute of Architects,” 2016). These statistics provided a starting point for research to find ways that design thinking could be used to increase the number of licensed African American architects.

Given the historically meager numbers, the lack of representation of African Americans in the profession has been a focus for both NOMA and AIA for the past 50 years. Another element impacting the sparse number of African Americans in architecture includes a growing population of individuals, according to the AIA (“The American Institute of Architects,” 2016), working in areas influenced by architecture, yet divergent from becoming a licensed architect. The small number of African Americans in the profession suggests the need for awareness and access to diversify the profession. Actions toward improving the diversity in that field of work have been chronicled following Whitney Young’s 1968 speech to the AIA. As stated by Young in his exhortation:

It would be the most naïve escapist who today would be unaware that the winds of change, as far as human aspirations are concerned, are fast
reaching tornado proportions. Throughout our world society, and particularly in our own country, the disinherited, the disfranchised, the poor, the black are saying in no unmistakable terms that they intend to be in, or nobody will be comfortably in. (1968, p. 2)

A subsequent event focused on diversification was the formation of NOMA in 1971 (“NOMA,” n.d.). As a follow up to those two events, at the NOMA Convention (Taylor, 2001) in 2001, Presidents Paul Taylor of NOMA and Jon Anderson of AIA signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), in which they agreed to work together toward increasing the number of African American architects to 15,000 by the year 2030.

Since 2001, other MOUs (2009, 2013, 2014, 2018, respectively) have been created between the AIA and NOMA for the purposes of increasing the profession’s diversity. However, at the current rate of increase, the goal of 15,000 African American architects will be difficult to achieve by 2030. The intent of this study was to utilize design thinking as a tool to increase the number of licensed African American architects in the United States to achieve the diversity the profession’s leaders committed their organizations to, inspired by Whitney Young’s speech and enacted through the MOUs.

Beyond scholarship offerings, to date no tangible process has been developed for actualizing the goal of 15,000 African American architects within the United States. Apathy has been prevalent in the United States with regards to equality and equity. According to Young (1968),

> Our problem has been the big 80 percent, that big blob of Americans who have been so busy ‘making it,’ getting ahead in their companies, getting a little house in the suburbs, lowering their golf scores, vying for admittance to the country club, lying about their kids’ I.Q. that they really have not had time to be concerned. (p. 4)

In a country that prides itself on equality for all and, given the AIA’s effort as responsive to Whitney Young’s address, the leadership in architecture have not executed
much in the way of quantifiable actions to increase the number of African American architects in the profession. This study sought to provide data and insights that may lead to plans for increasing the number of African American architects.

**Problem Statements**

PS 1: African Americans comprised 1% of licensed architects in the United States in 2001. African American architects, in 2021, comprise 2% (2,325) of the licensed architects in the United States (“The Directory of African American Architects,” n.d.). The AIA and NOMA are far off pace to reach the goal of 15,000 licensed African American architects by 2030.

PS 2: There have been five MOUs between the AIA and NOMA. The first MOU was created in 2001, the last one was created in 2018. All the MOUs between the AIA and NOMA in those 17 years, despite their continued support of the initiative, have had negligible impact on increasing the numbers of African American architects.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that impact the sparse numbers of African Americans in architecture and to demonstrate how design thinking could be a tool in increasing the number of licensed African American architects in the United States. That became a priority for the AIA and NOMA in 2001 with their first MOU agreement. The two Associations committed to the goal of 15,000 African American architects by the year 2030. This study was intended to be a starting point for future researchers to evaluate a quantifiable solution for increasing the diversity in the profession by increasing the numbers of African American architects in the United States. The intention was also for the research to be an assessment of design thinking as a
business solution within architecture, seeking to optimize business processes within that field. For the AIA, design thinking could measure results of increasing the amount of African American architects, as they were challenged to do years ago by Whitney Young. For NOMA, this study seeks to elucidate the efficacy of the MOUs with AIA, starting from the first one issued in 2001.

**Research Question**

The research question that formed the basis for the study is:

RQ: *What factors impact the low numbers of African Americans in architecture and how can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the profession of architecture in the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?* This question was predicated on understanding what design thinking is, juxtaposed with issues surrounding African American architects becoming licensed in the United States.

**Definitions**

Several constructs and definitions have been identified related to this proposed study.

**American Institute of Architects (AIA).** The AIA is the primary trade association for licensed architects in the United States and has managed matters pertaining to the profession of architecture since 1857 (AIA National Website, 2018).

**Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA).** The ACSA is responsible for the accreditation of architectural education programs in the United States and Canada (“About ACSA,” 2020).
Architecture. “The art or science of building, specifically the art or practicing of designing and building structures especially habitable ones” (Architecture,” n.d., para. 1).

Design. “An outline, sketch, or plan, as of the form and structure of a work of art, an edifice, or a machine to be executed or constructed” (“Design,” n.d., para. 1).

Design Thinking. A process for creative problem-solving (Rowe, 1987)

Diversity. “The inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.” (Diversity,” n.d., para. 1).

Minority. “A part of a population differing especially from the dominant group in some characteristics (such as race, sex, or national origin) and often subject to different treatment.” (“Minority,” n.d., para 3).

National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB). The NAAB develops and maintains an accreditation system in professional degree education that enhances the value, relevance, and effectiveness of the profession of architecture (“National Architectural Accrediting Board,” 2019).


National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA). NOMA is focused on diversity and inclusion within the ranks of architecture which include but are not limited to African American, Hispanic, and Asian members of architecture (“About NOMA,” n.d.).
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study relied on an understanding of discrimination in the United States and design thinking as a tool for stimulating change. Discrimination has been practiced both financially and racially. Discrimination existed throughout the duration of the profession in the United States. Financial/economic discrimination of African Americans has been documented as far back as slavery and, specifically, from the beginnings of African Americans being free in the United States during Reconstruction ("Public Broadcasting Service," 2019). The financial discrimination included limitations on businesses that were able to be owned and operated by freed African Americans, such as architecture firms. Another example is, redlining, which limited where African Americans could reside in a city, such as in Chicago ("Public Broadcasting Service," 2019).

Racial discrimination for African Americans became prevalent upon being freed from slavery via the Emancipation Proclamation ("Public Broadcasting Service," 2019). Before then, African Americans were viewed as three fifths of a human being ("What was Jim Crow," n.d.). After Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws became common in the South, and segregation was prominent throughout the entire United States. Racial discrimination hindered African Americans in all facets of life.

Design thinking is native to the profession of architecture and can serve as a tool for stimulating change in the profession. Peter Rowe (1987) coined the term. There are different variants of design thinking (d. school, IDEO, DMI, IIT, IBM). The goal was to comprehend the strengths and weaknesses of each variant and, from that assessment,
determine which variant the leadership of AIA and NOMA might employ to increase the profession’s diversity.

**Methodology**

Based on the assessment of qualitative design, the desired outcome of the research, and the research question for this study, a phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to capture the data needed. That form of research focuses on the “lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). In this study, the experiences of African American licensed architects from inception through education and licensure served as the phenomenon of focus. Intertwined in the experiences were questions about design thinking and the participant’s understanding of design thinking to assess their awareness. In conjunction with the area of focus, the change agent (design thinking), carries its own complexities that pose difficulties in a quantitative study. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was expected to yield applicable results for this study.

**Qualitative Research Design**

The fourteen participants, all of whom were licensed African American architects, were obtained through the NOMA database, which was accessed with the permission of the NOMA President. The interviews and the focus group session were held via Zoom and served to gather their experiences in becoming licensed architects and their understanding of design thinking. The individual interviews and the focus group session were each no more than two hours in length. Interviews were conducted via Zoom rather than in-person due to the impact of travel restrictions and social distancing protocols because of the active COVID-19 pandemic.
From those two methods of collecting data, the research demonstrated how and where design thinking could be applied in the processes applicable to the development of potential African American architects. Given proximity and timeliness needed to analyze the data, NVivo was used to process transcripts from the recording of the conversations between researcher and the participants in both the interviews and the focus group. NVivo analyzes, codifies, and provides thematic outputs as necessary for later analysis (“Fueling Academic Research,” n.d.).

Assumptions

According to Creswell and Creswell, “all studies contain assumptions” (2018, p. 249). This study assumed that the participants have a genuine interest and are participating in this study with no ulterior motives, and in both the interview and the focus group sessions would answer all questions in a candid and honest manner. Additionally, the researcher assumed that the participants selected for the study had an interest in seeing more African Americans becoming licensed architects in the future and wanted to take an active role in achieving that objective.

Limitations

Creswell and Creswell stated that limitations represent “weaknesses in the research that the author acknowledges so that future studies will not suffer from the same problems.” (2018, p. 199.) Additionally, the access to travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic was a limitation. Traditionally interviews would be done in person; however, given the pandemic and implications associated with travel, many participants from various parts of the country lacked easy accessibility due to concern about contracting COVID-19 (Metzler, 2020).
Interviewing is the preferred method of data gathering for phenomenological research (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018) and was the one relied upon in this study. Interviewing has the potential to be limited by subjectivity and bias. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that technical malfunctions can occur during interviews. Additionally, interviewing and the subsequent data analysis and synthesis can be time-consuming. Details of mitigation regarding these limitations will be presented in Chapter Three.

**Delimitations**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), delimitations define the parameters of a study created by the researcher, as opposed to a study’s limitations, which are imposed due to the process itself and are out of the researcher’s control. Delimitations particular to this study included the specific demographic of focus within architecture. That focus was on African American licensed architects who are members of NOMA, which delimited the inclusion of licensed architects of Latino and Asiatic descent. Another prominent delimitation of this study is that the participants are licensed architects who are members of NOMA, which eliminated the membership categories of Associate (non-licensed members of NOMA) and student members of NOMA. One other prevalent delimitation in this study is the usage of the d. school variant of design thinking, versus the others noted in this study (IDEO, IIT, IBM, and DMI versions), respectively. Details of mitigation regarding these delimitations will also be discussed in Chapter Three.
Summary

This study has the potential to deliver a tangible result for a problem that has remained unresolved for 53 years, since the Whitney Young speech presented to the AIA in 1968. This study also has the capacity to initiate future studies on the effects and impact of design thinking on architecture for researchers seeking ways to introduce change regarding diversity in the profession of architecture. The subsequent chapter, the literature review, will cover a historical context of African Americans progression in architecture, along with an analysis of design thinking. The literature review will provide converge areas of focus where design thinking could potentially yield a positive impact on the number of African American licensed architects in the United States.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF INFORMATION SOURCES

As distinguished in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to examine the factors that impacted the dwindling numbers of African Americans in architecture and demonstrate how design thinking can be a tool for leadership to use in increasing the diversity in architecture. The study was motivated by the 2001 agreement between the AIA and the NOMA and focuses on licensed African American architects in the United States.

This literature review demonstrated the importance of diversity in architecture and explored variants of design thinking for their potential application to the problem of the small numbers of African American architects. It further explored the incorporation of business topics in architectural education and investigated business development for practicing architects. In addressing diversity, the review considered the historical and cultural context, with a particular emphasis on Young’s 1968 speech.

The review applied a systems-thinking approach to the wicked problem of the small numbers of African American architects, which means it examined architecture within the larger system of society, including the history of architecture and African Americans in architecture. It also included an examination of the regulating bodies within architecture and the problematic nature of architectural education for African Americans. Subsequently it explored the public perception of architecture and how a lack of empathy within the field can alienate the public. That led to a review of design thinking and its relation to empathizing. Additionally, design thinking was reviewed in conjunction with the areas of impact along the process of licensure (outreach, education, licensure, entrepreneurship).
**Systems Thinking**

Systems thinking is a predecessor of design thinking. This section of the literature covered the definition of systems thinking and how it relates to the study. Subsequently an outline of the regulatory entities that oversee the process of creating architects in the United States was provided, as these constitute part of the system considered in this study. Systems thinking is defined by Dina as: “a holistic approach that focuses on the way the components of a system are interrelated and interdependent on each other, including within the context of larger systems” (2013, p.197). Systems thinking reveals how design thinking, when implemented into the process of the development of architects, can improve diversity in the profession and benefit architecture by improving the effectiveness and performance of the organization.

The system focused on in the literature is the process of becoming a licensed architect. To earn that license, one must complete a NAAB-accredited degree (Bachelor of Architecture) or a Master of Architecture with a bachelor’s degree in a non-architectural field. Upon completion of the educational component, an individual must register with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) to join the Architecture Experience Program (AXP) where hours in various areas are documented in preparation for taking the Architectural Registration Exam (ARE). Upon passing the ARE, the individual is then recognized in that state as a licensed architect.

Understanding the context of development within architecture is important for creating opportunities for future architects, as it allows for research regarding the development of licensed African American architects. Architecture has evolved to include various organizations with different points of regulation within the profession and
academia. The following six organizations operate independently yet work collaboratively to regulate architecture from education through licensure.

**American Institute of Architects (AIA).** The AIA represents the largest body of licensed architects. The mission of the AIA is “to organize and unite in fellowship the members of the architecture profession.” (“AIA Mission,” n.d., para. 1). The AIA has a separate Diversity and Equity practice group which focuses on matters of diversity and inclusion in the profession.

**American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS).** The independent student counterpart to the AIA is the American Institute of Architectural Students (AIAS) whose mission is advancing leadership, design, and service among architecture students (“History: American Institute of Architectural Students,” n.d.).

**Associate Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA).** The mission of the ACSA is to “lead architectural education and research” (“About ACSA,” n.d., para 1). The ACSA specifically lists diversity and inclusion among its core values. That specific value brings awareness that there may be a deficiency in the academic section of architectural development with regards to diversity, which in turn presents an area for improvement.

**National Council for Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB).** NCARB focuses on standardizing the registration process for architects in the United States and its territories. Their mission is to “protect the public health, safety, and welfare by leading the regulation of the practice of architecture through the development and application of standards for licensure and credentialing of architects” (“NCARB’s Role,” n.d.). This
regulation allows for consistency throughout the country regarding how to become an architect.

**National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB).** NAAB is the regulating agency for architectural education; for example, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) regulates the process for licensure. Founded by the AIA and NCARB, the premise behind NAAB was to standardize architectural education and the professional development of architects throughout the United States. According to the website of the National Architectural Accreditation Board, their mission is to “develop and maintain a system of accreditation in professional architecture education that is responsive to the needs of society and allows institutions with varying resources and circumstances to evolve according to their individual needs” (“Archinect Academia,” 2018, para 5).

**National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA).** NOMA was founded in 1971, following Young’s speech to the AIA. The original name was NOBA (National Organization of Black Architects) but was later changed to NOMA in 1971 to encourage funding from national entities. At the time, there was no organization that focused on the needs of African American architects and an organization was spawned that has added people of Asiatic and Hispanic descent to reflect the term “minority” within the field (“History,” n.d.). While several governing bodies demonstrate an awareness of the importance of diversity, NOMA stands alone in having diversity as its focus.

From an overview of the regulating bodies and a brief examination of the places where diversity is an area of focus, the perspective presented in the literature review was widened to examine the topic of diversity more broadly.
Diversity

Diversity in Business

The importance of diversity in relation to this study cannot be understated. This section starts with an exploration of diversity in business and focuses on the racial history in America in conjunction with the development of the profession of architecture. Subsequent sections cover the African American impact on architecture and the current numbers of African Americans in the profession.

Diversity is defined as “the inclusion of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc.” (“Diversity”. n.d., para 1). While contemporary society advocates for diversity and inclusion, the importance and benefits of both are often obscure to individuals in the majority. One benefit that is noted by Smallbone, Kitching and Athayde (2010), is that diversity contributes to overall economic growth. If diversity contributes to economic growth of the nation, what prohibits the field of architecture from taking a definitive stance on actualizing the diversity of the profession?

Racial History and Architecture

According to Richards (2010), “the practice informs the research, and the research influences the practice” (p. 49). While architecture has existed since prehistoric times (Kimball & Edgell, 2012), architecture has only existed as a profession within the United States since the AIA was formed in 1857 (“AIA National Website,” 2018). While the wider view of racism is beyond the purview of this study, understanding how diversity is relevant to increasing the number of African American architects in the United States is important. The profession of architecture developed without AIA engagement in social
matters until after Young’s speech to the organization’s members over fifty years ago (Appendix A).

The beginning of racism in the United States is associated with slavery. During the time of slavery, settlers from European countries came to the Americas. The settlers (who came to be known as Americans) proceeded to engage in transactions where Africans from various countries in West Africa were traded by the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and the Dutch for items such as tobacco and real estate. Once the labor force was acquired, settlers who engaged in chattel slavery began breeding slaves for tending to tobacco, sugar, and rice crops, and for conducting other functions, such as building houses throughout the United States.

Famous buildings built by slaves include The White House and The US Capitol Building, some structures on Wall Street, and the Harvard Law School (Pasley, 2019). During slavery, there was no profession of architecture, just owners who desired a building and possessed the labor force to develop it. President Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 signing of the Emancipation Proclamation initiated the ending of slavery in the United States. Slavery, however ended officially on Juneteenth (June 19th, 1865), with the Emancipation Proclamation read in Galveston, Texas, and was finalized with the passing of the 13th amendment in December 1865 (Nix, 2020).

After slavery ended, racism morphed into an entity that utilized law for the purpose of fortifying White supremacy. According to DiAngelo: “Upon the ending of slavery, Whiteness was sustained through legalized racial exclusion” (2018, p. 36). That transformation from slavery ushered in a new era known as Jim Crow, which consisted of
laws enacted in the southern United States to enforce segregation (“What was Jim Crow,” 2020).

Throughout that period in the United States, the growth of architecture as a profession excluded African Americans. Segregation enforced separation between African Americans and Whites. In the mid-20th century, while African Americans were migrating from the South to cities such as Chicago, New York and Oakland for new beginnings, architecture and planning were weaponized with tools such as redlining enforcing segregation in the north (“What was Jim Crow,” 2020).

A review of benchmarks of pivotal events in the profession, along with pivotal events for African Americans in architecture revealed a correlation that, at minimum, begs the question of access to the profession. The Emancipation Proclamation declared African Americans free from slavery in 1863. The AIA was founded in 1857 (“Richard Upjohn: The Foundation of the Institute,” 2005) but had no African American members until 1923 (Robinson-Jacobs, 2020). The first architecture program in the United States was founded in 1868, (“History of MIT,” n.d.). but an African American student was only admitted in 1888 (“Robert R. Taylor,” n.d.).

The growth of the field of architecture was reflected in architectural programs being offered at Cornell University in 1871, the University of Illinois in 1873, and Columbia University in 1881 (Craven, 2020). The first architecture program at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) was developed by Robert R. Taylor at Tuskegee University in 1893 (“History and Mission,” n.d.). What needs to be resolved is the following: Is that gap an issue of timing, access, or something else? With Mr. Taylor as the first African American student of MIT in 1888, graduating around 1891, how
established was the architecture program at Tuskegee from 1893-1923, if there were no African American AIA members until 1923? How were African American students prepared for employment or licensure during that period? There was a gap of 64 years between the founding of the AIA and admitting their first African American member. Another 47 years passed after that momentous change before Young’s speech motivated the organization to commit to become more diverse.

Concurrent to the works of African American architects Robinson, Williams, and Taylor, America evolved from overt racism in slavery to Jim Crow laws throughout the South. These laws enforced a caste system on African Americans (“What was Jim Crow,” n.d.). Years of segregation throughout the United States erupted with the death of Emmett Till. Emmett was a 14-year-old boy from Chicago, who when visiting with family in Mississippi, was lynched for whistling at a White woman (Bunch III, 2020). That climate was the backdrop for the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, during which Young gave his seminal speech.

The question then became, what has been the culture of the AIA and the profession of architecture with regards to diversity? An association in existence for 163 years has created its culture and within that organizational culture could be implicit and explicit biases from the greater culture in which it exists and functions. The immediate and tangible action that emanated from Young’s address to the AIA was the creation of the AIA/AAF (American Architectural Foundation) Disadvantaged Scholarship (renamed the Diversity Advancement Scholarship in 2014) (Towards a History: The AIA Diversity Timeline, 2020). The scholarship awards $5,000 to an average of twenty students each year.
While setting up a scholarship was a concrete act, the years between 1968 and 2001 saw little other action by the AIA in developing tangible solutions to the consistently small number of African Americans in architecture. The first Diversity Committee was formed in 1993. While diversity has been championed by the AIA’s leadership, particularly over the 27 years since that initiative began, with actions such as implementation of the Disadvantaged Minority Fellowship Award (formerly the AIA/AAF Minority/Disadvantaged Scholarship), the question arises regarding whether the culture of the AIA is fully vested in achieving true diversity with measurable results. Compared to other professions such as law, finance, and healthcare, the numbers of African Americans in architecture have failed to increase. As recently as 2016, according to the *AIA Inclusion in Architecture Report* only 14 U.S cities have more than twenty licensed African American architects (“Diversity and Inclusion Statement,” 2017).

While the value of diversity in architecture is implied as a morally correct action to take, the benefits also include diverse solutions for problems experienced by distinct groups. Diversity, rather than being limited simply to ethnicity, includes sexual orientation, political, geographic, and many more characteristics. NOMA and AIA are explicitly benefited by managing a “how” for African American architects, which would also result in guidance and direction for including other marginalized demographics.

**Impact of African American Architects**

Over the course of American history, African American architects have demonstrated prowess in architecture and their impact on society. Examples of African American architects include Hilyard Robinson, who worked on a public housing project in Washington D.C., and Paul Williams, who designed houses for celebrities such as
Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz (Mitchell, 2003). Those and other examples, such as the development of Tuskegee University (Mitchell, 2003) and the works of other African American architects in the South (Bonner, 2011) suggest there is a powerful potential for African American architects and their practices in the United States.

However, those examples are exceptions to the rule, as according to Mitchell “Black firms usually lack the history, capitalization, credit access, or manpower to be the primary architect” (2003, p. 93). Accessing entrepreneurial resources in the United States has consistently proven difficult for developing and sustaining architectural practices for African Americans. That difficulty presents an opportunity for design thinking to be introduced into the business development side of an architecture firm. The connection from design thinking in architecture to design thinking in business can be researched to determine whether that approach could alter traditional views, along with historical trends of the population of African American architects and African American-owned firms.

Successful efforts of economic development for African Americans in the United States have often met with resistance. Mitchell (2003) suggested that African American architects should seek individuals beyond their architectural classmates for partnerships in creating an architectural practice and recommended exploring partners from fields such as law, engineering, and business, particularly finance and management. Mitchell (2020) further reinforced his current premise that African American architects need to assume the role of “urban community builders” and collaborate with Black America’s cultural, political, and business leadership to create large-scale urban economic redevelopment.

