

Born Under Punches: Conflict, crisis and the transformation of American architectural practice

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In this paper I examine the profound and lasting transformation of American architectural practice that began during the Great Depression and the Second World War (1929-1945). I argue that team-based, flexible models of organisation would appear during and immediately after this period of crisis, and that this mode of organisation emerged not necessarily as a logical, strategic response to challenges in the environment, but rather as an apparently unintended result of a dialectic of crisis/response. I find that many firms founded in this period tended to develop isomorphic similarities with their clients, namely, with public agencies and the United States military. These firms gradually came to work *like* those they worked *for*, a trait that would originate with firms born into crisis, and would later spread to others in the profession.

Biography:

David Goodman is Director of Undergraduate Studies in Architecture at IE University in Segovia, Spain, and is co-founder of the design firm Roadwork Studio. A graduate of Cornell University and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, David is currently a Doctoral Candidate in Business Administration at IE Business School in Madrid.