This need to collaborate and create is counter to the history that Young spoke of:
I went back recently and looked at ads when they first started building subdivisions in this country. The first new subdivision—easy access to town, good shopping centers, good schools, no Negroes, no Jews allowed—that was the first statement. Then they decided in New York that that was cutting the market too close, so they said the next day, ‘No Negroes allowed.’ And then they got cute when they thought everybody had the message, and they said ‘restricted, exclusive neighborhood, homogeneous neighborhood.’” (1968, p. 7)

**African Americans in Architecture**

The profession of architecture for African Americans has historically been difficult to access, as reflected in the membership numbers provided by the AIA. Based on a survey taken of licensed architects within the organization, a total of only 26% of 1,169 firms identify as minority owned (“The American Institute of Architects,” 2016). Only 17% of the membership identify as a minority (“The American Institute of Architects,” 2016). In terms of delineation of ethnic clusters, minority-owned firms were unclear in the report. The Directory of African American Architects (n.d.) reported the current number of licensed African American architects stands at 2,325 in the United States; 1800 are male and 525 are female.

According to the NCARB, which oversees the licensure process in the United States, in 2017 there were 109,748 licensed architects (“NCARB’s Role,” n.d.). That positions the number of African American architects in the United States at 2%. When those statistics are measured against the population, which stands at over 325 million as of December 12, 2018 (“Population Clock,” n.d.), African Americans comprised 13.4% of the population or 24.5 million (“Quick Facts,” 2018). This data reveals an opportunity for the increase in the number of African American architects to coincide with the projected number of African American architects desired by both the AIA and the NOMA. For several years, the goal of those two associations was to get the
organizations’ membership to reflect the diversity of the United States. Based on the MOUs between them, the number of licensed African American architects would increase to 15%, which would be more representative of the population of African Americans in the country. Having considered diversity in general before narrowing in on the area most relevant to this research (African Americans in architecture), the literature review again pulled out to examine the culture of architecture and its impact on African Americans.

**Architecture**

The examination of the culture of architecture began with the education of architects, and then moved to the public’s perception of architecture before examining a culture of apathy within architecture. Subsequently the speech given by Young and the agreement between AIA and NOMA were explored.

**Architectural Education**

There has been a continual interest regarding diversity within architecture, specifically in architectural education. In *Designing for Diversity, Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession*, Anthony (2001) discussed diversity and architecture concurrently with potential solutions pertaining to why architecture has sustained issues in diversity. According to Anthony, the lack of diversity has negatively impacted architecture and society at large. The author also addressed a homogeneity in architecture that speaks to the lack of diversity and inclusion, and suggested architects were failing to seek to change the historically homogenous circumstances.

Academic environments for architecture historically have been uninviting to minorities, as the modern profession of architecture was modeled on the 18th century
ideal of the gentleman architect (Kimball & Edgell, 2012). The notion was that of the gentleman architect being a White male of an elevated financial class in society, similar to an aristocracy, making the practice less accessible to those with low economic status. Although the AIA was founded in 1857, African Americans had no representation in the AIA until 1923 (Anthony, 2001). Why did that exclusion occur and what prevented membership of African Americans to the AIA? Elitism and the exclusionary culture of architecture contributed to the difficulty of access to the profession for African Americans.

Elitism is also noted in academia by the jury process of judging work in architecture. For example, during the jurying process, students post their work for review by critics who the professors bring in to provide feedback to the students. The circumstances of jurors critiquing the students’ work was said to foster an environment of egotism and a combative approach to the student’s clients. Rather than fostering diversity, the feedback has led to a reinforcement of homogeneous thought that persists through the professional development of the architect and yields an exclusionary culture. (Boyer & Mitgang, 1996). Instead, what was created is a fostering of homogeneous thought that cycles endlessly, yielding the exclusionary culture that is then executed through the professional development of the architect. The concept of homogeneity is noted in current times in Wilkin’s 2016 book, Diversity among Architects, which indicated the still-prevalent need for diversity in architecture. The exclusionary culture has been a consistent issue in the development of African American architects.

Architectural education maintains a color blindness which implies that, although architecture deals with societies’ ills through building, those ills have no impact on
architectural education (Boyer & Mitgang, 1996). That color blindness in architectural education produces a leverage point where design thinking can maximize its impact. The leverage point, in this case the color blindness, can be an area for strategically focused and targeted action for design thinking (Senge, 1990).

Combativeness and egos, as noted by Boyer and Mitgang (1996), provided an ideal of architecture that makes firm and client development unfeasible for those without cultural, political, and economic capital. Mitchell (2020) corroborated Boyer and Mitgang’s (1996) report and elucidated their concepts by suggesting that African American architects must evolve past an outmoded ideal of focusing solely on design and instead consider the full impact of their design on the community. Here is where education could become a leverage point, for investigating where design thinking can be implemented to increase diversity within the profession.

The aggressive nature of jurying is experienced in architectural programs of both historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and White institutions (PWIs). Aggressive jurying in this context includes demeaning students’ work at times even to the extreme of destruction of the work by the juror. The implication that aggressive presentation of ideas, drawings and/or models to clients will translate from academic environments leads to a false expectation of what clients will anticipate from the architect in their interactions. That elitism, and the educational culture of architectural academia, contributes to many African Americans leaving architecture as they see it as a non-viable business option given their experiences (Anthony, 2001). Mitchell (2020) corroborated that culture as elitism, which is still ubiquitous in architectural academia and is reflected by sparse numbers of African American professors in architectural higher education. That
researcher stated that the culture of elitism in architecture has expanded beyond the boundaries of academia and has, in some instances, damaged the general public’s perception of the profession.

**General Public’s Perception of Architecture**

Shubow (2015) discussed how the public has a low opinion of architecture due to architecture’s tendency to hold a dismissive attitude toward the public. Disconnection between the public and the profession contributes to a disparaging attitude. That view is part of what Young addressed in his speech to the AIA, the contemptuous nature of which is clearly seen in the following quote from Young:

> Secondly, as a profession, you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights, and I am sure this has not come to you as any shock. You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance. (p. 7)

Awareness of the public view of architecture addresses African Americans and non-African Americans and indicates how an elitist perspective of architecture is misunderstood, including what an architect does, what is expected of the architect, and what the limitations of the profession are. The general view of architecture, while eschewed in architectural educational culture, has not been applied to African Americans, because the historical context of small numbers has implied a difficult accessibility to architectural education. That perspective parallels the low expenditure on education as noted by Young when discussing the Federal budget:

> These students point out how a budget of approximately $140 million was spent last year; less than 20 percent for things that are aesthetic, cultural, and educational, for health, education, and welfare, and almost 70 percent was spent for weapons of destruction or defense against destruction. (1968, p. 3)
Young’s quote bears relevance over 50 years later and serves as a testament to the lack of focus on education in general, and lack of African Americans in architectural education specifically.

**Apathy in Architecture**

Baker (2018) noted that apathy within the profession can be observed in many forms via the organizations that regulate the development of architects. Apathy can be considered present in the lack of directives and follow-through for growing the number of African Americans in the field of architecture. As noted in the NOMA News section by Taylor: “I don’t want the next 30 years to look like the last 30 years” (2001, p.1) (Appendix B). Architecture has long sought to improve civic conditions; however, a lack of empathy has been noted toward African Americans and that lack was addressed by Young.

**Whitney Young’s Address to the AIA**

Given the cultural climate in the United States during the 1960s and after such events as the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Feit, 2017), the issues surrounding diversity and economics were significant. Young’s 1968 speech brought the issue of expanding the number of African American architects to the forefront of the profession (Appendix A). Young addressed both access to and racism within the profession.

Young’s speech generated a sense of accountability within the leadership of the AIA. He provided an example of how diversity has been predicated on profit, as in the case of the integration of baseball when Los Angeles Dodgers’ manager Branch Rickey hired Jackie Robinson (Zeigler, 2018). The correlation of diversity being beneficial for
business was juxtaposed against moral and ethical decisions, which, while experienced in baseball, has yet to be realized in architecture.

The impact of Young’s 1968 speech remains to be fully experienced, for while it started discussions, it did not yield concrete solutions for increasing representation of African Americans as licensed architects. Young’s speech concluded with a call to action for the profession in general and the AIA specifically. The speech served as a starting point for the AIA to concentrate on awareness and its responsibility to increase the numbers of African American architects within the United States. Young directed his comments to the organization that managed the profession.

The speech also pushed the discussion into modern times and provided a baseline of awareness so that organizations such as AIA could address racial disparity. Young (1968) unwittingly addressed the AIA’s first concerted effort to improve the number of African Americans in architecture with the development of the Disadvantaged Minority Scholarship. He stated:

If you do not speak out for a scholarship program that will enable you to seek consciously and deliberately to bring in minority people who have been discriminated against in many cases, either kept out because of your indifference or could not make it. (p. 8)

After that speech, the only historically referenced actions associated with African American architects are the founding of NOMA in 1971 and the first Diversity Task Force in 1992 (“Towards a History: The AIA Diversity Timeline,” 2020).

**The AIA and NOMA Agreement**

The gap between the target number of 15,000 minority members AIA and NOMA committed to in their 2001 MOU and the current minority membership requires an
increase of 12,675 architects to achieve that number in 10 years. That projected total requires an average of 1,268 newly licensed African American architects to enter the profession yearly from 2020 to 2030. Every US state must add twenty-five licensed African American architects per year for 10 years to meet the target of 15,000 (See Appendix B).

Since the initial MOU, the AIA and NOMA have engaged in four additional MOUs. The first followed eight years later, in 2009 (Appendix C), and outlined that the AIA would provide space for NOMA at their National Convention. Additionally, AIA agreed to sponsor $5,000 annually for the NOMA Conference. Both AIA and NOMA agreed to invite two senior officials to the other’s annual conference. AIA agreed to grant NOMA CES (Continuing Education System) status to NOMA and its chapters at no cost. Nothing in the 2009 MOU addressed increasing the number of African American licensed architects.

The 2013 MOU (Appendix D) was a copy of the 2009 MOU, with the difference being that NOMA would provide an opportunity for an AIA Executive member to serve as a juror at the NOMA Student conference at the NOMA National Conference. The 2014 MOU (Appendix E) added a provision for the AIA to provide NOMA with 100-120 square feet for a NOMA office at the AIA National Office. Additionally, the AIA agreed to give NOMA $47,000 for management support, sponsoring a NOMA conference, and support of a NOMA National program, *Project Pipeline*. Also, NOMA and AIA (specifically in this case, the office of Diversity and Inclusion and the AIA Diversity Council) agreed to work together on messaging, joint surveys, reports, and position papers.
The 2018 MOU (Appendix F) increased the AIA contribution to NOMA to $67,000 ($42,000 for general sponsorship of NOMA programs and $25,000 for sponsorship of the NOMA annual conference). NOMA agreed to provide the AIA with their student mailing list to send out information twice a year concerning scholarship information, new graduate benefit info to the AIA, and educational materials.

**Significance of Increasing Numbers of African American Architects**

The agreement between the AIA and NOMA is important because it demonstrates a desire for continuing the momentum from Young’s long-ago speech. Yet, despite the joint commitment between the organizations, no substantial process has been developed by the AIA and/or NOMA to increase the number of African American architects in the United States. The AIA has African American members who are licensed architects and NOMA’s mission focuses on all minority architects. As a result of their agreement, MOUs were signed by both organizations in 2001, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018, yet none of these has succeeded in increasing diversity. It seems that something new, one might even say “entrepreneurial” is required to meet the goal of increased diversity. The literature review turned next to the topic of entrepreneurship.

**Entrepreneurship**

The examination of entrepreneurship followed a similar trajectory as the examination of architecture, first examining the topic of education (how entrepreneurship is taught) and finishing with an historical analysis of African American entrepreneurship within the U.S, which includes a documented desire for African Americans to be entrepreneurial. This section was brought to conclusion with examples of African American entrepreneurship in architecture. For architects, entrepreneurship (for this
study, entrepreneurship refers to starting a firm), is a pinnacle of education and professional experience. Entrepreneurship is the beginning of controlling one’s personal narrative in the profession, and contribution to the future development of the profession. Research of entrepreneurship from a general standpoint, as well as African American businesses in the United States, will serve as a starting point for understanding if design thinking can be effective in increasing diversity through growing the numbers of African Americans in the profession.

The education of entrepreneurs is important to their development, independent of profession or background. Huq and Gilbert (2017) researched how design thinking can modify and improve the development of a budding entrepreneur’s perspective in developing a business, which articulates how design thinking can impact architects in the creation of their firms. According to Huq and Gilbert’s study, the focus on design thinking in entrepreneurship improved the outcomes of business development for future entrepreneurs. This early integration of design thinking into entrepreneurship education and architectural education and development can be a catalyst for the African American architect intending to start a business. It demonstrates the relevance of design thinking, and its process to their future endeavors.

Self-employment and business ownership are higher among minorities than non-minorities (Smallbone et al., 2010). Self-employment can be attributed to racist practices such as Jim Crow in the United States. Many African Americans have sought to engage in the economy and have been outright limited both financially and socio-politically (Public Broadcasting Service, 2019). The growth in the economy via diversity helps to drive a more inclusive vision of entrepreneurship for all citizens (Sahagun, 2019).
Addressing the characteristic of timing in terms of the delay in milestones of African Americans in architecture, Bogan and Darity (2008) observed that for African Americans, the desire for entrepreneurship in the United States goes as far back as Reconstruction, which was the post-slavery period of African American business development. In this period no licenses to create or operate a business were issued to African Americans. A question that must be asked is: if no licenses were issued, how could African Americans become “licensed” architects?

Reconstruction was followed by the Great Migration, when many African Americans moved to northern cities such as Chicago, Gary, and Detroit, for employment opportunities. During that period, cities throughout the United States experienced surges of growth in African American business, as noted with Black Wall Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma and in Harlem, New York. More opportunities existed for employment than for entrepreneurship (“Public Broadcasting Service,” 2019). Again, the question is: how do African American school of architecture graduates become licensed architects?

Industries and professions that spawned businesses served specific needs for the African American community, as they were prevented from going into non-African American areas for services such as insurance, food, and shelter (Bogan & Darity, 2008). Those circumstances for business creation reveal an innate desire of African Americans to improve socioeconomic positioning and status within their community through economic development and entrepreneurship. That desire by African Americans for self-improvement is also reflected in the creation of HBCU architecture programs such as at Tuskegee to develop a group of African American architects focused on working in communities specifically for African Americans (Public Broadcasting Service, 2019).
Entrepreneurship is noted as a “messy dichotomy” of either/or (Welter, Baker, Audretsch & Gartner, 2017). The messy dichotomy includes examples such as:

- opportunity-based versus necessity-based
- venture capital backed versus bootstrapped
- formal versus informal
- men-owned versus women-owned
- innovator versus replicator
- promoter versus trustee
- growth-oriented versus lifestyle
- entrepreneur versus small business owner/proprietor (p. 3).

African American entrepreneurship, according to Welter et al.’s (2017) definition, is disparaged and lacking valorization. The only individuals promoting entrepreneurship are African Americans themselves. African American entrepreneurship has been motivated by survival, rather than by an ideal. In the case of African Americans in architecture, survival refers to having the needs of their communities addressed with empathy and cultural awareness specific to African Americans. From Welter et al.’s perspective their entrepreneurship has been necessity-driven. Examples of architectural entrepreneurship within the African American community are noted in the work of early 20th century architects such as Hilyard Robinson, Paul Revere Williams, and Robert Taylor. Each of them faced different issues of balancing entrepreneurship and racism within their profession. Paul Revere Williams is one such example. While working on many projects, he often could not walk into the very projects he designed (Mitchell, 2003).
Historically, architecture has not taught entrepreneurship in relation to the arts in the development of creatives, architecture included. Essig (2014) discussed the perception of arts incubators in the United States being business-focused, as “extra-economic;” they are focused on creating employees rather than wealth. This perspective of entrepreneurship within various fields that is viewed as a hurdle reinforces the view of architecture being a field that is exclusive and thought of to belong to the financially well-off (Woods, 1999).

More recently Wilkins (2016) also described architecture as an exclusive field, suggesting that design gears itself toward the top 10% of society who can afford the typical price of hiring architects. The result is that architecture, given its elitist perception by the public, fails to engage the public. Elitism in the profession was rampant, as previously noted by Woods (1999). Wilkins’s perspective that elitism yields a negative perception of business reinforced the reality presented by Woods, that elitism was present and continues its presence within architecture today.

**Design Thinking**

The previous section of the literature review addressed the relevance of entrepreneurship to increasing the number of African American architects, along with a contextual reference of African Americans and entrepreneurship in the United States. This section covers design thinking in relation to its origins as a term, the variants reviewed for this study, and discussion of some of the drawbacks of design thinking. Subsequently, this section addresses the variant selected for this study and how design thinking will impact the four areas of impact for architecture: outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship.
Variants of Design Thinking

In 1987, Rowe stated that design thinking is a derivative of systems thinking. Over time, variations of design thinking evolved, including those created by design firm IDEO, the d school (design) at Stanford University, the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, IBM, and the Design Management Institute. The purpose of this section of research of the literature was to analyze the different variations of design thinking to determine which variant would be the most appropriate for achieving the goal of increasing African Americans in architecture.

IDEO. Design thinking is defined as: “a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success” (“Design Thinking Defined,” n.d., para 1). IDEO heavily utilizes design thinking principles with their clients, building on these six steps:

1. “Frame a question
2. Gather Inspiration
3. Generate ideas
4. Make ideas tangible
5. Test to learn

The IDEO variant has important components such as framing the question and gathering inspiration, however there is a lack of empathy and connecting with the end-user in this variant. Empathy would be valuable for demonstrating the importance of increasing the diversity in the profession by increasing the number of African American architects. The
end user, in this instance, African American architects, would be positively impacted and the process could be replicated with other demographics within architecture.

**d School.** The d school at Stanford University utilizes a different version of the process of design thinking. The five steps according to the d school are:

1. “empathize
2. define
3. ideate
4. prototype

In the first step of empathizing, appreciating the person or entity the design will serve is critical to the process. Understanding the end-user, which, in the case of this study of the application of design thinking to developing African American architects via firm development, would be African American and other students of diverse demographics, is important. The second step, defining, would be an analysis of the data gathered during the empathy process for the purpose of formulating a user-based point of view for the solution that is to be developed (“The Design Thinking Process,” 2018).

The third through fifth steps are ideation, prototyping, and testing. During the ideation phase, ideas are formed on a large scale to identify long term solutions for the end-user, in this case African American architects. Ideation allows for brainstorming on a general and large scale for what can be specific solutions for each aspiring or developing African American architecture firm. Prototyping is the step when solutions created in the idea phase are transformed and developed into a tangible form for testing and assessment.
The final phase, testing, is where the ideas are confirmed with the end-user, then refined as needed for final adaptation (“The Design Thinking Process,” 2018).

Replication of the design thinking process could be executed on similar populations within the education process of future architects. Rowe (1987) passionately believed that the process of design thinking is rooted in architecture and d School’s approach confirms the similarity between the two.

**Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT).** The Illinois Institute of Technology’s Institute of Design version of design thinking focuses on the following seven steps to derive customized solutions:

1. “sense intent
2. know context
3. know people
4. frame insights
5. explore concepts
6. frame solutions
7. realize offerings” (Kumar, 2013, p8)

According to Kumar (2013), the IIT version bears similarities to the steps outlined in Stanford University’s d School approach, with differences noted in the language and the increase in the number of steps from five to seven. In the first step (sense intent) the designer surmises the purpose and the depth of the problem. In the second step (know context) the designer understands the setting in which the problem is anchored. Step three provides an opportunity to explore relationships between people; it often involves observing people through methods such as ethnography. The fourth step develops the
data gathered and identifies patterns. Exploring concepts involves brainstorming for concise solution development. In the sixth step the designer refines a solution(s) for delivery to the end user. The last step is the implementation of the agreed-upon solution.

Kumar (2013) stated that the IIT model of design thinking provides a systemic process that allows for delivery with logic, yet without empathy. In the third step, (know people) participants are observed for data gathering; however, there is no empathetic base for concern. Instead, this is a calculating method that may serve as a negative factor in the process of increasing the number of African American architects, especially if the researcher fails to connect this form of design thinking to a desire for increasing the number of African American architects.

**IBM.** IBM, the renowned multinational corporation, has its own version of design thinking which they apply to their products. The three steps in the IBM version of design thinking are:

1. “observe
2. reflect
3. make” (“Enterprise Design Thinking,” n.d., para 1)

IBM’s steps are fewer than the versions of d school and IIT, as the process was reduced to create an optimum version of design thinking in alignment with IBM’s brand (“IBM Design Thinking,” n.d.). In the stage of observing, the creatives immerse themselves in the world of the end user to research and uncover needs and hypothesize ideas. The second stage involves finding a common perspective and synchronizing the team for insights and future development. The final stage leads to the creation of a tangible form of ideas for review with the end-user and revision.
The IBM variant is an oversimplified version of design thinking, lacking in complexity for dealing with a culturally sensitive problem and failing to allow for ideation for achieving the purpose of this study of developing a solution for African American architects. The disconnect from reflecting to making also insinuates a process that, while efficient for product development, may be less suited for application to human challenges.

**Design Management Institute (DMI).** The last variant of design thinking is from the Design Management Institute. It details five characteristics, rather than define process steps. (“What is Design Thinking,” 2019).

- Non-denominational. Design thinking, according to the DMI, can be practiced by others, rather than only those who are designers and design managers.
- A means to align. Design thinking can be an asset for aligning an organization internally for better external output.
- A means to deliver creativity. Design thinking can be consumer-oriented around a common language of understanding that can intersect business and design.
- A predicative mechanism. Design thinking can be a starting point for awareness and/or serving as a catalyst for a disrupter-focused solution.
- Experiential. Design thinking works beyond traditional approaches and focuses on a user-centered, versus owner-centered, solution.

The DMI variant of design thinking has a solid foundation for working within a corporate organization and has a foundation in organizational development based on the steps outlined. However, the DMI solution fails to consider the human complexities of
culture and is focused on a management-driven solution, which may provide an ineffective point of connection and empathy for the population of African American architects and the purpose of increasing diversity within the profession.

**Design Thinking Dissenters**

The purpose of this portion of the literature review was to explore the perspectives of those who disagree with design thinking and how it could be ill-suited for usage in this study. There are strong opponents of design thinking who challenge its broad application. Issues of coverage pertaining to design thinking’s detractors include lack of concise definition, short-term popularity in design thinking as a solution to problems and proponents having a lack of knowledge of organizational thinking and development.

One issue that is prevalent amongst design thinking detractors is the lack of a concise definition. Walters (2011) suggested that the lack of definition in design thinking can prevent understanding how to properly utilize design thinking. While this can present an issue, design, and architecture both are critical terms to this study and neither has an agreed upon definition. Because architects are thoroughly familiar with design, this presents less of a problem than it might in other arenas. The lack of a consistent definition allows for flexibility to deal with a problem that is unconcise and allows for evolution of a solution with a problem that concurrently has evolved.

Raford (2013) maintained that design thinking has become overly trendy and has been presented as an elixir for all types of problems. With such high expectations it is bound to be inappropriately applied and lead to disappointment. However, design
thinking has been practiced for over 30 years (Rowe, 1987). The longevity and the multiple variants of design thinking (d. school, IDEO, IIT, IBM, and DMI), contradict the idea that it is just a trend. Further, design thinking can and should be practiced with nuanced knowledge and consideration of the larger context of the problem. Utilizing a systems approach requires this sort of knowledge and consideration and alleviates the concerns expressed by Raford.

Similarly, Raford (2013) discussed how designers are brought into a situation and are expected to revolutionize an organization; however, most designers lack the proper background and/or training to flourish in organizational development and change management. The lack of organizational development and change management skills are mitigated by the understanding of the iterative process in each variant. The repetitive nature of design thinking allows for flexibility in the execution of the process for a solution and does not limit the solution development to a linear process.

**Design Thinking Variant Proposed for Study**

After reviewing each variant of design thinking, the one most suited for this study was the d. school version (“The Design Thinking Process,” 2018). In that version, the step of empathy inculcates compassion and a humanity that the other variants leave out, or assume to know without engaging the end users, which in this study are African American architects. The steps after empathy (define, ideate, prototype and test) evolve from the empathetic step to make a solution that engages the end users with direct feedback and importantly, also transforms the practitioner of design thinking.

Lim (2014), a designer and researcher, presented in a TED talk that empathy improves creativity, innovation, design, and collaboration. He argued that empathy as a
key to creativity and innovation allows one to develop solutions that will create value to the users as it represents an emotional engagement and connection. He added that design created out of empathy and compassion for the subject creates an emotional connection and practices respect. Empathy present while working with the population is key for both increasing the numbers and for understanding how that diversity speaks to what Young stated: “One need only take a casual look at this audience to see that we have a long way to go in this field of integration of the architects” (1968, p. 1).

The d school variant involves empathy for the population which is an integral element in understanding and developing a replicable solution. That variant allows for the execution of knowledge brokering between subject and researcher, as well as through future interactions between regulating organizations such as NOMA, AIA, and NAAB. The d school variant utilizes consistent steps which can be repeated as much and as frequently as needed, with the difference being the usage of empathy as the initial step.

Design thinking is a discipline that uses the designer’s mindset and sensibility and methods to satisfy the needs of the end-users to arrive at a strategy that is both technologically feasible and business viable thereby converting into customer value and market opportunity (Brown, 2008). In short, design thinking uses the sensibilities or mindsets and methodologies often used by designers to create ideas, solutions, alternatives, and choices that satisfy the desires of the end users or stakeholders. Numerous studies have been conducted utilizing design thinking as a teaching and learning approach and applied in teaching business and entrepreneurship (Bruton, 2010 Dunne & Martin, 2006; Laviolette, Lefebvre & Radu-Lefebvre, 2014; Mumford, Zoller & Proforta, 2016; Nielsen & Storvang, 2014).
Leverage Points for Implementation of Design Thinking

A vital component of this study is identifying areas where the integration of design thinking can be applied to initiate diversification within architecture. In speaking about the potential of leverage points within systems, Senge (1990) stated “…systems thinking also shows that small, well-focused actions can sometimes produce significant, enduring improvements, if they're in the right place. Systems thinkers refer to this principle as ‘leverage.’” (p. 49). The characteristics Senge outlined reveal how system thinkers look for places of maximum impact.

For this study, the focus is on the leverage of multiple points of impact to create the desired result of improving the number of African American architects. Design thinking (the d. school variant) in this study is working within the framework of systems thinking. The system in this study is the regulations which create architects in the United States. The system encompasses outreach and education through licensure, and then extends beyond licensure into entrepreneurship.

The first step is the outreach to African Americans about architecture. The second step is the education of architects and the third, licensure (the period from graduation to licensure). The last step is entrepreneurship, where licensed architects create their own practices. These serve as leverage points where the impact can be derived regarding diversification of the profession.

The review of design thinking addressed the topic from various standpoints and provided justification for the design thinking variant applied to this study. The review identified four areas of focus for implementation: (1) outreach (marketing and publicizing architecture to a population that may not be cognizant of it as a career option), (2)
education (architectural education), (3) licensure (the process of becoming a licensed architect), and, finally, (4) entrepreneurship (process of becoming an architecture firm and/or having a business within the profession of architecture). Each of these areas was explored in greater depth, as described in the following sections.

**Design thinking and outreach.** Outreach for the African American community can begin with awareness. Empathy, the first step of design thinking as practiced by the d. school, will be critical in engaging in that connection process. Making youth aware of architecture is an essential first step to developing the next generation of African American architects (Mitchell, 2020). Outreach is engagement at all levels of education, K-12 through college, revealing an association of architecture to the built environment and highlighting the impact of African American architects will be pivotal in introducing the possibilities of the profession to African Americans in general. Outreach will bridge onto the next area for the implementation of design thinking. With regards to outreach, while the AIA has reached out to NOMA and the two associations have created five memorandums of understanding (Appendices, B- F), a plan for increasing the numbers of African American architects has not been solidified.

**Design thinking and education.** Design thinking has been shown to have a measurable impact on education, specifically in business schools (Glen, Suciu & Baughn, 2014). With the recognition of design thinking’s influence in education, teaching it to creatives for application in business development can be vital to the education of future architects. Boyer and Mitgang (1996) report that architectural education presents a predominantly white perspective and fails to consider the contributions of minority architects.
As a result architecture, similar to engineering, has seen consistently low numbers of minorities. An analysis of the system and end users is built into design thinking, making it a powerful tool for incorporating the minority perspective. The iterative nature of design thinking then allows the impact of greater representation to build and grow.

Design thinking in an architectural business setting can allow for job training as an application (Glen et al., 2014), as in the way architects currently learn in the Architecture Experience Program (AXP) created by the NCARB (“Gain AXP Experience,” 2018). Design thinking in architectural education could inculcate empathy, both for clients and for other demographics in architecture, such as Latino or Asian. The benefit of empathy would lie in the intentionality of both acknowledgement and deliberate focus to increase representation of African American students who could become architects. That form of empathy is aligned with the Whitney Young quote: “We are going to have to have people as committed to doing the right thing, to inclusiveness, as we have in the past to exclusiveness” (Young, 1968, p. 7).

Design thinking is unique in that it speaks to the practice of design from an intellectual and cultural perspective. Also, with its grounding in pragmatic thought, the application of design thinking to architecture, in general, has an elevated level of feasibility (Dalsgaard, 2014). The ingrained practicality will be important for the business development purposes of implementation, as well as for developing future research on the evolving needs for the practices of African American architects. Design thinking’s practicality would make it an asset in educating future African American architects as well as other groups.
Design thinking and licensure. The exodus of individuals from architecture after the Great Recession of 2008 inspired a question of where the profession was going. Baker (2018) described how architecture was impacted over those 10 years (2008-2018) by external factors, economic and political, and how architects were impacted due to that recession. Construction cycles from 2007 to 2011 led to a decrease of $2 billion in architectural staffing throughout the United States. With those economic issues looming, the survival of the industry was the focus of the governing organizations.

After identifying the roles of the various agencies associated with the architectural profession and the under-representation of African Americans, a deeper analysis is required to examine what has been done to improve the numbers of African American architects in various sectors, including academia, internship, licensure, and entrepreneurship, to understand systemically the structure of how architects are developed within the United States. With application of the steps of d. school design thinking (empathy, define, ideate, prototype, and test) to the development of a strategy for increasing African Americans in architecture, design thinking can be integral to improvements in the licensure process.

Design thinking and entrepreneurship. For architects, entrepreneurship is the culmination of their education and experience. The perception of entrepreneurship is one of controlling one’s personal narrative within the profession while also contributing to the future development of individual architects. Research on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship of African Americans in the United States can serve as another leverage point for implementation of design thinking in increasing the numbers of African Americans in architecture.
The education of entrepreneurs is important to their development, independent of profession or background. Huq and Gilbert (2017) researched how design thinking can modify and improve the development of a budding entrepreneur’s perspective in expanding a business, which indicates how design thinking can positively impact architects in the creation of their firms. According to Huq and Gilbert’s study, which focused on the application of design thinking in entrepreneurship pedagogy, design thinking improved the outcomes of business development for future entrepreneurs. That early integration of design thinking into entrepreneurship education and architectural education and development can be a catalyst for the African American architect wanting to start a business, making design thinking relevant, as well as connecting and applying the design thinking process to their future endeavors.

Entrepreneurship has an innate management element that deals with the development of a business. Subsequently, sustainability of a business requires measuring growth and failure, forecasting, and anticipating future organizational needs. Entrepreneurship is influenced externally by political, legal, economic, technical, technological, demographic, socio-cultural, and ecological factors (Ionescu & Grigore, 2016). The context of entrepreneurship, based on the aforementioned factors, mirrors the context of how architecture is impacted with similar issues. The correlation of entrepreneurship, management, and architecture creates a new basis of research to assess the impact of design thinking in terms of the development of African American architectural firms. Design thinking steps, as noted by the d. school (“The Design Thinking Process,” 2018), can be applied to entrepreneurship, and the management
subset as a leverage point that also impacts the future growth of African Americans within architecture.

Design thinking and entrepreneurship provide the connection into business for this study. With entrepreneurship being an area of focus for this study, in relation to architects and their development, design thinking makes the connection of business to architecture.

Summary

The literature review covered systems thinking and the potential for small adjustments at the right point to bring about significant change, a concept known as leverage. It detailed how the systems of architecture are regulated by various agencies and examined issues of diversity with an emphasis on African Americans in architecture. This included an examination of Young’s 1968 speech to the AIA, the creation of NOMA and the role of the MOUs between AIA and NOMA.

The review also explored design thinking and selected the d school variant as best suited for use in bringing about change in the system. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology and research design used to confirm or refute design thinking’s use as a tool to change the levels of diversity in architecture.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The literature review documented research on the architecture profession, educational opportunities, entrepreneurship, diversity, and design thinking. All those topics were intended as means to account for sparse numbers of African American architects in the United States and to engender and support change for the purpose of increasing the diversity of the profession.

This chapter is organized to restate the study purpose and research question, as well as provide a description of the research design of the study. The chapter addresses the target population, sampling method, and related procedures, followed by data collection and data analysis. Limitations and delimitations of the study and ethical issues related to the research are also presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that impact the low numbers of African Americans in architecture and to demonstrate how design thinking could be a tool in increasing the number of licensed African American architects in the United States, as prioritized in 2001, per the first AIA-NOMA MOU, in which the two associations committed to the goal of having 15,000 African American architects by the year 2030.

Research Question

The research question that formed the basis for the study is:

RQ: What factors impact the low numbers of African Americans in architecture and how can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the profession of architecture in
the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?

That question was predicated on understanding what design thinking is in conjunction with issues surrounding African American architects becoming licensed in the United States. The basis of the research question is that an awareness of design thinking on the part of the study’s participants, combined with their own experiences, could reveal how design thinking can be utilized as a change agent. The initial goal of the study was to interview twelve participants. To ensure the desired number of participants was reached, thirty individuals were contacted to inquire about their willingness to be part of this study. The study ultimately utilized 14 participants.

NOMA granted permission to access their database for names and contact information of potential participants. (See Appendix H). The participants were licensed architects and members of NOMA. Thus, the intent of this research was to affirm or refute, through a phenomenological study, that design thinking can be a tool for increasing the number of African Americans in architecture and the diversity within the AIA.

**Methodology Utilized: Phenomenological Study (Qualitative)**

The research methodology that was used in this project was qualitative. However, to provide context, an assessment of all three methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed) was conducted. Qualitative research, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018) “is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Quantitative research is defined by those researchers as “an approach for testing objective theories by examining the
relationship among the variables” (p. 4). Mixed method involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and has various subsets.

According to Creswell and Plano (2011), there are three mixed method approaches:

- **convergent parallel mixed method design**, which consists of combining qualitative and quantitative data and analyzing them separately.

- **explanatory sequential mixed method design**, where quantitative data is gathered before qualitative data.

- **exploratory sequential mixed method design**, where qualitative data is gathered before quantitative data (Creswell, 2014 p. 69).

This study focused on experiences of African American architects as a point of research and understanding of how design thinking could increase the number of licensed African American architects in the United States. Prior to this study, no research existed that correlated the development of African American architects to design thinking. While mixed methods could be utilized to collect data, the limitations of time (further explained in the limitations section) hindered a proper usage of any of the subsets of mixed method research.

After assessing the methodologies, the best suited approach for this study was determined to be qualitative, which allowed for open-ended questioning, as well as assessing a social concern, in this case the lack of licensed African American architects within the profession of architecture. Qualitative research provided an opportunity to
capture the information needed to discuss the effectiveness of applying design thinking to change the diversity within the profession.

After the selection of an appropriate methodology, the next step was the selection of an appropriate data collection method. A determination was made that a phenomenological (hermeneutical) study, which according to Creswell and Creswell (2018) is a design of inquiry where the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants, would be the most effective means of answering this study’s research question and meeting its purpose. According to those researchers, a transformative view pushes further than a constructivist view for advocating an actionable agenda for marginalized peoples, which, in this case, are African American licensed architects.

The “lived experiences” (Husserl, 1970) garnered from the participants in this study are foundational in understanding the experiences of African Americans becoming licensed in the United States. According to Gaete-Celis (2019), descriptive phenomenological analysis focuses on “searching essences and, specifically, the essential structure of experience or consciousness” (p. 2).

This study sought to reveal the “essences and … structure of experience” (Gaete-Celis, 2019) of African American architects through codification and orientation within the steps of the d. school variant of design thinking (empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test) and the four areas focusing on architectural development (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship).
Study Participants

The process for approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) included a submission of a 23-page document describing the study. Once the IRB approval and a research number were granted, potential participants were contacted for commencement of the study.

The population of participants for this study consisted of African American licensed architects who are members of NOMA and practicing architects. NOMA provided access to a list of about five hundred eligible members. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended that a phenomenological study should have between five and twenty-five participants. The anticipated sample size was twelve and the actual sample was fourteen.

An email was sent to the NOMA president to gain access to NOMA Membership (Appendix G). The approval response from the President of NOMA is in Appendix H. The NOMA database includes the race and licensure status of members, and this was used to select individuals who met the study requirements. Subsequently, a letter of recruitment was sent to the individual members (Appendix I), requesting their participation. Participants who accepted the invitation were then sent a letter of consent (Appendix J) informing them of the study topic: an in-depth analysis of how design thinking could provide insights into and impact architecture at various points: education, licensure, and entrepreneurial development.

Snowball sampling was employed because the African American architects, through their NOMA membership, are familiar with each other. Snowball sampling was used for the selection process, starting alphabetically by state. To initiate the sorting
process, the members were categorized by their state of residence. Sorting started with the letter A and, if there were thirty members in that state, the researcher concluded with that state. After 30, the number of architects were noted until all fifty (50) states were accounted for. There was a potential for traction once candidates became aware of the study. Due to their mutual membership, they were invited to share information about the study with colleagues if they wanted to do so, thus increasing the potential for other candidates to be interviewed.

Thirty architects responded to the invitation to participate in the study. After reducing the list to fourteen participants, via random sampling, a letter of consent (Appendix J) was emailed to each one to digitally sign. The candidates had 3 days to respond. After 3 days, eight positive consents and no declines were received. A follow-up email (Appendix K) provided the individuals who had not yet responded an additional two days to reply. Within the additional two-day period, the remaining six candidates confirmed their consent for participant within the study. Interview appointments were made, and the Zoom link was provided to each of the participants after they returned their signed letters of consent.

**Interviews**

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted utilizing open-ended questions (Appendix L). To ensure informality, all interviews and focus groups were scheduled to be conducted outside of work times for both the researcher and participants. Because the Covid-19 pandemic restricted travel and in-person meetings, interviews were conducted via Zoom.
The first half of the interview aimed to gain details of their experiences and then pivot into ascertaining their awareness of design thinking from a general perspective and into the variant utilized in this study (d. school). Information needed to develop the interview questions was obtained from assessing the MOUs and the d. school variant of design thinking. The researcher received the MOUs from NOMA and the AIA for analysis and assessment of the documents as another means to determine points of discussion during the interviews. The steps that comprise the d. school variant of design thinking (empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test) were intertwined throughout the questioning to surmise the effectiveness of design thinking.

The second phase of questioning in the interviews focused on determining whether the participants believe that design thinking could create a change for increasing the number of African American architects in this country. Participants were asked which of the four leverage points (outreach, education, licensure, entrepreneurship) would be useful or would lack usefulness in attaining that desired diversity. If they envisioned no value in design thinking to achieve those goals, they were asked to explain their rationale. Potential entry into the focus group was the last question asked in the interviews.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed from Zoom through NVivo for review by the participants. Each participant was provided seven days to review the transcript of their interview for accuracy and completeness prior to analysis of the data. The participants were informed that no suggestive revisions and/or responses within a week meant, explicitly, that they accepted the transcripts as provided. The email sent to the participants requesting suggestive revisions is found in Appendix O.
Focus Group Session

All the interviewed participants were invited to join the focus group session, which was scheduled to last 120 minutes (2 hours). According to Carlsen and Glenton (2011), the minimum number of participants needed in a focus group is four (4) including the researcher, which is the number achieved for completing this step of data collection. The focus group interview was conducted via Zoom. The open-ended questions that were utilized in the focus group session are in Appendix M. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that the researcher is “a key instrument” of conveying information. Focus group participants shared their stories and expounded upon their individual interview responses.

The researcher is the ultimate gatherer of information in an interview, whereas in other methodologies, such as surveys or questionnaires, there is a tendency to rely on others to develop the tools to gather information. This researcher’s background in the profession, including working within or alongside architecture for 23 years, provided firsthand experiences with issues of becoming a licensed African American architect. Bias was innately present in this study, given that the researcher has been involved in NOMA as a national board member and as an AIA member who has worked with the Diversity Committee and with various chapters throughout the organization. Therefore, the researcher potentially could have had similar experiences as the subjects being interviewed. Those biases were mitigated throughout the research process via the inclusion of research journaling (Etherington, 2004). During and after each interview, journal entries were made documenting any issues that might have arisen for the participant and/or the interviewer (Appendix N).
**Codification**

NVivo was chosen as the analysis instrumentation tool, as it delivers the capacity to consume audio and video as well as other formats of data, and then code, classify, categorize, and label interview data. These processes are vital tools in qualitative research, where they help to distinguish and translate meaning, value, and theory from the interview-sourced data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Given the nature of qualitative data analysis, coding and associated analysis and activities take place throughout the data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Because analysis occurs in every step of data collection, efficiency and accuracy improve when a single software tool merges multiple processes.

Theme development was performed by NVivo. The intent was to codify along the following areas: (a) inception (inception of when the participant wanted to become an architect). (b) education (architectural education from undergraduate through final degree). (c) licensure (the process of becoming a licensed architect, starting from when the subject began working in the field of architecture through the completion of their exams), and finally, (d) entrepreneurship (process of becoming an architecture firm owner and/or having a business within the profession).

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in research ensures that the participants maintain ownership of their voice in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study all documents were electronic, and confidentiality was protected by storage on the secured Zoom service (audio and video recordings and transcriptions) or on the researcher’s personal password protected laptop. Data that was processed using NVivo was password protected and
encrypted. The Zoom and NVivo accounts and the laptop were accessible only to the researcher. A backup of the NOMA email list and interview transcripts were kept in a separate cloud. All files were encrypted to provide an additional level of protection. Following the completion of the study, all data, including transcriptions of recordings, will be stored securely for three years per National Louis University’s IRB requirements. After that time, all data and other information will be deleted.

**Anonymity**

To maintain anonymity, each participant was referred to as Participant PA, Participant PB, and so forth when reporting the study’s findings. The importance of anonymity in qualitative research, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), is that it protects the participants’ need to feel secure in stating their perspectives. Only the researcher knew who participated in the study, except for the focus group members, who met and interacted with each other. Those individuals were asked to provide anonymity to each other by not disclosing the focus group participants. At no point during or after the study was any information regarding who participated in the study divulged to others, including the NOMA administration.

**Data Analysis**

The interviews were recorded in and transcribed by Zoom. The transcripts were then codified with the use of NVivo. Data consolidation was used to determine common themes and experiences amongst the participants.
Reliability and Validity

According to Mehrens and Lehman (1987), reliability is the degree of consistency between two measures of the same thing. A reliable instrument will have consistent results over time or usage (Worthen, Borg, & White, 1993). Reliability in a qualitative study can be achieved through consistent administration of the instrument (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), cross-checking codes, and making sure there are no mistakes in transcription (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study member checking provided reliability.

While reliability addresses the consistency or reproducibility of results, validity is used to describe how effectively the results measure what they are intended to measure. Validity in qualitative research is conferred using appropriate tools, processes, and data (Leung, 2015). The group setting of the focus group provided a deeper insight to validate perspectives shared in the individual interviews. Member checking and reflexive journaling also support validity. Member checking refers to the participants being given the opportunity to review their findings if desired and making modifications to it as needed. Reflexivity (or reflex journaling) reveals comments made by the researcher and their role in the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Reliability tends to be low in qualitative research methods, but validity is generally stronger (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study triangulation confirmed both the validity and reliability. Triangulation is achieved by using multiple methods or data sets or by examining the same data through different lenses to demonstrate a coherent justification of themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study the interviews and the focus group provided multiple data sets.
Limitations

Limitations for this study included innate limitations of interviews, the boundaries inherent in conducting qualitative research, the limits in collecting data via the interview process, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviewing as a form of qualitative research has innate limitations, such as bias created by the presence of the researcher and indirect information filtered from the view of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During this study, the presence of the interviewer occurred via Zoom. Regarding indirect information from the view of the participant, that limitation is relevant, as each participant shared their firsthand experiences about architecture and design thinking in the interview.

In-depth interviews, the data-gathering method utilized in this study, had the following built-in limitations: the interviewer and the social context. The first area of concern deals with the interviewer, who has the potential to bias the information gathered from the interview. This can happen due to: (a) personal characteristics such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, and education; (b) personal values or beliefs; and/or (c) other factors (e.g., an interviewer’s misinterpreting, stereotyping, and/or presumptions about the participant based on outward appearance). Any of those characteristics may negatively influence an participant’s responses to the researcher’s questions and/or the accuracy of the researcher’s data gathering. Conducting the interviews through Zoom did not eliminate the potential for bias, which can still occur through a computer screen (Chesney et al, 2021).

The second area of concern is the broader social context of the relationship within the interview environment, characterized by the possibility of a “one-way dialogue”
where the interviewer dominates the interview. Social context is important for the researcher to contemplate the social interactions that are vital to the interviewing process and the potential impacts these interactions may have on the credibility of the study (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The global COVID-19 pandemic impacted how research is conducted worldwide (Metzler, 2020). The effect on this study was the elimination of travel to potential candidates.

**Delimitations**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), delimitations imposed by the researcher are important to narrow the focus and scope of a study. The delimitations associated with this research are the specific focus on African American licensed architects who are NOMA members and the decision to use the d. school variant to diversify architectural trade organizations, specifically by increasing the number of African Americans in the profession.

Regarding the delimitation of African Americans versus other minority groups (Asian, Latino, LGBTQ, etc.), that decision was based on the focus of Whitney Young’s exhortation to the AIA in 1968 regarding the limited demographics of the profession of architecture. African Americans currently comprise 2% of licensed architects in the United States (“The African American Directory of Architects,” n.d.). The decision to make this delimitation is justified by this remark by Young: “For a society that has permitted itself the luxury of an excess of callousness and indifference, we can now afford to permit ourselves the luxury of an excess of caring and of concern. It is easier to cool a zealot than it is to warm a corporation” (1968, p. 11).
Regarding the delimitation of using only licensed NOMA members, the professional organization has five membership tiers (student, intern, associate, registered architect, and allied professional) (“NOMA,” n.d.). The category of registered architect best suited this study, as those individuals have: (a) completed their educational requirements, (b) completed licensure requirements, and (c) can be tracked as licensed architects, who are also members of NOMA. This category indicates what was required to become licensed architects. While non-licensed African Americans could contribute a perspective of impacting the factors preventing licensure, for this study knowing what those factors were and how they were overcome by African Americans who became licensed was pivotal. Those criteria provided the setting for gathering detailed information on their experiences in becoming licensed architects.

The final delimitation pertaining to this study is the selection of the d. school variant (“design school, Stanford University,” 2018). A review of the other variants (IBM, IIT, IDEO, and DMI respectively) led to their elimination due to the lack of empathy in each of those design processes. The d. school inculcates empathy, a step which can be pivotal to understanding the difficulties of becoming a licensed African American architect and developing strategies for future generations to mitigate those barriers of entry to the profession.

Ethics

According to the Belmont Report (1979), there are three principles of ethical research: (1) respect for persons (i.e., privacy and consent), (2) concern for welfare (i.e., minimize harm and augment reciprocity), and (3) justice (i.e., equitable treatment and enhance inclusivity). Respect for the participants was a priority characterized by the
Qualitative method of this study being utilized through one-on-one interviews only after a signed Participant Consent Letter was received and interviews were handled in a professional and respectful fashion.

Participant privacy was respected through the practice of holding all personally identifiable information in strict confidentiality and the use of pseudonyms (Participant PA, Participant PB, etc.) when referencing individual participant comments in the findings chapter, as a means to ensure anonymity. Participants were urged to abstain from placing any personally identifiable information on any research form or procedures to make sure confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the process of gathering data and reporting findings. The individuals who took part in the Focus Group were asked to maintain confidentiality and the anonymity of the other participants. Furthermore, appropriate security settings and tools were utilized, including controlled or password-protected access to both physical and digital computer hardware and software.

The concern for welfare was covered by the Participant Consent Letter (Appendix J) which explained that study participation was voluntary, with no consequences for declining or withdrawing. Concern for the participants’ well-being was also demonstrated by the careful treatment of the participants’ anonymity, confidentiality, and data. Lastly, the principle of justice was addressed in this study by selecting participants based solely on the requirements of the study. Such elements include, yet were not limited to, culture, sex, ethnicity, age, religious or political affiliation or disability. Sampling and interview protocols contained no information or questions referencing any of the above factors. In addition, this study sought to avoid exclusivity with Zoom for interviews. Because interviews were scheduled in advance and participants could be expected to have
sufficient access to a laptop, tablet or smartphone which could support Zoom, the requirements for participation were equitable.

**Summary**

This chapter covered how the study engaged a qualitative methodology for research of the following question: *What factors impact the low numbers of African Americans in architecture and how can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the profession of architecture in the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?* Specifically, the study used a descriptive phenomenological analysis, with interviews to explore the factors impacting the dwindling numbers of African American architects. A review was conducted of the NOMA membership groups. Licensed architects through NOMA’s database were identified as potential participants. After responses to the invitations were received and consent was given by the selected participants, the interviews were conducted via Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting travel. For purposes of triangulation, a Zoom focus group followed. The interviews and focus group were analyzed and codified via NVivo for review.

The methodology chapter outlined how this study utilized the qualitative method of interviewing and a focus group session to identify if design thinking can increase diversity in architectural trade organizations. The next chapter will detail the findings of the interviews and the focus session.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that impact the sparse numbers of African Americans in architecture and to demonstrate how design thinking could be a tool in increasing the number of licensed African American architects in the United States per the first MOU agreed upon between the AIA and NOMA in 2001. The research question was: What factors impact the small numbers of African Americans in architecture and how can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the profession of architecture in the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?

Participant Interviews

From the research question, the interview questions for the participants were derived, as well as the labels, which were based on two themes in which the questions would be categorized. The first being the steps of design thinking from the d. school (empathy, define, ideate, prototype and test) and the other category being the four areas where design thinking would be applied (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship). Founded on those nine areas, the questions fell into at least one of the categories. Three of the questions, involved multiple areas, (Q20, Q21, and Q22). The interviews were gathered over a four-month period from January of 2021 through April 2021. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom, due to safety protocols and travel restrictions owing to Covid-19. The participants in this study were licensed architects who were affiliated with NOMA (National Organization of Minority Architects). The interviews ranged from 15 min to 1hr 58 min and lasted on average 55 minutes. For the
individual interview questions, please refer to Appendix L. For the individual interviewing journal created by the researcher, see Appendix N.

**Recording Data Collection**

The interviews and focus groups were video recorded and transcribed on Zoom. The participants were provided their transcripts to review for accuracy. None of the participants requested any changes.

**Sample Description**

The sample for this research was comprised of fourteen African American architects. All of them were licensed, and some were currently working in architecture. Six of the fourteen subjects worked in the public sector of architecture while eight worked in private practice. This sample was derived from the NOMA membership database of licensed architects. To reduce the potential for bias in answering the questions, the identities of the other participants were not shared during the interview process. The only participant awareness involved those who agreed to join in the focus group discussion after all individual interviews were completed. Focus group participants were all asked to respect confidentiality and anonymity.

**Participant Demographics**

Demographics of the fourteen participants include ten male architects and four female architects residing in the following states: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, New York, Texas, and Washington D.C. All participants have extensive histories as members of NOMA and more than 80% had membership in both NOMA and the AIA. Each participant was identified by the following:

Participant 1 = PA
Participant 2 = PB
Participant 3 = PC
Participant 4 = PD
Participant 5 = PE
Participant 6 = PF
Participant 7 = PG
Participant 8 = PH
Participant 9 = PI
Participant 10 = PJ
Participant 11 = PK
Participant 12 = PL
Participant 13 = PM
Participant 14 = PN

**Triangulation**

As defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018) a focus group is deemed a form of triangulation for purposes of validity. For that purpose, a focus group consisting of three of the individually interviewed participants (PF, PH and PN) and the researcher was formed. The focus group questions are found in Appendix M.

The Reflexive Journal, composed during the individual interviews, (Appendix N) was utilized to provide another layer of triangulation, and thus validity, to the research data, as well to document the researcher’s comments regarding interacting with all the participants to manage any biases.
Results

After reviewing the interview transcripts and the focus group transcript, the following themes and findings emerged from the research.

Table 1

Themes of Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Related Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Q3, Q5, Q6, Q8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Q1, Q7, Q9, Q10, Q11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensure</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Q13, Q14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathize</td>
<td>Q7, Q15, Q16, Q17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Q2, Q19, Q20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideate</td>
<td>Q12, Q13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototype</td>
<td>Q21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Q22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following results are organized around these themes: outreach, education, licensure entrepreneurship and the five steps of design thinking: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

Theme #1 – Outreach

Outreach for the purpose of this study speaks to engagement and bringing awareness to African-Americans about the existence of architecture, and the contributions of African Americans in the profession. Outreach is the first theme as
awareness of the profession is important to determine if one will be interested in it as a career option. This step then leads to the first step of the process of becoming an architect, which is being educated.

Figure 1. Q3 – Theme Outreach

**When did you become interested in architecture? (Q3).** The average age of the participants in that regard was 10 years and two months. Sixty-four percent became interested in architecture before high school (see Figure 1). When the participants became aware of the profession was important to understand. Subsequently, that awareness can then lead to future research regarding African Americans visualizing and seeing themselves within the profession. One example showing interest during high school was Participant PG. According to PG: “In high school, I took a drafting class in high school,
and it was just one of those things I was really interested in. I was told I had a good hand and just pursued it from there.”

**Figure 2.** Q5 – Theme: Outreach

**When did you decide to become a licensed architect? (Q5).** Question 5 is also aligned with the application theme of Outreach. Fifty percent of the participants decided to become a licensed architect before college (see Figure 2). This would suggest awareness of the designation of licensed architect versus architect. An example of that approach was revealed by Participant PC, who stated:

OK, it was at eight years old, when I decided I wanted to be an architect and there was never any question that I would become licensed. It is just like when I was in elementary and middle school, there was never any question that I was not going to college. So, I have never been one who saw myself in the profession, but not registered.
Figure 3. Q6 – Theme: Outreach

Why did you become a licensed architect? (Q6). Question 6 is aligned with the application theme of Outreach. Figure 3 shows the distribution of answers, and the qualitative differences are illustrated by the following examples. PD stated: “…when I went to college, I didn’t know that when you graduated, you weren’t an architect. I did not have that background. So, it was learning the process.” PJ stated: “It just seemed like the right thing to do.” And even more varied perspective was shown by PK, who stated:

…so, when I decided to do architecture, you have this, like, weight on your shoulders the entire time that you are doing architecture, because it is so, you know, you go into an architecture program and then you are in studio all the time. If you look at the amount of time architecture students spend on their projects in comparison to our contemporaries who are in like business programs, pharmacy programs, doctoral programs, whatever it might be. Just the simple amount of time that we must invest in our work far exceeds any other major. And, for that to be the case and for us to come out of it, having a clear understanding and a clear
direction on licensure, I felt like that was the problem and now was a hurdle that I personally had to get over.

This question spoke to the participants’ decision to become a licensed architect. This data is significant because there are many (drafters, specification writers, interior designers) who are allied to the profession but have not achieved licensure. The decision to become licensed also speaks to each of the participants then understanding of the difficulties in becoming licensed.

![Figure 4. Q8 – Theme: Outreach](image)

**When did you first become aware of an African American architect?** (Q8).

Sixty-four percent of the participants became aware of an African American architect while in college. Thirty-six (36%) percent were aware before college. Further delineating
the information, 60% of the male participants became aware of the existence of African American architects. For the female participants, 75% became aware while in college and 25% became aware of African American architects before college (see Figure 4). Participant PB stated they met their first African American architect as a junior in college. Participant PL also referenced meeting their first African American architect in college, specifically at an HBCU (Historically Black College and University).

As one decides to become a licensed architect, the importance of seeing someone that “looks like you” in the profession becomes important for issues such as mentorship and relatability (Mitchell, 2003). Awareness and exposure can also be a factor in becoming an architect. Just as sports and entertainment are exposed to African Americans at an early age, there is a correlation to awareness of architecture at an early age for African Americans.

**Theme #2 – Education**

Education in this context, speaks to higher education of oncoming architects, focusing on undergraduate and graduate level degrees. The education phase is the first official step towards becoming a licensed architect. This phase also as noted by Senge (1990) is a leverage point. Specifically, a leveraging point for increasing the number of African American architects.

**Where did you attend college to earn your degree in architecture? (Q1).**

Of the participants, 71% (10 out of 14 total participants) attended a Predominately White Institutions (PWI) and 29% attended an Historically Black College or University (HBCU). The location of one’s education (PWI vs HBCU) provides a baseline for speaking to experiences of indoctrination within the profession and their expectations of
the profession from a formative age. Subsequently, this lends a perspective on definitions of such terms as design and architecture, based on what was taught in the classroom.

Figure 5. Q9 – Theme: Education

**Did you learn of any African American architects in your years of college?** (Q9). Overall, the responses were evenly divided regarding whether the participants learned of any African American architects while in college. Amongst the male participants, 60% learned about African American architects, for the female participants, 25% learned of an architect while in college (see Figure 5). This question speaks to what is being taught in college regarding African American architects. If an awareness of architecture existed before college (Q8) a deeper question is then followed regarding what is being taught about African American architects in college. Participant PA, who attended a PWI stated: “No” to learning about African American architects in college. In
contrast, Participant PE, who attended an HBCU, did report learning about African American architects in their studies. While the expectation was that students would learn about African American Architects at an HBCU, the broader focus has been established Eurocentric architects. Of the participants in the study only 29% of them graduated from HBCUs.

Figure 6. Q10 – Theme: Education

Were there African American professors in your undergraduate/graduate studies? (Q10). Overall, 57% stated they had an African American professor in college. Among male participants, 60% stated they had an African American professor. Among female participants 50% stated they had an African American professor in college (Figure 6). Participant PD stated, “There were no African American professors in my studies”
Participant PM, stated “There was one Black professor, and they were in urban planning, so they were adjacent but not directly in the school of architecture.”

This question follows Q9. The difference in this question, however, focused on representation of African American educators within the architectural academic space. The question provides an insight regarding those who are teaching individuals to become licensed architects.

**What was the most difficult aspect of being an architecture student for you? (Q11).** Divergent perspectives from each participant show various difficulties. Participant PA stated: “…nothing was difficult for me in architectural school.” Participant PE: “A lot of it was the expectation, a preconceived notion because my father was an architect…” Participant PN: “Being alone.”

This question revealed how their own expectations, or those placed on them, were the biggest difficulty for African American students (Figure 7). The participants’ internal expectations or the participants external pressures of the profession, as well as from friends, peers, etc. were described as major factors.
Figure 7. Q11 – Theme: Education

Theme #3 – Licensure

Licensure in this study refers to the process of becoming an architect after completing the educational phase of development for becoming a licensed architect. Licensure was the third theme of this study.
How long have you practiced architecture? (Q4). Participants had spent as little as four and as many as 38 years in the profession; the average was 22 years. The average amount of time licensed as architects was 16 years.

For the male participants, the average time was 25.4 years in the profession and 19.9 years as licensed architects. For female participants, the average time in the profession was 19.5 years, and 14.5 years as licensed architects (Figure 8). The length of time in the profession reveals a spectrum of gathered experiences which framed the perspectives of the participants. More than half of the participants engaged in the profession for between 21-30 years. The group with the least amount of time were those in the profession between 4-20 years.
Theme #4 – Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship in this study refers to creation of an architecture firm for African Americans. This is the last theme in the process of developing African-American architects. This step occurs after education and licensure of the participants.

Amongst all participants, 64% envisioned themselves as a firm owner at some point. The male participants (70%) were more likely than the female (50%) to envision firm ownership (Figure 9).

This question revealed an interest in business within architecture. Owning a business could potentially imply hiring others and aiding similar individuals who are
African American in their quest to become licensed architects. Participant PM stated:

No, but I wanted to. The goal was to get out of school and get a respectable job. I wanted to walk into an office building where I waved to the receptionist every morning and I had my picture in my head of what I wanted to do.

In contrast, Participant PJ stated:

I did; I think it is the natural thing. I had my best friend in college, Jasmine Anderson, she was always talking about how we were going to start a firm. I do not know that is ever anything I was particularly interested in. It was just the thing you say you are going to do.

**Figure 10.** Q13 – Theme: Entrepreneurship

*If you are a firm owner, what are your biggest struggles? (Q13).* This question delved into the biggest struggles of firm owners. Participant PB stated: “I didn’t know how to run a business...” Participant PG believed that the main issue was “defining yourself at a firm that is focused on doing a particular type of work.” Participant PM
shared that it was “getting work on a full-time basis.” The participants believed that sales were the biggest singular issue when owning a firm (Figure 10). Sales in that context meaning selling themselves to clients for business and/or maintaining business with clients to retain a constant stream of revenue.

**Theme #5 – Empathy**

Empathy is the fifth theme in this study. Empathy is also the first step of the design school variant of design thinking.

![Graph](image)

*Figure 11. Q7 – Theme: Education, Empathy*

**Was the process of becoming a licensed architect responsive to your cultural background? (Q7).** Overall, amongst the participants, 71% believed they experienced no response to their cultural background. More of the women (50%) reported feeling that
their cultural background was acknowledged more than did the men (20%) (Figure 11).

Similarly, more women than men stated that the process of licensure spoke to their African American background. Participant PC agreed about empathy when stating: “Is anything responsive to the African-American culture, and the answer is yes, a lot of things are responsive, then that response tends to be a negative response. Right. And so, I must say yes…” Not everyone felt the same, Participant PK stated: “I'd say no, my immediate answer would be no. I can't see a hindrance that occurred because of my cultural background.”

![Question 15: Does empathy play a pivotal role in the architectural education of African American architects?](image)

*Figure 12. Q15 – Theme: Entrepreneurship*

**Does empathy play a pivotal role in the architectural education of African American architects? (Q15)**. Amongst all participants, 79% of them believed that
empathy played a role in their architectural education. For the male participants, 70% believed that empathy played a role. For the female participants, 100% of them believed that empathy played a role. (Figure 12). This question addressed a general empathetic awareness within architectural academia towards African Americans. Participant PJ stated: “I think it should. I do not know that it does, but I absolutely think that it should. I do not think empathy plays a role in architecture.” In contrast, Participant PG stated:

Empathy, yes. Well, yes, I mean, I talk about this a lot with my son. I mean, he picks up what was going on in politics. So, he sometimes says, ‘what's up with this guy? You know, we just got out of office.’ I said: Well, the problem with that is, you cannot expect a person who is not empathetic to express empathy. So, I always make it known that no matter what I have achieved and what success I have, I must always make somebody who's struggling to get to that license exam, somebody who's in their second or third year in school, having a problem getting through the program, somebody who wants to get into graduate school, you know, are they ready for it? They are not ready for the profession. To always have that, like, you know, that responsibility to say, I am here to help you and to be sure you are on the right path. I am not here for my own self.
Does empathy play a pivotal role in the development of African American architects? (Q16). Amongst all participants, 43% (6 out of 14 total participants) believed that empathy played a role in their choice to become architects. Here again women (75%) were more likely than men (30%) to report that they felt empathy played a significant role (Figure 13). This question addressed the topic of empathy towards African Americans, and was followed up with a further question of “If so, how, and where?” Participant PM stated: “I mean, you definitely have to understand where they're coming from and understand that they don't have the same exposure, and the advantages that non-African-Americans get.” Participant PA stated:

And my first professor who authored a book with an architect. He was the most empathetic person and at the end and he had so much, which I found later, I had

Figure 13. Q16 – Theme: Empathy
so much tension with the university because he did not prescribe to critiques, and it is this and that. He was really trying to find the designer within what was there. And I remember after that semester, he is like, ‘are you going into architecture?’ And he is like, ‘are you sure that's what you want?’ He was really making sure.

**Figure 14.** Q17 – Theme: Empathy

*Has empathy, played a role in others assisting you in becoming a licensed architect?* If so, how? (Q17). Whereas Q16 asked about empathy helping African Americans becoming architects in general, this question (Q17) asked the participants if they believed that empathy had motivated others in aiding them becoming architects. Amongst all participants, 71% of them believed that empathy played a role in the individual participants in this study becoming architects. The women (100%) were again more likely than the men (60%) to report that empathy played a role in their licensure process (Figure 14). The role of empathy is the first step in design thinking. This question
asked the participants directly about their view of empathy impacting them becoming licensed. Participant PF stated:

I would say yes, and I would say simply that I was surrounded and nurtured by fellow activists, Wendell (Campbell), case in point. Wendell was a civil rights activist, and he was known to sit in the movie theaters wherever he desired, and not relegated to the balconies as Black people were in that time in east Indiana. Wendell knowing the struggle helped me to become the architect that I am today.

**Theme #6 – Define**

Define is the sixth theme in this study. Define is also the second step in the d. school variant of design thinking which was used in this study.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 15. Q2 – Theme: Define**

**How do you define architecture?** (Q2). No participants had the same definition of architecture. Each explanation comes from a difference in beliefs. This question is
important to provide the participants’ understandings of architecture in their terms. Architecture has no singular definition, and the basis of this question was to allow the participants to speak on their view of architecture which reveals the participants viewpoints of the profession throughout the study. The most common definition of architecture in the study was: “creating a physical space.” The second most common theme was “a transformative force” (Figure 15). This question coincides with Q18 which addressed the definition of design. Highlighting the difference of views of architecture, Participant PA stated: “Creating something for a client, but it’s also about creating spaces and environments for people.” Participant PH: “How I change the environment and change my community.”

Figure 16. Q18 – Theme: Define
**How do you define design? (Q18).** This question, while like Q2, asks for a definition, this time for design. Participant PG: “Design is solving a problem.” Participant PI: “Design is the creation of a solution.” Participant PK: “Design is a mix of your personality; everything that has happened in your life to make you become you and using that to respond…” Related to Q2, (How do you define architecture?) this question defines a critical element within architecture, design.

Design, like architecture, has varying definitions and this question, along with Q2, provided an opportunity for each participant to deduce their values. Solving a problem and creating something comprised less than 50% of the participants’ definitions of design (Figure 16). Many of them had varied definitions of it, revealing a lack of consistency in the meaning of design.

*Figure 17. Q19 – Theme: Define*
What comes to mind when you hear the term design thinking? (Q19). This question goes specifically into what comes to mind when the participants hear the term design thinking. Most of the participants held a positive outlook regarding design thinking (Figure 17). Participant PC stated: “…it’s a very specific way of processing ideas to come up with an aesthetic and functional solution.” Participant PG stated: “It’s a cognizance or awareness of what you don’t know and what you need to know so you can ensure that all these various elements I was just mentioning are being adequately and appropriately addressed during the design process.” Participant PK stated: “What comes to mind is presentations, diagrams, and mind mapping.”

However, not all participants had positive things to say about design thinking. Participant PA stated: “I think it’s a convoluted term.” Participant PF stated: “It is a disaster.” Participant PA’s perspective is that the term is used as a buzzword within business circles that have no understanding or context of what design thinking is. Participant PF’s perspective is an extruded version of that of Participant PA; however, the disaster is that the lack of understanding what design is, in relation to design thinking, allows for it to be misunderstood and miscommunicated to the public.

Theme #7 – Ideate

The seventh theme of the study is ideation (ideate). This is also the third step in the d (design) school variant of design thinking.
Figure 18. Q14 – Theme: Ideate

What was your expectation of impact on the profession as an African American architect? (Q14). This question provided an opportunity for participants to explore the ways in which they expected to impact the profession and particularly to focus on their African American identity. Mentorship emerged as the most common vehicle for asserting an influence (Figure 18). This arose out of their individual experiences and a desire to motivate future generations to become licensed and empowering them with the resources to do so. Participant PB: “…just being a visible presence for other ladies who feel like they don’t know or can’t do it, or don’t know what it is, or they don’t know any African-American architects.” Participant PK: “I make them really explore themselves, explore, and influence them on the profession of architecture.” Participant PL: “I am not
done yet…” which meant they believed that they still could have an impact through their service to the profession.

Figure 19. Q20 – Theme: Ideate

What phase (outreach, education, licensure, entrepreneurship) do you believe might yield the most results for generating ideas (ideation) for improving the number of African American architects? (Q20). This question asked the participants to provide responses based on four areas of focus (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship). They were queried regarding which of the four would yield the most ideas for increasing the number of African American architects. Overall, 14% stated licensure would yield the most ideas; 36% believed it would be outreach. A tie of 21%
resulted for both education and entrepreneurship, and, lastly, 8% felt none of the four would yield any ideas (Figure 19).

For the male participants, 40% believed outreach was the approach to take, 20% believed it would be education; another 20% believed it would be entrepreneurship, and 10% thought it would be licensure. Lastly, 10% of the male participants thought that none of the four would yield any ideas for improving the number of African American architects in the United States.

The female participants were equally divided between outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship. Outreach is the area that most participants thought could deliver tangible results in increasing the number of African American architects in the U.S. Participant PJ endorsed entrepreneurship. Participant PN endorsed outreach, stating: “Outreach. Because how do you make people aware of architecture from birth to through twelfth grade?” Participant PL supported education. According to Participant PL:

Education, because you have freedom to explore areas where the numbers are leading us and how far back you need to go to engage. It used to be that high school was where you wanted to touch students to start to create that pipeline (to architecture). But now we are back into elementary school, you know, so there are several strategies to do that.

According to Participant PJ:

Licensure, because I think once you get into entrepreneurship, you are kind of out there by yourself. I mean, sure, you may be hiring people, but what I think of as an entrepreneur is, you know, this one-man shop and he hires ten people.

Participant PA endorsed licensure:

I want to say licensure. Yes, it is that phase because, you know, if you do not get through school, it means nothing. Many people go through architecture school and do not go on to the profession at all. Without licensure you are not impacting the profession.
Theme #8 – Prototype

Prototyping is the eighth theme in this study. Prototyping is also the fourth step in the d (design) school variant of design thinking.

Figure 20. Q21 – Theme: Prototype

**Where might a prototype be implemented for design thinking between outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship?**

(Q21) While Q20 insinuates that outreach was the area participants chose for ideas for improving the amount of African American architects, Q21 revealed a preference for education as the area to develop a design thinking prototype for outreach to African Americans (Figure 20). This question asked where a prototype would most effectively be implemented between the four areas (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship). The area with the largest percentage was education, with 43% overall. After education was licensure, with
21%, followed by outreach and education both with 14%. Finally, 7% of the participants believed none of those would be viable areas for implementation.

Forty percent of the male participants believed education was the highest, followed by outreach and licensure both at 20% and entrepreneurship and none of the above tied at 10% each. Fifty percent of the female participants believed education was the solution, and 25% both for licensure and entrepreneurship. Participant PK believed that none of them would work, and that the profession was toxic in its current form and needed to be massively overhauled. Participant PL’s perspective revealed that outreach was the focus of where to obtain the most impact and influence for prototype development.

**Theme #9 – Test**

Testing is the final theme of the study. Testing is also the decisive step in the design school variant of design thinking.
Figure 21. Q22 – Theme: Test

After developing an effective prototype for the previous question, where can design thinking best be applied to see its impact on increasing African American architects between outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship? (Q22).

After ideating in outreach, and developing a prototype in education, the participants believed that education is the appropriate place where design thinking could be applied for increasing the number of African American architects in the United States. This question focused where, specifically, design thinking can be best applied to the four phases (outreach, education, licensure, entrepreneurship). Overall, 50% thought education is the effective place to apply design thinking to increase the number of African American architects (Figure 21). Participant PI stated: “Education, as it is needed to really bring change needed to impact the profession.”
The next most popular theme was outreach (21%). An example of outreach as stated by Participant PL: “So I think from that standpoint, design thinking can be used on several levels in an outreach effort to ultimately start to create a larger pipeline for minorities and underrepresented groups into the profession.”

Third was licensure at 14%, (two out of fourteen total participants) and the there was a tie at 7% (one out of 14 participants) for both entrepreneurship and none. For licensure, Participant PA stated: “Well it would be the licensure stage. Because it's just going to build upon itself and impact entrepreneurship.” For entrepreneurship, Participant PC stated:

The best way to bring all those together is like what a lot of law schools do with their neighborhood nonprofit law centers, where they bring legal services to the underserved masses pro bono. Like a neighborhood design center which would utilize the talent of your college students, your interns, and they provide pro bono designed services to an underserved community which creates a forum for the community.

For the male participants, both outreach and education were areas of implementation of design thinking, with each scoring 30%. Second was licensure at 20% and there was a tie at 10% between entrepreneurship and none of the above. All the female participants believed education was the area for implementation for design thinking.

Focus Group Results

The focus group included three participants and the researcher and provided an opportunity for greater reflection on their experiences in the profession and their thoughts on the impact design thinking might have on diversity within architecture. The themes addressed by each question as found in Table 2.
Table 2

Themes of Focus Group Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Related Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>FG1, FG8, FG12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>FG8, FG12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensure</td>
<td>FG2, FG3, FG4, FG4, FG6, FG7, FG8, FG10, FG12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>FG8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideate</td>
<td>FG9</td>
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**Outreach**

Several questions invited the participants to explore the theme of outreach (FG1,8 and 12). The latter two questions also provided opportunities to expound on other themes and are included in later sections.

**What made you interested in participating in this study? (FG1).** This question asked the participants about their motivation to volunteer for the study. The participants were allowed to provide more than one answer. It was best summed up by participant PF who stated: “Yeah, because the path for these opportunities was not as abundant as they are now. I mean, there are way more opportunities and there’s a target for access.”

**Licensure**

Many of the focus group questions focused on licensure (FG2-8, FG10-11). This reflects the importance of this process to the profession. The importance being the end goal of licensure, not just completing education, but fulfilling the path to become a licensed
architect. As noted above, FG8 is addressed in a later section, as it invited broader reflection.

**After the interview, did you reflect on your journey to become a licensed architect in a different way? If so, how? (FG2).** Of the participants, 66% reflected on their journey to become a licensed architect. This question asked the participants whether they reflected differently on their journey after being interviewed. Participant PH stated: “Oh, yes. Me and another architect were just talking today about starting to pursue a fellowship, you know, and we've seen a lot of these young people get a fellowship.”

Participant PN stated: “But I think right now what we're trying to do is look back. As we obtain our licensure and see who's (the next generation of African American architects) coming behind us, we are looking for ways to help the next generation in ways we were not helped. There is more activism toward what people want to do to get their license currently than it was in the past. They want to change those numbers.”

Participant PN stated: “I guess really in a lot of ways, your question is: ‘Did I have any new revelations during our time or since then?’ I have not because I have been focused on it for so long that I will not say that I have uncovered everything, you know, because I am still searching. For, not necessarily the magic bullet, but I am still searching for a more higher performing path for this. But no, that has not happened since we last talked.”

**What is the most memorable part of your journey of becoming a licensed architect? (FG3).** This question focused on the most notable parts of their individual journey of becoming an architect. Participant PF stated: “I think just perseverance.”

Participant PN stated:
So, it was important for me to get my license, get it done, and then relate back to the young folks that are coming up behind me, taking the exams to make sure that we all get licensed. We are getting our credentials, getting the numbers increased. So that was like a mental journey that I was going on. The feeling of knowing you are in an elite group of individuals that has accomplished such a difficult goal positively impacts confidence going forward.

**Do you believe that your profession is truly vested in diversifying by increasing the African Americans in it? Please provide a basis for your answer (FG4).** This question asked the participants to consider whether their profession is vested in increasing the number of African American practitioners. Participant PN stated:

> You know, the thing is about that question is this kind of goes back to this whole notion about good intentions and what is the difference between good intentions and good actions that manifest, you know? So, that is really the issue. Are there good intentions now?

Participant PH went on to state:

> When I joined that section [AIA New Jersey], they still do not know about - unbelievably, even with two Black presidents - they still do not know the full focus and mission of NOMA. So as a former board member, I told them, this is what NOMA is about. This is what you all need to know. And it was slow, I think, until the George Floyd murder. When that happened, everybody in the U.S. wanted to know what NOMA is and what we as an organization were doing.

Participant PF’s perspective was succinct, stating: “So, I would say the industry as a whole is consistently inconsistent.”

**What do you want to see done differently, on the part of the AIA, with regards to increasing diversification within the profession? (FG5).** This question is focused on the role of the AIA in diversification of the profession. Participant PH stated:

> So, I have been to three (AIA) Grassroots conferences being on the Board of Directors. When I go to a Grassroots conference, I am really coming to that big first opening reception and looking around the room and seeing how many of us (African Americans) are in the room. And I can never see many of us because, what it really boils down to is how many of us are in leadership positions, in chapters and sections around the country.
Participant PF stated: “…but the Karens of the architecture profession are just as complicit as the good old boys’ network, because at the end of the day, they know that they propagate or broaden inequities for African Americans.”

**What role do you envision NOMA can play in the future diversification of the profession? (FG6)** This question focused on the role of NOMA in the diversification of the profession of architecture. Participant PH stated:

Oh, I mean, they are just going to become more powerful under Kim Dowdell. You started seeing more of a presence. We started seeing more attention paid to the organization, even during the pandemic. I think more exposure has been on NOMA than I have seen in a long time. And I can tell you, no one was, like, dismissed.

Participant PN stated:

One of the things I was just thinking is that the researcher and I talked about the power of scholarships and what that means to the pipeline [of creating African American architects]. And we will save that conversation for another time. But the thing is, I just realized that, you know, we must do that, too, on our own.

Participant PF stated:

We are not fighting everybody's fight. Because everybody did not fight our fight, which is why we started this organization in the first place, correct. Now we all know the reason we have the name that we have is so we will allow to be in the game. Period.”

**From your perspective, which organization must engage in more empathetic behavior to affect positive change in the profession: ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB, and/or NOMA? (FG7).** The response stated by Participants PG, and PH; their perspective was that the architectural collateral organizations (ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, and NCARB) have been complicit in their silence in not actively helping to increase the number of African Americans and have benefited from systemic racism.
Therefore, to undo systemic racism, they must be actively engaged in each organization to show they are truly serious about bringing about the change.

**Who benefits the most from diversification of the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer.** (FG10) and **Who benefits the least from lack of diversification of the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer.** (FG11)

All participants unanimously stated the majority, which in this case is Anglo-Saxon White males, benefit from the diversification. The profession has a history of saying and not delivering according to Participant PF: “So, what in this case would be different?”

This question also asked who benefits the least from diversification of the profession. All unanimously agreed that NOMA would benefit the least. The consensus was that the organizations can benefit, yet as noted in the research, the African Americans did not reap the benefits of integration. In the events after Whitney Young’s speech, the AIA created a scholarship titled AIA/AAF Minority/Disadvantaged Scholarship in 1970. Subsequently it was renamed to the Diversity Advancement Scholarship in 2014 and has averaged twenty scholarships since its inception (Diversity and Inclusion Statement (2017).

**Ideate**

Ideate is one of the steps in the design thinking process. The focus group was invited to explore their ideas around design thinking and diversification in the profession.

**Do you believe a culture specific version of design thinking will evolve from diversification in the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer.** (FG9). The participants in the focus group, while confident in design thinking, have reservations of
diversity within the profession, giving the history of the profession, as noted by Whitney Young’s speech. Participant PH stated:

As far as the design aesthetic, everybody has in their culture an aesthetic. What they think is strong. We (African Americans) have African culture. And like either Asian or Arabic, there is always something strong in the aesthetics; if it is a place of worship or a cultural center that they move this through and put this into the building. The thing with us is that we identify as African Americans and we must come back and identify that African part of ourselves and embrace it and push it into, you know, we are doing, for example like a community center.

Participant PN stated:

I teach design thinking and as part of one of my courses and, as we talked before, one of the tenants of design thinking is, of its very nature, intended to be diverse. So, one of the factors in that is to eliminate the concept of groupthink, so you must have people who have diverse backgrounds, different professions, different thinking, different ethnicities. You know, the whole goal there is to develop something new because you have such a diverse mindset that it is just all the people that are diverse.

Participant PF stated:

You know, that is just a matter of time. I do want to say that from my perspective, I have just been reading a little more about Afro futurism, you know, and to me, even though I am an old dog, you know, trying to learn some new things, I am still learning.

Multiple Themes

Two of the questions posed for discussion in the focus group led to discussions that ventured into multiple themes. FG8 drew responses touching on licensure, education, outreach, and entrepreneurship; and FG12 invited exploration of outreach and education.

What role do you see yourself participating in to engender the diversification of the profession? (FG8). Each participant was asked by the researcher which role they see themselves focusing on increasing the number of African American architects in the
United States. Participant PN focused on education. Participant PH focused on outreach. Participant PG focused on entrepreneurship.

Participant PN stated education was the most essential element in diversification of the profession. That response was based on their background in education. Participant PG’s perspective regarding entrepreneurship was due to their value of and assistance in helping architects develop their practices.

If you could speak to your younger self about the profession, what would you tell and ask yourself? (FG12) Participant PN stated:

You know, if I could create a time machine and take my older self and travel back into time and knock on the door of my room up in my mother's house, studying architecture, of not living on campus, living at home, like, how did that happen? And, hey, you know, this is what the career is. Do you know what I always tell people? I do not care who walked in that door. There is nothing that would ever change my mind.

Participant PH stated: “Be strong, I mean, just like them (White architects).” Participant PF stated: “…take that last financial disbursement. Partner with your roommates. To get finance to buy the apartment building that we lived in.”

Summary of Findings

Participants in this study revealed the value of empathy was important to their development both in academia and professionally. The study also revealed the value of defining both architecture and design. The depiction of ideation through Q20 and the importance of it to the movement to increase the number of African American architects. Prototyping and testing demonstrated through the identification of outreach and education as key areas of impact for design thinking.

The research question: “How can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the
profession of architecture in the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?” was answered by the steps of design thinking (empathy, define, ideate, prototyping and testing). Those steps were deconstructed and overlaid in the areas of outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship to reach more African Americans at a younger age, concurrently bringing awareness to African American architects and projects in their educational training. Subsequently, in the licensure phase, mentorship of graduates and lastly in the entrepreneurship phase developing firms to assist future generations of African American architects in developing a pipeline and professional safe space for African Americans who seek to work in the profession.

The research showing the importance of empathy, supports Shubow’s (2015) position on the inclusion of empathy and awareness to the end-user, which in the case of this study are the African Americans in architecture. The research demonstrated, how interdependent the phases of architectural development are interrelated and interdependent on developing African Americans architectures, supporting the definition of system thinking, which Dina (2013) stated was “a holistic approach that focuses on the way components of a system are interrelated and interdependent on each other…” (p. 197). Within the culture of architecture, technology and business intertwine in this study as leverage points to increase the number of African American architects. Convergence is a necessity, whereas divergence (where cultures grow apart) would be detrimental. The lack of representation in architectural academia, as noted in the research, supports the fact that architectural education maintains a perspective that architecture manages the ills of societies through building with no context of culture (Boyer &
Mitchell (2020), 24 years later, corroborated Boyer and Mitgang’s (1996) perspective by elucidating the continuing culture of elitism in architectural academia.

Architectural education has for some time maintained and still does maintain a colorblindness which implies that, although architecture deals with societies’ ills through building, those ills have no impact on architectural education (Boyer & Mitgang, 1996). Subsequently, the study also substantiated an interest in diversity as noted by Anthony (2001). Concurrently the lack of representation of African Americans in architectural education as noted in the study supports Dr. Anthony’s perspective on the homogeneity of the profession at all levels, (education and licensure). Finally, the study confirmed the impact of design thinking on improving and developing a business (Huq & Gilbert, 2017) through the usage of the d. school steps of design thinking (empathy, define, ideate, prototype, and testing).

In conclusion, this research demonstrated that design thinking, through its five steps (empathy, define, ideate, prototyping, and testing) can be used as a tool for increasing the number of African American architects in the United States, through outreach and education primarily, and licensure and entrepreneurship secondarily. For this study to be impactful, in the words of Whitney Young, “We are going to have to have people as committed to doing the right thing, to inclusiveness, as we have in the past to exclusiveness.” (Young, 1968, p.7). The findings demonstrated where commitment to inclusiveness is required.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

One purpose of this study was to examine the factors that impact the sparse numbers of African Americans in architecture. A second purpose of this study was to demonstrate how design thinking could be a tool in increasing the number of licensed African American architects in the United States. That outcome became prioritized in 2001, per the first MOU agreed upon between the AIA and NOMA, in which the two Associations set a goal to increase the number of licensed African American architects to 15,000 by the year 2030. That goal derived from the speech given by Whitney Young, (1968) during their yearly AIA Convention. Young eviscerated the profession for their ineptitude and apathy regarding their lack of action involving African American participation in architecture.

The literature review for this study demonstrated research in the areas of systems thinking, diversity, architecture, and design thinking. Diversity covered general diversity, as well as diversity in business and the profession of architecture. Architecture covered the collateral organizations (ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB and NOMA), apathy within the profession of architecture, architectural education, the public perception of architecture, as well as the business of architecture. This study affirmed the apathy in architecture as noted by Baker (2018). That researcher specifically noted a lack of directives and follow-through for developing African American architects. The AAF/Disadvantage Scholarship created by the AIA in 1970 was changed to the Minority Disadvantaged Scholarship in 2014 (“Towards a History: The AIA Diversity Timeline,”
2020), and while well intentioned, yields further opportunity for more development and research for creating more African American architects.

This study is coherent with systems thinking, design thinking, and architecture. The interrelated components of the system discussed were the regulating entities of architecture. (AIA, AIAS, ACSA, NAAB, NCARB and NOMA respectively) and their impacts on the process of developing architects.

The study revealed the components of the d. school’s design thinking (empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test) as viable for working to positively influence factors (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship) that can impact the numbers of African American architects. The findings of this study concur with the issues of diversity noted in Young’s 1968 speech. The areas where this study found design thinking to be most effective were outreach and education. Those two areas serve as leverage points, which according to Senge (1990) are places for significant, enduring transformation.

The participants in the study expressed their beliefs that White architects would benefit more from diversity in the profession, and African Americans architects will benefit the least. The participants in the study expressed a concern that once initiatives for diversity were commonplace, African Americans would be relegated behind White women, the LGBTQ community, and the Hispanic populations, respectively. Participants in the study expressed similar ideas to the founders of NOMA and strove to focus specifically on the experience of African Americans in the profession. For contextual history, the National Organization of Minority Architects, founded in 1971, recently celebrated their 50-year anniversary. The organization, while in the early stages of
forming, changed its name from NOBA (National Organization of Black Architects) to NOMA because presenting the organization as overtly Black impacted the ability to get funding (Mitchell, 2003).

Another example referenced earlier is the AIA/AAF Minority/Disadvantaged scholarship which was created after the Whitney Young speech and was focused on creating more opportunities for African Americans. In 2014 the AIA changed the name of that scholarship to the Diversity Advancement Scholarship. The participants’ responses demonstrated skepticism about the AIA working to increase African Americans in the profession, which came from a train of thought that when something is African American centered, then it becomes an issue of inclusiveness of everybody else, relegating African Americans to a less impactful position.

Whitney Young's exhortation focused specifically on African Americans in architecture. The MOUs between AIA and NOMA also focused explicitly on African Americans. The inclusion of other minorities led to a reduced focus on African Americans.

This study detailed the message and purposes of the MOUs, and revealed that, while the intention to improve has been there, the percentage of African Americans has not increased. The words and the deeds have been incongruent. The lack of diversity in business, as shown in this study, runs parallel to the profession of architecture. The study revealed that the participants considered outreach a principal factor that can increase the number of African Americans in architecture and truly diversify the profession. As quoted from Young’s speech:

It would be the most naïve escapist who today would be unaware that the winds of change, as far as human aspirations are concerned, are fast reaching
tornado proportions. Throughout our world society, and particularly in our own country, the disinherited, the disfranchised, the poor, the black are saying in no unmistakable terms that they intend to be in, or nobody will be comfortably in. (1968, p. 2)

While the winds of change still abound, as they did in 1968, paralleling civil rights issues such as Martin Luther King’s assassination (1968) and the death of George Floyd (2020), African American architects intend to be in, and not as tokens. And, while actions, such as creating space for NOMA at the AIA office and AIA General Convention, the AIA must do more to diversify the profession. The MOUs are pro forma and benefit the AIA in the organization’s intention to assist NOMA, but the lack concrete actions specifically designed to increase African American architects.

That absence of concrete action belies a lack of empathy. The importance of empathy as a component for assisting African American architects was noted by the participants. The lack of empathy demonstrated by the profession limits diversification. Empathy improves creativity, innovation, design, and collaboration (Lim, 2014).

Entrepreneurship was addressed in the business of architecture section in the literature review. The participants believed that entrepreneurship ranked lower than outreach and education. The interviews revealed that design thinking, applied specifically in outreach, education and entrepreneurship could all contribute to the increased number of African Americans in architecture. The findings confirmed what Huq and Gilbert (2017) noted, that design thinking can modify and improve the development of a budding entrepreneur’s perspective in developing a business.

**What Was Learned**

Interview questions were formed along the steps of design thinking used by the d. School at Stanford (empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test), as well as the four
areas of focus in the process of licensure and ownership for a licensed architect (outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship). Those nine areas became the themes for analyzing the data.

This study discovered that outreach is an important area where ideation can be used to implement design thinking, which supports Mitchell’s (2020) prevailing idea that making youth conscious of architecture is vital to developing future African American architects.

The study also uncovered education as an area of testing design thinking to develop results for increasing the number of African American architects in the United States. This is again substantiated by Glen et al (2014), who asserted that design thinking has been shown to have a considerable influence on education in various industries and professions.

The interview questions were analyzed and grouped into categories which corresponded with the d school steps of design thinking (empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test). Examining participant responses within these categories revealed the importance of empathy particularly in the area of education. Empathy in education was revealed as a leverage point that can serve to support potential African American architects continuing to licensure. Empathy was also found to be important to understanding the education and licensure steps within the profession. That correlates with Shubow’s (2015) study which discussed the value of empathy for the end-user, along with Lim (2014), who discussed how empathy improves creativity and innovation. This research thus confirmed both Shubow and Lim’s perspectives on empathy in relation to design thinking and increasing the number of African American architects.
The steps of defining both architecture and design revealed a gap in uniformity of meanings. Without a reliable definition of the two terms, understanding how to execute, design and create architecture remain problematic. The lack of a consistent definition of two elements prevalent to this study suggests a future area of research for their development for both architecture and design. The etymology of a word implies a concrete concept of what defines it (Lievers, 2021). Having a concrete concept and definition can mitigate variants of a word, reducing it to one definition for the industry to follow.

Ideation as a step is intuitive to architects of all backgrounds; however, in this study, ideation speaks to the idea of a legacy that the participants want to leave behind. Prototyping and testing revealed that education and outreach (outreach being an area for developing a prototype, and education being the area of testing) are the vital areas that design thinking needs to focus on increasing the number of African American architects in the United States. Participants believed in the inculcation of design thinking in the outreach phase at various ages to create results. Participants in the study also revealed that education is a crucial factor in executing design thinking. This is again validated by Glen et al (2014) who stated that design thinking showing a substantial impact on education.

Elements of focus from the literature review correlated to the themes of the study. The research in entrepreneurship and business innovation, as presented in the literature review, demonstrated the importance of entrepreneurship being an area of focus for developing an incubator for future African American architects. The study’s findings support Bogan and Darity’s (2008) notion of businesses opportunities serving specific
needs of African Americans, for such things as food and shelter (in this case architecture). Innovation is covered in this study through the application of design thinking, specifically the d. school variant of design thinking (“design school, Stanford University,” 2018).

Entrepreneurship for architects usually manifests as they start their own firm. When the architect takes on a mentor role, the firm has the potential to serve as an incubator for future African American architects. While Bogan and Darity (2008) and Sahagun, (2019) emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship, the participants in this study placed a lesser emphasis on those two factors. Instead, the areas they found most important were outreach and education.

**Significant Findings**

This study demonstrated a specific methodology of design thinking being applicable for increasing the number of African American architects in the United States. The application of the d. school variant of design thinking can achieve something that the four MOUs between NOMA and the AIA have, up until now, been unable to accomplish (Appendices B-F). In 2001 they set a goal to increase the number of African American architects to 15,000 by 2030; however, there was no framework in place at that time, nor, twenty years later has either organization developed one to reach that goal. The strategy to implement design thinking, and the recommendations following in this chapter can be measured over time to evaluate success rates, and the development of other strategies to work in concert with, or separately, to bring about the increase in numbers of African American architects in the United States.
What I Would Have Done Differently

One thing the researcher would have done differently was interviewing the participants in their home offices. The impact of COVID during this study limited the ability to travel to any of the participants’ locations. The ability to conduct face to face interviews with the participants in their offices as a backdrop could have altered length of interviews, as well their contents. Executing the interviews via Zoom, while cost and time efficient, may have lost some opportunities for surmising perspectives from body language reading. As noted by Roller and Lavrakas (2015), social context within the interview environment can impact the interactions.

Another thing the researcher would have done differently was to have included those individuals who were not licensed architects. This would have provided a more comprehensive perspective of factors impacting African Americans becoming licensed architects.

Recommendations for the Profession

The initial agreement between the AIA and NOMA was to have 15,000 licensed African American architects by 2030. As of this study, there are currently 2,325 of them (The Directory of African American Architects, n.d.). To bring about the change that will yield results for the increase of African American architects, the following steps are recommended:

Education: Design Thinking and Elective Courses

Adding design thinking courses in architecture could be an area of impact within education. As an elective course in both schools, design thinking could provide a deeper understanding, from a business perspective, for designers and a creative perspective for
business students. Architectural programs often only have one required business course in
their curriculum, usually called Professional Practice. Implementing design thinking into
architecture course work corroborates with the perspective that design thinking in an
architectural business can allow for job training (Glen et al., 2014), as the training could
be executed within a Professional Practice course. That course skims the topics of what
the actual profession is and the business of architecture, whereas most architectural
programs predominately require studio courses, where students design several types of
residential, institutional, and commercial structures for their portfolios.

Broader electives options, such as marketing, finance, accounting, and
management, can provide students with better resources and skills utilized within the
profession of architecture. Subsequently, such courses, along with design thinking
elective(s), could more effectively and appropriately prepare all students of architecture
for entrepreneurship within and beyond the profession of architecture.

**Increased Diversity in the Professoriate**

Another recommendation is that the collateral organizations of architecture
(ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB, and NOMA) create a minimum requirement of
African American professors; for example, fewer than 2% of the faculty in architecture
programs within the United States are African American. That requirement is specifically
meant to be applied in architectural studio courses, where students spend most of their
time being indoctrinated about architecture.

NOMA is recommended to be the lead, as the organization’s purpose is best
suited for such efforts, and the AIA, ACSA and NAAB are suggested to collaborate with
NOMA to bring about increases in the number of professors. The recommendation also
includes those professional organizations revisiting the advancement made during every accreditation cycle to measure the progress of students and track them afterward to assess the impact. The success of that approach would be determined by how many students have proceeded to become licensed architects.

**Monitoring Progress in the Profession**

Another recommended strategy is monitoring the progression of African American students from graduation through AXP (Architecture Experience Program, via NCARB), over a 10-year period. Monitoring the students’ progression (via data collected by NAAB, NOMA, and ACSA) allows for measuring any increase or decrease in African American architects over time. Data collected by NCARB on the graduates seeking licensure could be used to determine how many graduates chose alternatives to licensure. The 10-year tracking timeframe allows for graduation and completion of AXP and the time needed to complete all sections of the architectural licensing exam.

**Diversity in Architectural History**

Also recommended is the inclusion of African American architectural history into all architectural history courses. The organizations needed to make that step viable would include NOMA, ACSA and NAAB. ACSA can make that step part of their research component of architectural history in the United States so that schools have that information to provide, at minimum, as an elective. The enforcement of that step by NAAB ensures that implementation meets accreditation requirements. The benefit of this approach is providing all students opportunities to gain experience about the contributions of African American architects and architectural firms, which are as integral to the profession which are considered canon for learning within architectural
Creation of African American Architectural Journal

A supplementary recommendation to assist in the described approaches would be the development of an architectural journal by NOMA focused on African American architectural contributions on the part of both individuals and firms. As of this study, no academically referenced journal on the topics of African American architects and/or architecture exists. Journals that focus on specific cultures are usual to the industry, such as Annali di Architettura, which concentrates on Italian architecture and the International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA) is a publication that focuses on architecture in relation to Islam. Given such examples, the concept of an architectural journal focusing on the historical contributions of African American architects is feasible.

While a journal for all minority architects would be inclusive, there needs to be a journal that concentrates solely on the African American architects of the United States. While a journal may indirectly contribute to increasing the number of African American licensed architects, it can directly and positively impact architectural education, allowing students and professors to see people like them in an academic forum researched and studied with the same intensity as Vitruvius and Frank Lloyd Wright. However, there currently is no publication that focuses on that academic space. The AIA can be of assistance in collaborating with NOMA in the design and structure of such a journal, as they currently have their own publication, which is industry standard for the profession.

Marketing Campaigns

Architecture, as a profession, traditionally does no marketing; however, in the age of social media, more can be accomplished to reach various age demographics within the
African American community to bring about awareness of architecture. A concerted marketing effort by the collateral organizations (ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB, and NOMA) could expose architecture as a viable option in African American communities. Traditionally marketing is not seen as an organizational development tool; however, through social media channels and a dedicated strategy for the six collateral organizations (ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB and NOMA), the historical accomplishments of African Americans within the profession can be presented.

This campaign must extend beyond Black History Month. Collateral organizations, such as ACSA and the AIA, are in a powerful position to bring awareness to famous African American architecture firms such as McKissack & McKissack with the same level of intensity as provided Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. NOMA, collaborating with an advertising agency, could potentially engage in a marketing campaign with an advertising agency to bring awareness to their organization, which would have the potential to yield a higher number of entrants into the profession. An example of that recommendation is how Leo Burnett rebranded the U.S. Army to increase engagement and registrants into the military (Michaelson, 2001).

**Collaboration for Incubator Programs**

Lastly, NCARB, in collaboration with NOMA and AIA, could develop an incubator program for assisting African American architects who want to develop architecture firms. That type of program would be focused on helping individual architects build a practice or helping architects to develop a roadmap for creating a firm and working in concert with other firm owners to develop firms. Such elements as business formation and plan development, in conjunction with reciprocity (registration
for practicing architecture, beyond the state an individual has acquired initial licensure in) can be a benefit African American architects and all architects.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study, while focused on African Americans, yielded areas of future studies for researchers. One area that can be expound upon is how the number of African American female architects, specifically, can be increased. Of the 2,434 African American architects in the United States that are licensed 25% of that number are African American women ("The Directory of African American Architects," n.d.). According to the U.S. Census (n.d.), African American woman comprise 50.8% of the Black population, yet are even more unevenly represented in architecture than African American males (75% male, 25% female, ("The Directory of African American Architecture," n.d.).

Another area of potential research is the correlation of business studies to future architect development. While entrepreneurship was covered in this study, specific research focused on the potential benefits for integration of business education earlier in the academic development and indoctrination of architectural students could yield a leverage point and collaboration across architectural schools and business schools throughout the United States. Design thinking would be the connection between architectural education and entrepreneurship.

One more potential area of research is the definition of design. As noted in the study, more than 57% of the participants could not agree on a definition of design. The remainder of the participants were split on their definition as being either “creating something” or “problem solving.” The lack of a consistent definition presents an issue of
understanding what design is and what it impacts. This proposed research would branch off from design thinking and can impact various forms of design (architectural, graphic, product, etc.), subsequently providing a stronger foundation for understanding design thinking and how it relates to other fields, professions, and industries.

Finally, this research revealed the potential for an alternative study regarding what other methods besides design thinking can be used to increase the number of African American architects in the United States. While the focus of this study was the utilization of design thinking, other tools, resources, and techniques have potential for application, such as the incubator for African American architecture professionals and a marketing outreach for creating and building African American awareness of the profession. The potential means of doing so could be infinite, and future researchers would have to consider various elements, to boost numbers the of African American architects in the United States to 15,000 by 2030. A mixed method study could allow for quantitative (for example surveys) and qualitative (for example interviews) analysis and assessment to surmise in greater detail why the numbers of African American architects have not increased.

**Conclusion**

The participants shared insight to a problem they have known to exist throughout their professional careers. The participants provided their input for this study believing an actionable plan was viable. While much dialogue has occurred and multiple MOUs have been developed, up until now no research has been conducted to develop a strategy to bring about the results sought by the AIA and NOMA. Additionally, design thinking,
similar to the definitions of architecture and design, have numerous variants. Developing a definition of design can be a baseline for future research.

Many of the participants believed this study, which was the first foray of a member of NOMA into academic discussions and impact, was long overdue. This study can be the catalyst for actions spawned after the Whitney Young speech of 1968. The AIA seeks to positively impact the profession, as noted by their years-long efforts in creating and maintaining their scholarship for minority individuals and developing the MOUs. The goal of this study was to demonstrate whether design thinking could be a useful tool increasing the number of African American architects.

Lastly, the participants believed that, for the first time academically, someone took the time to listen to their story, to speak to future researchers who may or may not have to deal with the same issues, yet at least now have a starting point from which to move forward. The creation of the AIA in 1857, the speech by Young in 1968, and the first agreement between NOMA and AIA in 2001 have provided short-lived moments of hope but have yet to succeed in increasing the number of African American architects. Until this study was conducted, there were hardly any tangible initiatives that could lead to actualized results.

As noted in the research question *How can design thinking be a tool for diversifying the profession of architecture in the U.S. through increasing the number of African American members in architectural trade organizations?* the answer is by using design thinking in the areas of outreach and education to develop strategies intended to lead to the stated desired goal. A quote from Whitney Young’s conclusion of his remarkable, intentionally compelling speech to the American Institute of Architects in
1968 is meaningful and purposeful here. “For a society that has permitted itself the luxury of an excess of callousness and indifference, we can now afford to permit ourselves the luxury of an excess of caring and of concern” (p.11) (Appendix A).

For far too long, the profession of architecture fulfilled Whitney Young’s perception of acting callus and indifferent. This study provides new knowledge that offers the field of architecture a step in the direction detailed in the MOUs. Now is the time to show African Americans, and everyone else in the profession, an excess of care and concern, with actionable movement producing tangible results.
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Young, W. M., Jr. Speech at AIA Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon June 1968.

APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Whitney Young Speech
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Whitney Young Speech

Full Remarks of Whitney M. Young Jr.
AIA Annual Convention in Portland, Oregon
June 1968

Thank you, very much, President Durham.

Distinguished Co-Panelists, Mr. Brower and Mr. Canty. I believe that the Governor was accurate, as he usually is—he still may be in the audience—and under any circumstances, I want to extend my greeting to one I regard as the nation's most socially sensitive and able chief administrator, and a long time personal friend.

I will not apologize for being presumptuous, as the Governor did. However, if I seem to repeat things you have heard before, I do not apologize, any more than I think a physician would apologize for giving inoculations. Sometimes we have to give repeated vaccinations, and we continue to do so until we observe that it has taken effect.

One need only take a casual look at this audience to see that we have a long way to go in this field of integration of the architects. I almost feel like Mr. Stanley looking for Dr. Livingston—in reverse—in Africa. I think I did see one and wanted to rush up and say: Dr. Livingston, I presume!

I also have another gripe. I'm not sure yet whether I will charge you formally with discrimination. If you're going to bring me this far across the country, why couldn't I have been assigned along with Mr. Brewer to speak at Honolulu instead of at the meeting in Portland?

I happened to have been in Honolulu. In fact, Governor McCall was with me. We stopped over there on our way back from Vietnam. My wife was worrying about my safety in Saigon only to have the newspapers come out where some enterprising photographer with a telescopic lens had caught Ambassador Lodge and myself surfing off the beach at Waikiki. I've had some difficulty in explaining that.

But I was impressed with Honolulu the short time we were there, and the great diversity that you see among the people: a real living democracy, diversity as far as homes are concerned, people all mixed together. I hope that you will just sort of go over there and concentrate on enjoying yourselves. Please don't take over there in what you've been, I think, a silent partner in developing in this country. Just leave them alone. They've done very well without our building and architecture.

I would like very much to speak to you as citizens and as a professional group, and simply as men and women.
Not so long ago a group of miners suddenly found themselves after an avalanche entombed unto their death in one of the diamond mines of South Africa, starving for food and thirsting for water and the need of spiritual comfort. Diamonds were worthless, and they slowly met their death.

So it is increasingly in our society today. We are skilled in the art of making war; we are unskilled in the art of making peace. We are proficient in the art of killing, particularly the good people; bad people are in no danger in this country. We are ignorant in the art of living. We probe and grasp the mysteries of atomic fission and unique and ingenious ways to handle brick and mortar and glass, and we most often forget such simple things as the Sermon on the Mount and the golden rule.

Somehow, there must be a place in our scheme of things for those broad human values which transcend our materialistic grasping and our values that are concentrated more around things and people, or else we shall find ourselves entombed in our diamond mine of materialism.

It would be the most naïve escapist who today would be unaware that the winds of change, as far as human aspirations are concerned, are fast reaching tornado proportions. Throughout our world society, and particularly in our own country, the dispossessed, the disfranchised, the poor, the black are saying in no unmistakable terms that they intend to be in or nobody will be comfortably in.

Our choices are clear-cut: We can either engage in genocide and the systematic extermination of the black poor in this country and poor generally, and here we have an ideal model in Mr. Adolf Hitler, or we can engage in more formalized apartheid than we already have, and here we can use as our pattern Mr. Ian Smith in South Africa. Or we can decide that the American dream and promise and the Judeo-Christian ethic are more than rhetoric and a collection of nice clichés to be mouthed on Sunday morning and the Fourth of July, and that they are principles to be practiced, and here we can take as our model the Constitution and the Bible.

But the dispossessed in our society today, unlike the past, are fully aware of the gap between their standard of living and the large majority of Americans. No longer are they the sharecroppers on farms and in rural areas where they have not the benefit of newspapers and radio. Today, for the most part, the poor live within a stone's throw of the affluent. They witness on their television sets and read in their newspapers and see personally how the other half, or the other eighty percent live. The poor no longer assume that their status is God-made. They no longer believe that they are congenitally and innately inferior because of their color or because of a condition of birth. The poor are fully aware today that their conditions are man-made and not God-decreed or constitutionally derived.

The poor are also today quite conscious of how other people have managed to lift themselves out of the mire of injustice and poverty — whether it was the leaders of civil disobedience in the Boston Tea Party or the revolutionists in the American Revolution, or the labor movement, or the woman's suffrage movement, or the struggles of the Irish, Italians, Jews and what have you. They know the techniques that are sometimes today so glibly discredited are the same techniques that others have used in other periods of history when they found themselves similarly situated.
The poor today are determined. We ignore that at our peril. It is not a passing phenomenon of the moment. It is not a transitory thing like panty-raid or the swallowing of gold fish or crowding in telephone booths. This is a growing trend in our country. Any institution or any individual who feels that they are immune to confrontation or that they somehow will avoid being affected by this, I am afraid are guilty of indulging in smoking opium.

Now, there is one other factor that tends to accelerate and, if anything, complicates. The poor and disinherited of our society today have found strong allies. The allies are the young people of this country and of the world.

Young people whom I’ve had an opportunity to talk with in some 100 universities, colleges and high schools this year, and many in these last few weeks, who themselves are experiencing a degree of cynicism at best and contempt at worst for adult values, who can document with unerring accuracy the inconsistency in our society, the pervasive gap between what we practice and what we preach, who point at the tragic paradox of a society with a gross national product approaching one trillion dollars and yet would permit 20 percent of its people to live in squalor and in poverty; a society that willingly taxes itself to rebuild Western Europe, to rebuild West Germany, spending billions of dollars—there are no slums today in West Germany; the slums are in the Harlems of our community where black people live who have been in this country four hundred years, whose blood, sweat and tears have gone to build this country, who gave it 250 years of free labor and another 100 years of cheap labor. They are the ones who live in the slums and who are unemployed.

These students point out how a budget of approximately $40 million was spent last year; less than 20 percent for things that are esthetic, cultural and educational, for health, education and welfare, and almost 70 percent was spent for weapons of destruction or defense against destruction.

No other country has quite this record of disproportionate expenditures. No other country ever dreamed of this great wealth. We are not at a loss in our society for the know-how. We have the resources. We are at a loss for the will.

The crisis is not in our cities, ladies and gentlemen. The crisis is in our hearts, the kind of human beings we are. And I submit to you that if you are a mother or a father you are today being challenged either silently by young people or you will be challenged even more violently by them, but you are risking the respect of generations not yet adults and generations yet unborn.

Now, in this situation there are two or three, I think, positive aspects and possibilities that are present today that were not present in the past. One is that we are all today aware of the problem. The black person—and I make no apology for singling out the Negro, although I am fully aware that there are poor white people in Appalachia, poor Mexican Americans, poor Puerto-Ricans and Indians. The Negro is a sort of symbol, the only involuntary immigrant in large numbers, sort of a symbol of it. I make really no apologies, but the Negro today is at least on the conscience of America. This is not to say that he loves it. Probably it is irritating to most people, a source of great unhappiness, but it is better to be hated than ignored.
The Negro has been largely the victim, not of active hate or active concern, but active indifference and callousness. Less than 10 percent of white Americans wanted to lynch Negroes, or 10 percent wanted to free them.

Our problem has been the big 80 percent, that big blob of Americans who have been so busy “making it,” getting ahead in their companies, getting a little house in the suburbs, lowering their golf scores, vying for admittance to the country club, lying about their kids’ I.Q. that they really haven’t had time to be concerned.

Our sin, then, is the sin of omission and not of commission, and into that vacuum have rushed the prophets of doom, the violent people, the vicious people who hate, and they have come all too often around the world to be the voice of America. But at least we recognize the existence of a problem. The communication is probably more candid, though more painful than ever before, and this is progress.

And today, for the first time, we have the full attention and concern of the establishment in America, the decision makers, the top people—I’m talking about the Henry Fords, the Tom Watkins the George Romneys, the truly big people in your field and in the field of business and in government, the most enlightened governors, the most enlightened mayors, the most enlightened college presidents. Even the religious leaders are now beginning to decide that race relations are no longer a spectator sport and in their own enlightened self-interest they have to get involved.

This is important. Nothing in this country [is achieved] really until the so-called decision-makers and the power structure in the country decide that they had better get busy, and that’s a very powerful ally.

A final positive thing is, I think, that we today are no longer in a quandary as to the extent of the problem and the cause. We’ve been now the beneficiaries of a President’s Commission Report—the Kerner Commission—a group composed of predominantly white, respectable, conservative, responsible people who, when they started out, the first time they met as a group was to identify the conspirators who were causing the disorders and to suggest ways of suppression and control.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the final report. We invited these gentlemen to take a visit to the ghetto—more specifically, to a tenement house. They smilingly but naively agreed, and that was the beginning of a significant report.

We took these men into a typical tenement house, some 14 floors, and immediately they discovered that as sophisticated as our communications media happen to be, they still are not able to give all the dimensions of the situation—the dimension of smell, for example, feel or taste.

The minute these men walked into the building, they smelled the stench of urine. And why shouldn’t they. Little 2- and 3-year old boys out in my neighborhood, just when they have to go to the bathroom, they can’t make it into the house, go around to the bushes—sort of an accepted pattern. When you live in the 14-story tenement house with no elevator, little boys can’t quite make it and do what little 2- and 3-year old boys do normally.
These men went up the stairs. They made it as far as the seventh floor; they weren't in the best of physical shape. We took them into a typical apartment with six people (including four children) living in two rooms. They saw the little 1 1/2 year-old with a shrunken stomach. All they had to eat that day was a bowl of cornflakes, and it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

They talked to the mother whose eyes were bloodshot because she had stayed awake all night trying to keep the rats from biting the children. They saw the rat holes, saw the roaches. Then they talked to the father—alienated, bitter, because he suffered the daily humiliation of not being able to support his children, not playing the role of father, not being able even to buy the kid an ice cream cone.

Repeated experiences like that left no choice except to, as we say, tell it like it is. This upset many Americans, accused of being racists, to be told in no uncertain language that, in fact, there is this gap between how some Americans live.

We are a proud people. We like to kid ourselves into believing that we are good Christians, good human beings; but it isn't true. These men were not starry-eyed liberals, not sentimental do-gooders. These were white conservatives.

I've always been told that white people were always right. I assume they're right. Rap Brown didn't write the report. The report was written by these people that you know as well as I know, that when good people want a social audit, you take it just as seriously as a fiscal audit that says you're in arrears and bankrupt, or a health audit that says you have tuberculosis and you wouldn't go out to see a mechanic and try to get him to dispute the claim.

We are a racist nation, and no way in the world could it be otherwise given the history of our country. Being a racist doesn't mean one wants to go out and join a lynch mob or send somebody off to Africa or engage in crude, vulgar expressions of prejudice. Racism is a basic assumption of superiority on the part of one group over another, and in America it had to happen because as a society we enslaved people for 250 years, and up until 1964 it was written into our laws and enforced by social custom—discrimination against human beings [meant] that a man because of the color of his skin couldn't go into a restaurant or hotel or be served in public places.

Now, there's no way in the world, unless we are more a nation of schizophrenics than I think, that we could have this kind of law tolerated and this kind of social custom and still have gone to church on Sunday and mouthed all those platitudes if we didn't honestly believe that some were superior to others. Racism reflects itself in many little ways—little to you, but big to some people.

A few years ago my wife and I finally managed to reach the point where we could hire a maid for one day a week. When she came into the house she introduced herself as Lucille. My wife said, "What is your last name?" and she said, "Fisher." So my wife said, "Mrs. Fisher, let's talk." And they talked and they decided they could stand each other, and she would go to work immediately.
That afternoon my two youngsters came home and Mrs. Fisher met them at the door and said, "Hello, I'm Lucille." And my wife came in and said, "Marcia and Loren, this is Mrs. Fisher."

Mrs. Fisher followed her back into the kitchen and said, "You don't have to do that. I like to be called Lucille, it make me feel like a member of the family and I'm closer. I like that just fine."

And my wife said, "Mrs. Fisher, we are not doing this for you. Our youngsters do not call adult women of 45 or 50 years of age by their first name, and if they don't do it with anybody else, then we don't think they ought to do it with you unless they get the impression that you are different because of the kind of work you do. So we're trying to teach our youngsters to respect the dignity of human beings, regardless of what they do or the color of their skins."

About an hour later the phone rang. It was Mrs. Fisher's little five-year old son and he said, "Lucille there?" And my wife said, "There's no Lucille here."

And then she told Mrs. Fisher she thought it was her son and maybe she had better call him back, and she did, and the conference went like this: "Son, did you call?" "Yes, Mother, but they said there was no Lucille there." She said, "No, son, I'm not Lucille here, I'm Mrs. Fisher, I'm somebody."

Now, if you could have seen the expression on the face when she said this. This is just simple, elementary dignity.

Fifty percent of all the people in this country don't even pay their domestic's social security which they are required to do by law. Even though the people say they don't want it paid, don't want this kind of record, it is these people's only opportunity for insurance against old age, against illness in old age, and it is a moral thing to do. We pay both shares—ours and hers—because we are thinking about her and we are concerned about what will happen to her.

What I am really talking about here is your role and to realize it as a citizen, and it begins in the home. Dear Lord, let there be peace at home, and let it begin with me. A young man stood up in a meeting a couple of weeks ago and said—a white fellow, an SDS student, not like your young man, and he really blasted the white audience for their prejudice and bigotry and hypocrisy, and then ended up by saying, "So if it means we have to level down with them to achieve equality with all human beings, then white people must do this."

This is a racist statement. I pointed this out. The only reason he could think of leveling down, he was assuming that superiority relates to acquisition of material things, technology, money and clothes. It's conceivable that it might be a leveling upward, or it might be a bringing together on the one hand qualities of humaneness, compassion and style that this society needs a great deal of technology and money and material things. And so we are giving to each other.

If we are going to do anything about changing the individual, let us first admit that it is easier to have lived in a lepers colony and not acquired leprosy than to have lived in
America and not acquired prejudice. You don’t start changing until you first admit you have it.

Secondly, as a profession, you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights, and I am sure this has not come to you as any shock. You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance.

Now, you have a nice, normal escape hatch in your historical ethical code or something that says after all, you are the designers and not the builders; your role is to give people what they want.

Now, that’s a nice, easy way to cop out. But I have read about architects who had courage, who had a social sensitivity, and I can’t help but wonder about an architect that builds some of the public housing that I see in the cities of this country. How he could even compromise his own profession and his own sense of values to have built 35- or 40-story buildings, these vertical slums, and not even put a restroom in the basement and leave enough recreational space for about 10 kids when there must be 5,000 in the building. That architects as a profession wouldn’t as a group stand up and say something about this, is disturbing to me.

You are employers, you are key people in the planning of our cities today. You share the responsibility for the mess we are in terms of the white noose around the central city. It didn’t just happen. We didn’t just suddenly get this situation. It was carefully planned.

I went back recently and looked at ads when they first started building subdivisions in this country. The first new subdivision—easy access to town, good shopping centers, good schools, no Negroes, no Jews allowed—that was the first statement. Then they decided in New York that that was cutting the market too close, so they said the next day, “No Negroes allowed!” And then they got cute when they thought everybody had the message, and they said “restricted, exclusive neighborhood, homogenous neighborhood.”

Everybody knows what those words mean. Even the Federal Government participated. They said [there] must be compatible neighborhoods for FHA mortgages, homogenous neighborhoods. The Federal Government participated in building the nice middle-class housing in the suburbs, putting all the public housing in the central city. It took a great deal of skill and creativity and imagination to build the kind of situation we have, and it is going to take skill and imagination and creativity to change it.

We are going to have to have people as committed to doing the right thing, to inclusiveness, as we have in the past to exclusiveness.

You are also here as educators. Many of you are in educational institutions. I took the time to call up a young man who just finished at Yale and I said “What would you say if you were making the speech I’m supposed to make today?” Again, not quite as sedate and as direct as your young student here because he did have some strong observations to make. He did want you to become more relevant; he did want you to begin to speak out as a profession, he did want in his own classroom to see more Negroes, he wanted to see more Negro teachers. He wanted while his classwork was
going on for you somehow as educators to get involved in the community around you.

When you go to a city—Champaign-Urbana, the University of Illinois is about the only major institution and within two or three blocks are some of the worse slums I have seen in the country. It is amazing how within a stone’s throw of the School of Architecture you have absolutely complete indifference—unless you have a federal grant for research, and even then it’s to study the problem.

I hope you accept my recommendation for a moratorium on the study of the Negro in this country. He has been dissected and analyzed, horizontally and vertically and diagonally. Thank you, very much. And if there are any further studies—I’m not an intellectual—I hope we’ll make them on white people. And that instead of studying the souls of black people we’ll be studying the souls of white people; instead of the anatomy of Watts, we’ll do an anatomy of Cicero, an anatomy of Bronxville.

What’s wrong with the people in these neighborhoods? Why do they want—themselves just one generation removed from welfare or in many cases just one generation within the country, where they have come here sometimes escaping hate and have come here and acquired freedom—why do they want to turn their backs and say in Cicero, “Al Capone can move in, but Ralph Bunche can’t?” Why are they so insecure? Why do people want to live in these bland, sterile, antiseptic, gilded ghettos, giving sameness to each, compounding mediocrity in a world that is 75 percent nonwhite, in a world where in 15 minutes you can take a space ship and fly from Kennedy to South Africa? Why would anybody want to let their children grow up in this kind of situation?

I think this kind of affluent peasant ought to be studied. These are people that have acquired middle-class incomes because of strong labor unions and because they are living in an unprecedented affluent period. But in things esthetic and educational and cultural, they leave a lot to be desired. They wouldn’t know the difference between Karl Marx and Groucho Marx.

This is where our problem is. We can move next door to Rockefeller in Tarrytown, but I couldn’t move into Bronxville. Any white pimp or prostitute can move into Bronxville. A Jewish person could hardly move into Bronxville, incidentally.

As a profession, you ought to be taking stands on these kinds of things. If you don’t as architects stand up and endorse Model Cities and appropriations, if you don’t speak out for rent supplements or the housing bill calling for a million homes. If you don’t speak out for some kind of scholarship program that will enable you to consciously and deliberately seek to bring in minority people who have been discriminated against in many cases, either kept out because of your indifference or couldn’t make it—it takes seven to ten years to become an architect—then you will have done a disservice to the memory of John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Bob Kennedy and most of all, to yourselves. You are part of this society. It is not easy. I am not suggesting the easy road, but the time has come when no longer the lunatics and crackpots speak for America. The decent people have to learn to speak up, and you shouldn’t have to be the victim to feel for other people. I make no pretense that it is easy.
We do have today the best possibility of generalizing and rationalizing around the issue that you ever had. You have riots and shouts of black power and anybody looking for an excuse to cop out in this can use it, but I insist that if you believe in equality then we have as much right to have crackpots, no reason why white people should have a monopoly. If we have been able to put up all these years with the Ku Klux Klan, with burning and lynching, with the George Lincoln Rockwells, with the White Citizens Councils, with slaveowners, and still don't generalize about all white people. Why should white people generalize about all Negroes on the basis of a few? All Negroes didn't riot in Watts. All Negroes didn't riot in Newark. One out of three in Newark were whites, and one out of five in Watts, and that's why there was more violence in Newark. White people are more experienced.

We don't generalize. A man sat on the plane with me, and he and his wife had a couple of martinis. She fell asleep, and he leaned over and said: Mr. Young, my wife and I are great liberals, we love your people very much, but we have a problem. We would like to invite a colored couple into our home, and he took another sip of liquor and made it more magnanimous, two or three couples but my wife doesn't feel comfortable around colored people. I hope you won't be offended, he said, but what can we do about the problem?

I said I'm not offended. I know perfectly well what you mean. Most people feel odd and uncomfortable and inferior even around Ralph Bunche—Phi Beta Kappa, Nobel Prize Winner, cosmopolite, traveled all over the world. Most people would ask a stupid question and get an elementary response, and I said maybe the Urban League could help you recruit some of the below-average Negroes that your wife would feel more comfortable with.

It's the same business of generalizing—no such thing as a black is a black man, a white is a white man. We have our right to an Adam Clayton Powell if the Irish have the right to a Curley. He would make Adam Clayton Powell the epitome of political morality. Nobody generalizes about the Italians because of the appearance of a disproportionate number in the Mafia. Nobody condems all of them. Nobody indicts all white men because a white man killed President Kennedy, or Martin Luther King, or a white man stands in a tower in Texas and kills 14 people, or a white man assaults and kills eight nurses in Chicago. They didn't call him "white." We called him "sick." And that's what they were. With the Negroes, it's "the black man."

We fall victims to clichés like "law" and "order." The best example we've ever had of order in this world was created by Adolf Hitler with his Gestapo and his police. We got perfect order. There was no dissent—goose stepping all over the place—and he used that order to bring about the death of 14 million people, 6 million of them in ovens. There will never be order without justice. And the first prerequisite for order in this society is that there must be justice and the women would still be disorderly in this country if they hadn't gotten the right to vote, and the workers would have torn it apart if they didn't have the Wagner Act, and America would still be fighting England if we had not won the war.

We must have justice. Civil disobedience and lawlessness has been practiced not by black people in this society but by white people who denied the laws of God and the laws of the Constitution.
When a Wallace stands up and talks about law: Who was more lawless, engaged in more civil disobedience than that man? Who stands in the doorway of the courts and constantly berates the Supreme Court of the United States? Talk about respect for law and order! We who have been the victims of the most unscrupulous practices by merchants, by landlords, by employers, by public officials, we know something about lawlessness.

When you talk about crime, talk about the syndicate boss who lives downtown; and he’s white and responsible for the dope and the prostitution and the numbers racket that causes 60 percent of the crime in the ghetto. Talk about the guy who charges too much interest rates, or the guy who makes people pay $500 for a $175 television set. The people who talk about neighborhood schools—Mrs. Hicks—you know what they mean. They want little segregated neighborhoods. Now we make the big deal, neighborhood schools, and you can go to the same schools and you see these same people bussing their kids to private schools, or three hundred miles away to prep school if they’ve got the money. They don’t really like the neighborhood that well. But now it has become the new code word for racism in fact.

Finally, let me dwell on your role as men, because I think this probably more basic than anything. Sure, you’re architects. You’re a lot of things—you’re Republicans, Democrats and a few John Birchers. You’re a good many things but you’re a man and you’re a father. I would hope that somehow you would understand that this issue, more than any other of human rights, today separates the phony from the real, the man from the boy, more than anything else.

Baseball’s Rickey solved the problem of attitudes and how long it takes. I agree with you that it takes a long time to change attitudes. Doesn’t take any time to change them overnight. When he brought Jackie Robinson to the Dodgers, there was this ballplayer who said I’m not going to play with that “nigger.” He thought Rickey would flap like most employers. I imagine most architects thought he would say that he’d pull away. But he didn’t know Rickey very well. Rickey was kind. He said, “Give him three or four days.” Well, at the end of a few days, Robinson had five home runs, stolen many bases and this fellow was reassessing his options. He could go back to Alabama and maybe make $20 a week picking cotton, or stay there with the Dodgers and continue to work and, now it looked like Jackie would get him into the World Series and a bonus of $5,000, which he did. The only color he was concerned with was green.

We see it happening in Vietnam. White boys from Mississippi in Vietnam develop more respect and admiration for their black sergeant in one week because they too have made their own assessment and have decided to be liberal white boys from Mississippi instead of a dead white bigot. They’re interested in survival and the sergeant is skilled in the art of surviving, and they say “Mr. Sergeant”—changed overnight. Why is it that the best example of American democracy is found in the muck and mire of Vietnam? Why is it that the greatest freedom the black man has is the freedom to die in Vietnam; and as they die, why do his loved ones, their kids and their wives and their mothers have to fight for the right to buy a house where they want to? There is something wrong with that kind of society.
I do want to relate one last story. Mel Batton, who is the chairman of the board of J.C. Penney, about four months ago was having breakfast with his kids, one girl 21 and a boy 23, and they asked what he was going to do that week. He said, "I'm going out with Whitney Young and I have a series of luncheons in some three or four cities. I'm hosting these, and I'm going around talking about expanding employment opportunities for Negro citizens and giving money to the Urban League. Incidentally, I don't want to miss that plug: You also are distinguished by the fact that I bet we have fewer architects and fewer architectural firms contributing to the national Urban League than any group in the country. That is probably my fault and I apologize—you have not been solicited. Next time it will be your fault.

But when he told those kids what he was going to do, his boy said, "You're going to do what?" He repeated it to him. And the boy said, "You mean you're not going to maximize the profits of J.C. Penney today? You're not going out this week to undercut Woolworth's; you're not going out to see if you can get something a little cheaper and increase the margin of profits of some product?" And the father answered, "No." The 21-year-old daughter, without saying a word, ran over and hugged and kissed him with tears in her eyes. He said to me, "I never had as much respect and affection and admiration from my kids than I had in that one moment."

Here is a man who gives his children everything—sports cars, big allowances, clothes, big tuition. That isn't what counts. They take that for granted. Here is a man who suddenly became a man with guts concerned about other human beings. Here is a man who is willing to stand up and be counted. That's what these kids care about.

You talk about communication with these kids; they tell you why you don't communicate. They tell me you are inconsistent. You tell them they shouldn't smoke, drink and pet because everybody else does, that you have your own value systems, stand up for what you believe in, do what you know is right. Then, they say "My mother and my dad never do. They never lift their finger to let a black man in business at the top level, never try to get a Negro into the neighborhood, into the club or church. They just go along."

I submit to you that this is a mistake in your role as a parent and as a human being. If you cannot identify with the kind of thing I described, that the Kerner Commission saw—it happens even today in this country—if you can't as a mother and as a father, you are in worse shape than the victims.

So, what's at stake then is your country, your profession, and you as a decent civilized human being. Anatole France once said, "I prefer the error and enthusiasm to the indifference of wisdom." For a society that has permitted itself the luxury of an excess of callousness and indifference, we can now afford to permit ourselves the luxury of an excess of caring and of concern. It is easier to cool a zealot than it is to warm a corporation.

An ancient Greek scholar was once asked to predict when the Greeks would achieve victory in Athens. He replied, "We shall achieve victory in Athens and justice in Athens when those who are not injured are as indignant as those who are."

And so shall it be with this problem of human rights in this country.
APPENDIX B

NOMA Newsletter Outlining 2001 MOU
APPENDIX B

NOMA Newsletter Outlining 2001 MOU

13 Percent By Year 2030

Paul Taylor, NOMA, AIA

This past spring, I met with John Anderson, president of AIA. My agenda for the meeting covered three areas: the past, the present, and the future of African Americans in the profession of architecture.

The Past

Approximately thirty years ago, Whitney Young lambasted the AIA for not being more supportive of a number of issues relevant to the African American community. The AIA decided to take action. There was also concern for the lack of representation of African Americans in the profession of architecture. At that time, African Americans represented about 1% of the licensed architects in the U.S.

The Present

Today, at the turn of the century, African Americans represent about 13% of the general population, and there are approximately 120,000 licensed architects in the U.S.; therefore, there should be about 15,000 African American architects. However, there are only about 1,300 African American architects at present—about 1%. Thirty years have passed, with no progress.

The Future

I do not want the next thirty years to look like the last thirty. This is a problem for the entire profession to address, not just NOMA. Because the AIA is the most representative body of architects in the country and the most influential, they should work with NOMA to resolve this issue. The goal is to have 15,000 licensed African American architects by the year 2010.

I do not believe that the low number of African American architects is a function of African Americans in general not being capable of becoming architects. Do you? Therefore, the problem must be with the “environment”

Continued on page 2
13 Percent By Year 2030

Continued from page 1

that surrounds African Americans who might otherwise be architects.
I submit that the most relevant environmental factor is the
"pipeline"—the formal and informal path that individuals take on
their way to becoming a licensed architect. I submit that it is this
pipeline that warrants critical study and analysis, modification and
management. I further submit that if intelligent, well-meaning, hard-
working, dedicated professionals tried to solve this problem over the
past thirty years but couldn't, then we need strategies that are dra-
matically different from what has already been tried. Are you familiar
with this phrase: . . . the definition of stupidity is doing the same
thing over and over and expecting different results . . . ? Let's be
smart.

The thirty-year time frame for accomplishing the goal of 15,000 African American architects
may seem long at first, but if you think
carefully it may actually be ambitious.

The thirty-year time frame for accomplishing the goal of 15,000
African American architects may seem long at first, but if you think
carefully it may actually be ambitious. To convince people to enter
this field, we must start when they are young, perhaps at birth. A
person born today who takes the exam three years after graduating
with an architectural degree will most likely be in her late twenties.
So, it will take thirty years or so to realize the full effect of our
strategies.

The next step for NOMA and the AIA is to make sure that we
have all of the facts before embarking on any specific actions.
Remember, we must be careful not to simply do what others have
tried before. A meeting will take place at AIA headquarters on
August 1. Invitees will be people who have conducted research on
the status of African Americans in the profession. Also in attendance
will be representatives from NCARB, NAAB, and ACSA, all key
components of the pipeline. Researchers will share their findings
with the group and determine what other information must be gath-
ered. This fact-finding effort will ensure that any solutions proposed
are based on facts, not anecdotes, assumptions, or individual beliefs
and experiences.

One of the key challenges of this initiative is to maintain momen-
tum over the years. Future leaders of the organizations constituting
the pipeline must continue their efforts. On this point, let me state
that I plan to fully commit myself after my NOMA presidency to
ensuring their continued involvement. I have decided that working
to increase the number of African American architects in the United
States will be my lifetime contribution to the profession and to my
people. I hope you will join me. ●
APPENDIX C

2009 AIA & NOMA MOU
APPENDIX D

2013 AIA & NOMA MOU
APPENDIX E

2014 NOMA & AIA MOU
APPENDIX F

2018 AIA & NOMA MOU
APPENDIX G

NOMA Database Access Request
APPENDIX G

NOMA Database Access Request

Dear Madame President,

My name is Leroy David Stewart, and I am a doctoral student in the Doctor of Business Administration Program at National Louis University. I am conducting a study on African American architects and how design thinking can be a tool for diversifying architectural trade organizations.

The purpose of the study is to examine the factors that impact the low numbers of African Americans in architecture and to demonstrate how design thinking could be a tool in increasing the number of licensed African American architects in the United States, as prioritized in 2001, per the first MOU agreed upon between the AIA and NOMA, in which the two Associations committed to the goal of having 15,000 African American architects by the year 2030.

As a researcher, I seek access to your membership database for usage in my study. The purpose of the access is to compile a group of twelve (12) licensed architects to interview in relation to this study. To initiate this process, if granted access to the database, I would send an introductory email to some of the licensed members of NOMA, stating who I am, and what I am seeking, and with regards to design thinking and diversifying architectural trade organizations.

The initial group that qualifies will then receive an email, addressing issues of consent to participate and the process for setting a time and date for the interview. All participants will also be invited to interact in a follow up focus group session with others who were interviewed to address any additional comments, concerns, or questions, regarding their initial input. Finally, after each of the interviews is completed, a thank you email will be sent. The Letter of Consent is attached to this message for your viewing. After the interviews are conducted a follow-up email will be sent thanking them for their participation and offering them an opportunity to join a focus group involving only those who were interviewed to further discuss design thinking and how it can impact architectural trade organizations such as NOMA and AIA with regards to increasing diversity within the profession.

Following strict research protocols, confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the entire process. The list of NOMA members will be kept confidential; I will be the only person with access to it. That electronic file will be kept on a password protected laptop with a backup of the file in a cloud-based security system with a...
different password. Additionally, I will be the only person with access to the list of the individuals who are contacted and those who participate in the interviews and focus group. All their personal information will be kept in the same manner as the NOMA membership list and accessible only to me. Additionally, the participants will only be referred to, in the reported findings, using numbers, such as P1, P2, etc.

If the NOMA Administration has any questions, please respond to this email [removed] (or call me at [removed]). You may also reach out to the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Marguerite Chabau at [removed] with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

L. David Stewart
APPENDIX H

NOMA Database Access Signed
APPENDIX H

NOMA Database Access Signed

L (Leroy) David Stewart.
National Louis University Student.
Doctor of Business Administration Program

Attn: Madame President Dowdell.

Greetings, my name is L. David Stewart, a doctoral student at National Louis University, currently working towards completing my dissertation. The title of my dissertation is “HOW CAN DESIGN THINKING TRANSFORM DIVERSITY INITIATIVES FOR ARCHITECTURAL TRADE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES?” In this study, the research will demonstrate whether design thinking can be a tool for increasing the number of African Americans in the profession of architecture.

My population of focus is African-American licensed architects who are active members of NOMA. What I am seeking to execute my research is access to the NOMA database for access to the population of focus. Per IRB (Institutional Research Board) I must provide protocols to cover a) privacy b) anonymity and c) confidentiality.

If granted access to the database, I will utilize snowball sampling going through each state to identify participants to contact for interviewing. Upon contact, via email, I will dispatch a letter that outlines how privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be achieved. The participant can withdraw at any time for any reason if they desire. Upon signing the consent form which will be sent digitally and signed via Zoho Signature, a date will be set up via Zoom for the interview. The allotted time for each interview is between 1 hr. to 2 hrs. The goal is for the collection of 12-15 interviews for analysis. After completion of the interviews the participants have the option of participating in a focus group session via Zoom. The focus group session will be between 1 hr. to 1.5 hrs. with a minimum of (4) participants.

The information of the database will be a password encrypted file secured with myself only having access. The interviews and focus group session will be encrypted and only accessible to myself for the research for analysis.

Upon completion of the research, which is and will only utilized for completion of my dissertation study, the information will remain encrypted and not sold or accessible to any individual, organization or entity and will be accessible to only myself as I release the aforementioned information I violate IRB rules and the research and study would be rendered nullified.

I am asking, you Madame President (Kimberly Dowdell), for your permission to access to the NOMA Database for access to the following: Licensed architects who are members of the NOMA Database. My research is only on this population. If agreed to, please sign below and electronically transmit via email (password encrypted) a PDF or Excel file to be sent to

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at [email protected] or call me at [phone number]
Sincerely

\[\text{\textbf{\textcolor{#000000}{\textbf{\textit{}}}L\,(\text{Leroy})\,David\,Stewart}}\]

National Louis University Doctoral Student.

Madame President, Kimberly Dowdell

\[\text{\textbf{\textcolor{#000000}{\textbf{\textit{}}}Madame\,President,\,Kimberly\,Dowdell}}\]

\[\text{\textbf{\textcolor{#000000}{\textbf{\textit{}}}Kimberly\,Dowdell}}\]

\[\text{\textbf{\textcolor{#000000}{\textbf{\textit{}}}\textbf{Important\,Note\,of\,Revision:}\,Per\,the\,legal\,counsel\,received\,by\,NOMA's\,attorney,\,NOMA\,will\,email\,message\,our\,licensed\,members\,and\,request\,that\,they\,opt\,into\,the\,research\,project\,described\,herein.\,Upon\,receipt\,of\,the\,approval\,of\,our\,opt-in\,members,\,NOMA\,would\,be\,delighted\,to\,share\,the\,names\,and\,contact\,information\,for\,the\,members\,who\,have\,volunteered\,to\,be\,contacted\,in\,support\,of\,your\,important\,and\,much\,needed\,research.}}\]
APPENDIX I

Recruitment Email
APPENDIX I

Recruitment Email

Subject: L. David Stewart is seeking participants for a research study

Hi:
You are receiving this email because you are an African American licensed architect within the United States who is a member of NOMA. I am reaching out to you to request your participation in a research study I am conducting on the topic of exploring ways to increase diversity in architectural trade organizations through increasing the numbers of African American members and whether or not design thinking can be utilized as a tool to achieve that long sought-after goal.

If you take part in this study, you will participate in interviews and an optional focus group to relay your experiences in the profession of architecture, from your initial interest through your current position as a licensed architect. The interviews will take up to 120 minutes and the focus group up to 120 minutes amount of time. That investment of your time is intended to benefit all current and future AIA and NOMA members and fulfill the call to action made by Whitney Young many, many years ago for the AIA to diversify its membership.

To be able to take part in this study, participants must be African American licensed architects and current members of NOMA. If you are interested in participating and/or have any questions about the study, please email [email protected] or call [phone number].

Communicating to me about participation requires absolutely no disclosure of any sensitive or health related information. Please avoid sending any sensitive, detailed personal information by email. All personal information will be shared only during the Zoom interviews.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained with password protected files and the use of numbers, rather than names to represent participants and their responses. While NOMA will provide the membership list, no one in the organization, including administration will know who chooses to participate in the study. Only the researcher will have knowledge of who the participants were. Participation in the focus group entails a slight risk of loss of confidentiality and anonymity. If you need to talk to me immediately about this participation request or would prefer not to receive any study communication by email, please contact me at [email protected]. If you elect to participate you will be provided a consent form to confirm your willingness; receipt of that consent will trigger setting up a Zoom session date and time convenient for you.

All participants have the option to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice. If you know of others who would like to participate in the study, please
provide their contact information or have the individual contact me at [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]. However, whether you agree to participate or not, you have the right to decline the opportunity to recruit others.

I look forward to the opportunity to conduct this study with your valuable input. Cordial Regards,

L. David Stewart
APPENDIX J

NOMA Participant Consent Form
Dear Participant,

My name is Leroy David Stewart, and I am a doctoral student in the Doctor of Business Administration Program at National Louis University. I am conducting a study on African American architects and how design thinking can be a tool for increasing the numbers of African American in the profession of architecture within the United States.

I seek participation of licensed architects who are African American members of NOMA. If you decide to participate, your input will allow for an in-depth analysis of how perceptions of architecture, the education of architects, the licensure process and if applicable, the process for becoming an entrepreneur, can be impacted by design thinking. Your perspective and experience will add value to the analysis and subsequent research in the development of the profession of architecture and in the application of design thinking, for African Americans specifically, and architecture en masse. It is recommended that the setting for the interview be in a quiet place with a solid internet connection for the Zoom interview with minimal distractions.

Your participation is voluntary, the interview will be recorded, and strict anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. To maintain confidentiality, the recordings and transcripts will be kept securely for three years using a password protected laptop, a password protected cloud file and a locked cabinet for any hard copies of any documents. Subject identities will be kept anonymous by using pseudonyms throughout the research findings reporting process. Only the researcher will have knowledge of who the participants were. Participation in the focus group entails a slight risk of loss of confidentiality and anonymity. If you desire, you will be able to request, review and make minor revisions to the transcripts of your interview. You will receive no payment of any kind for taking part in this study. You can end your participation at any time for any reason, without ramifications.

You also have the right to review the results of the completed research. If you decide to do so, you can contact me at [email address], or phone at [phone number]. I will email you a copy of the completed study.

Additionally, should you have specific concerns or questions, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Marguerite Chabau at National Louis University - Tampa, by phone at 1-800-366-6581, or by email at [email address]. Other contacts are the Co-Chairs of the University’s IRB committee: Dr. Kathleen Cornett, Associate Professor College of Professional Studies and Advancement IRB Co-Chair by phone at 1-844-380-5001, or email at [email address] and Dr. Shaunti Knauth, Director of Engaged
Research, IRB Chair by phone at [redacted], or email at [redacted].

Your decision to participate will have no effect on your relationship with The National Organization of Minority Architects. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, NOMA will not be provided with the names of any individual members who agree to support this study through their participation. If you decide to participate, please respond to this email [redacted] or call me at [redacted]. Once I receive your signed Letter of Consent form, I will contact you to schedule the interview within three (3) days via Zoom.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims.

Signature: _____________________________________

Print Name: ____________________________________  Date: _____________
APPENDIX K

Follow-up Email
Dear Participant,

I hope you find yourself doing as well as can be expected given the current circumstances. Per our last communication, I sent the Participant Consent Letter to you for your digital signature. Given that many of us are working from home on our digital devices, I am using a signature service, Zoho Sign, which allows you to sign the Consent Letter digitally from any device.

Thus far I have confirmed on my end the form for your signature has been sent, so there is a possibility that the email from Zoho Sign may have been captured or placed into your spam folder; you may want to check there if you are unable to find the message.

I know that everyone is busy and most of us are just a little overwhelmed right now, so I really appreciate the time you have offered to complete the form and participate in the study. I value your insight in this momentous study to impact the profession of architecture!

For your convenience I have included a link to a YouTube video that walks through the process of digitally signing with Zoho Sign: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-LkvkT_Tog

Thank you in advance for your valuable help with this important research topic.

Respectfully,

Leroy David Stewart
APPENDIX L

Individual Interview Questions
(Reminder: At any point, a participant can stop for any reason without penalty.)

All information provided in interviews will be confidential and anonymity will be protected. All data (interviews, recordings, etc.) will be kept for 3 years in a password protected cloud and deleted after 3 years from the date of their creation. Participants will be listed as Participant A, Participant B, etc. Although NOMA provided access to their membership list to access participants for this study, the organization will not be notified of the identity of the members who chose to participate. Only the researcher has knowledge of who the participants were.

1. Where did you attend college to earn your degree in architecture? EDUCATION

2. How do you define architecture? DEFINE

3. When did you become interested in architecture? OUTREACH

4. How long have you practiced architecture? LICENSURE

5. When did you decide to become a licensed architect? OUTREACH

6. Why did you become a licensed architect? OUTREACH

7. Was the process of becoming a licensed architect responsive to your cultural background? If so, or if not, how, and why? EDUCATION /EMPATHY

8. When did you first become aware of an African American architect? OUTREACH

9. Did you learn of any African American architects in your years of college? If so when and what were their accomplishments? EDUCATION

10. Were there African American professors in your undergraduate/graduate studies? EDUCATION
11. What was the most difficult aspect of being an architecture student for you?

EDUCATION

12. Have you ever envisioned yourself as a firm owner?

ENTREPRENEURSHIP/IDEATE

13. If you are a firm owner, what are your biggest struggles? ENTREPRENEURSHIP

14. What was your expectation of impact on the profession as an African American architect? IDEATE

15. Does empathy play a pivotal role in the architectural education of African American architects? EMPATHY

16. Does empathy play a pivotal role in the development of African American architects? If so, how, and where? LICENSURE/EMPATHY

17. Has empathy played a role in others assisting you in becoming a licensed architect? If so, how? EMPATHY

18. How do you define design? DEFINE

19. What comes to mind when you hear the term design thinking? DEFINE

20. What phase (outreach, education, licensure, entrepreneurship) do you believe might yield the most results for generating ideas (ideation) for improving the number of African American architects? IDEATE

21. Where might a prototype be implemented for design thinking between outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship? PROTOTYPE
22. After developing an effective prototype from the previous question, where can design thinking best be applied to see its impact on increasing African American architects between outreach, education, licensure, and entrepreneurship? OUTREACH, EDUCATION, LICENSURE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

23. Are you willing and able to participate in a focus group session, with other participants, to discuss design thinking and diversification of the profession of architecture later?

Debrief Statement

Thank you for participation in this study. I am again reassuring you that this study is treated as both confidential and anonymous. No one, other than this researcher, including any staff from NOMA will have access to this information in this interview, in order to maintain your confidentiality and your identity will remain anonymous. What questions or concerns might you have at this time which I can address before we bring the interview session to a close?
APPENDIX M

Focus Group Questions
APPENDIX M

Focus Group Questions

(Reminder: At any point, a participant can stop for any reason without penalty. As some participants may know each other, I ask that if you do know another participant in the focus group, please maintain confidentiality and honor each participant’s anonymity and do not discuss your responses with each other).

All information provided in the focus group discussion will be confidential and participant anonymity will be protected. All data (interviews, recordings, etc.) will be kept for 3 years in a password protected cloud and deleted after 3 years from the date of their creation. Participants will be listed as Participant A, Participant B, etc. Although NOMA provided access to their membership list to access participants for this study, the organization will not be notified of the identity of the members who chose to participate. Only the researcher has knowledge of who the participants were.

1. What made you interested in participating in this study? ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2. After the interview, did you reflect on your journey to become a licensed architect in a different way? If so, how? ENTREPRENEURSHIP

3. What is the most memorable part of your journey of becoming a licensed architect? ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4. Do you believe that your profession is truly vested in diversifying by increasing the African Americans in it? Please provide a basis for your answer. LICENSURE

5. What do you want to see done differently, on the part of the AIA, with regards to increasing diversification within the profession? LICENSURE

6. What role do you envision NOMA can play in the future diversification of the profession? LICENSURE

7. From your perspective, which organization has to engage in more empathetic behavior to affect positive change in the profession, the: ACSA, AIA, AIAS, NAAB, NCARB, and/or NOMA? LICENSURE

8. What role do you see yourself participating in to engender the diversification of the profession? LICENSURE, EDUCATION, OUTREACH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

9. Do you believe a culture specific version of design thinking will evolve from diversification in the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer. IDEATE
10. Who benefits the most from diversification of the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer. LICENSURE

11. Who benefits the from lack of diversification of the profession? Please provide a basis for your answer. LICENSURE

12. If you could speak to your younger self about the profession, what would you tell and ask yourself? EDUCATION, OUTREACH

Debrief Statement

Thank you for participation in this study. I am reassuring you that this study is confidential and anonymous. To maintain your confidentiality, no one other than the researcher, including staff from NOMA, will have access to this information from this focus group session and your identity will remain anonymous. I am requesting your cooperation and consideration in maintaining both. What questions or concerns might you have at this time, which I can address, before we bring the focus group session to a close?
APPENDIX N

Reflexive Journal
APPENDIX N

Reflexive Journal

PA

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
What happened? First interview for Research
Who was involved? Participant A
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? The first interview of the research. PA also is working on his PhD and understand this process and the relevance of the research
How can it be explained? PA knows the process of research and relates very well
How is it similar to/different from others?
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? The value of difference of opinion with African American architects
How can it be applied in the future? not assuming the ideas of all African American architects are the same

PB

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
What happened? Second interview of research
Who was involved? Participant B
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Participant A was the 1st Female Black architecture interviewed for my research. Currently not working as an architect but as a set designer for a famous tv show.
How can it be explained?
How is it similar to/different from others? Very Unique
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? That architecture is difficult for women and that requires different tactics between male and women
How can it be applied in the future? An area for future research
PC
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
What happened? Third interview on Zoom for dissertation
Who was involved? Participant C
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Participant C is a former National President of NOMA from Cincinnati provided context on his tenure as president and perspective of the profession.
How can it be explained? Through the questions.
How is it similar to/different from others? Participant C was the first NATIONAL NOMA president interviewed.
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? The behind-the-scenes elements that impacted the 2014-2016 years of NOMA as well as what formed his views
How can it be applied in the future? Understanding impact of NOMA in the profession
PD
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively. Fourth interview for dissertation, second woman architect, youngest architect.
What happened? Interviewed for dissertation
Who was involved? Participant D
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Learning Participant D story of what led her to architecture and why she became licensed and struggle for developing her design practice

How can it be explained? A unique struggle that is different from male counterparts.

How is it like/different from others? This would be a unique theme for the female participants

What is next? (Outcome)

Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? There are surmountable differences of what Black women deal with versus Black men in architecture.

How can it be applied in the future? Future research may be required to focus on this further marginalized population

PE

What (Description)

Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? Interviewed fifth architect for dissertation

Who was involved? Participant E

So what? (Interpretation)

Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

A detailed interview of inspiration and pushing from his father who is a licensed architect

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Being a public architect as well as Participant E’s father being a known licensed architect

How can it be explained? In Participant E’s decision making to find his own

How is it similar to/different from others? First subject to have a father as an architect,

What is next? (Outcome)

Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

The importance of family in the influence of one becoming an architect. Understanding how outreach can be important

What have I learned?

How can it be applied in the future?

PF
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
Sixth interview for research dissertation.
What happened?
Who was involved? Participant F
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? This interview revealed an architect that is as wrapped in activism as architecture
How can it be explained? Involvement in multiple civic organizations
How is it similar to/different from others? Importance of mentoring
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? Service and outreach
How can it be applied in the future? Outreach can be a critical point for focus in increasing Black architects

PG
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
What happened? Seventh interview for dissertation
Who was involved? Participant G
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? The importance of service and value of Black architects in public service.
How can it be explained? Through the opportunities leveraged in the career
How is it similar to/different from others? Bigger influence with service for Black architects
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? Public works has an avenue for future Black architects

How can it be applied in the future? A possible area for entrepreneurship for future Black architects

PH

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? Eighth interview for dissertation

Who was involved? Participant H

So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Second professional focused architect career and first who has been an AIA chapter president

How can it be explained? Showed insight to his service and outreach

How is it similar to/different from others? importance of service and outreach in increasing Black architects

What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? That mentorship can be an especially useful tool for increasing Black architects

How can it be applied in the future? Developing a specialized mentorship system for Black architects

PI

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? Ninth interview for the dissertation

Who was involved? Participant I

So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? PI also had a father who was connected to architecture and worked on both costs as well as Federal work in architecture. Also connected to a former Secretary of Defense.

How can it be explained? Through PI’s diverse experiences as architect.

How is it similar to/different from others? Different.

What is next? (Outcome)

Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? The importance of family connecting their children to architecture.

How can it be applied in the future? Seeing the importance of outreach.

PJ

What (Description)

Recall an event and write it down descriptively.


Who was involved? Participant J.

So what? (Interpretation)

Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? First architect who overtly admitted had no interest in being a firm owner. Was focused on security and stability from day one.

How can it be explained? PJ’s positions with universities for consistent work.

How is it similar to/different from others? Vastly different focus on from work.

What is next? (Outcome)

Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? That for some architects, entrepreneurship is not the focus.

How can it be applied in the future? Understanding a licensed architects different focus.

PK

What (Description)

Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? 11th interview.

Who was involved? Participant K.
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? The most disparate interviewer
How can it be explained? PK did not believe in design thinking, or any theme identified and the view of the profession
How is it similar to/different from others? Vastly different
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? That a unique perspective is valued for growth and future development

PL
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.
What happened? 12th interview for dissertation
Who was involved? Participant L
So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.
What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Participant L who was in the air force and whose career was driven into architecture by the military
How can it be explained? Organization and focus and influence
How is it similar to/different from others? Business minded more than most
What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.
What have I learned? the importance of business acumen for architects
How can it be applied in the future? integration of business in architecture education

PM
What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? Interviewed 13th person for dissertation
Who was involved? Participant M

So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Participant M one licensed architect who is also a historian
How can it be explained? historic perspective of understanding how and why Black architects have had issues
How is it similar to/different from others? Historical concepts give different insight

What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? Importance of teaching history in architectural education
How can it be applied in the future? implementation of history for architecture

PN

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? 14th interview of dissertation
Who was involved? Participant N

So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Participant N was the most familiar with design thinking in a general sense and in relation to business
How can it be explained? Participant N has taught design thinking in their courses
How is it similar to/different from others? Different in that they grasped the connection to design thinking and architecture

What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? importance of education and research to architectural education
How can it be applied in the future? Added to architectural education
FOCUS GROUP

What (Description)
Recall an event and write it down descriptively.

What happened? Focus Group for dissertation

Who was involved? Participant N, Participant G, Participant F

So what? (Interpretation)
Take a few minutes to reflect and interpret the event.

What is most important / interesting / relevant / useful aspect of the event, idea, or situation? Focus group for getting various perspectives amongst perspectives and gathering insights for triangulation and validation of research

How can it be explained? Varying perspectives that also show the importance of licensure and entrepreneurship

How is it similar to/different from others? These participants solidified the research

What is next? (Outcome)
Conclude what you can learn from the event and how you can apply it next time.

What have I learned? Value of mentorship, outreach, education, and licensure

How can it be applied in the future? To be implemented for Chapter Five recommendations
APPENDIX O

Participant Suggested Revision Request
Dear Participant:

Thank you for participating in this study concerning design thinking and diversifying architectural trade organizations. Please find attached a transcription of your interview held on xxx date, via Zoom. Please review and advise me if there are any minor changes you suggest be made to your comments. You will have seven (7) days from receipt of this email to provide me with those revision. If you have no requested revisions, please respond back to this email with “I (insert name) confirm this recording transcript to be satisfactory for submission.” A non-response within seven (7) days will be taken as a confirmation of satisfaction with the original transcript. If you have any questions, please contact me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

L. David Stewart
APPENDIX P

CITI Completion Report
APPENDIX P

CITI Completion Report

This is to certify that:

Leroy Stewart

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

AU Students (Curriculum Group)
AU Students (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Siaa)

Under requirements set by:

Argosy University

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify?wb49a3e76-3db3-4618-8e80-bcc146b5a667-28029291
APPENDIX Q

IRB Approval
December 2, 2020

Dear Leroy David Stewart:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has received your application for your research study “HOW CAN DESIGN THINKING TRANSFORM DIVERSITY INITIATIVES FOR ARCHITECTURAL TRADE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES?” IRB has noted that your application is complete and that your study has been approved by your primary advisor and an IRB representative. Your application has been filed as Expedited in the Office of the Provost.

IRB: ER00873

Please note that the approval for your study is for one year, from December 2, 2020 to December 2, 2021. As you carry out your research, you must report any adverse events or reactions to the IRB.

At the end of your approved year, please inform the IRB in writing of the status of the study (i.e. complete, continuing). During this time, if your study changes in ways that impact human participants differently or more significantly than indicated in the current application, please submit a Change of Research Study form to the IRB, which may be found on NLU’s IRB website.

All good wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Sincerely,

Shaunti Kaurath, Ph.D.
Chair, IRB