Going beyond Agile, toward antifragile projects

How to live (and thrive) in a world we don’t understand

Angelo Caruso, 2014
Wind is blowing stronger and stronger...
Actions…

- *Wait and hope*  ->  *Fragility*;
Actions…

- Wait and hope -> Fragility;
- Build strong walls -> Robustness;
Actions…

- **Wait and hope** -> Fragility;
- **Build strong walls** -> Robustness;
- **Build Windmills** -> Antifragility!
Fragile all in all means

- *Something, let’s say a glass, is subject to stressful events;*
- *Its robustness diminishes over time through wear;*
- *Sooner or later it will be broken!*

A normal glass subjected to forces in daily use

[Diagram showing force over time with a breaking threshold]
A practical meaning of Antifragility

- Our (fictitious) glass improve its robustness through time and stresses;
- It can be broken, more force is needed;
- It’s a dynamic process, typical of organic materials
It’s now on us…

- Mr. Taleb has been so kind to suggest us we live in a world we don’t understand, so planning is futile and we have to pursue antifragility in us and in our organizations in order to survive future black swans;
- He also reiterated how this is crucial and urgent…
- Unfortunately he didn’t give us clear directions on how to concretely do this!
- Let’s work together, being creative, to transform concepts in actions and risks in opportunities
What is an organization?

- An organization is a complex entity (cognitive artifact) that has a collective goal and is linked to an external environment;

- Its basic, universal, goals are:
  - to survive;
  - to produce value;

- Each organization structure conducts activities oriented toward its general and specific goals;

- These activities are usually structured in “processes” and “projects”, possibly crossing the organization’s boundaries.
Processes and Projects?

Why two different concepts and specific methods and tools?
- Organizational structure antifragility;
- Processes antifragility;
- Projects antifragility;
- Relational antifragility

From Agility to Antifragility - The Agile Manifesto

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools;
- Working software over comprehensive documentation;
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation;
- Responding to change over following a plan.
From Agility to Antifragility - The twelve principles

- Our highest priority is to **satisfy the customer** through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.
- Welcome **changing requirements**, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the **customer's competitive advantage**.
- Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
- Business people and developers **must work together** daily throughout the project.
- Build projects around **motivated individuals**. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
- The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is **face-to-face conversation**.
- **Working software** is the primary measure of progress.
- Agile processes promote **sustainable development**. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a **constant pace indefinitely**.
- Continuous attention to **technical excellence and good design** enhances agility.
- Simplicity—the art of **maximizing the amount of work not done**—is essential.
- The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from **self-organizing teams**.
- At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become **more effective**, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.
From Agility to Antifragility - Agile Main Practices

- Backlog Grooming
- Continuous deployment
- Heartbeat Retrospective
- Iteration
Let's play games - Mapping in the Triad

- Fragile
- Robust
- Antifragile
Let’s play games - Sources of projects (anti)fragility

Source: Crawford-Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles
Let’s play games - Sources of projects (anti)fragility (2)

- Integration Management
- Scope Management
- Time Management
- Cost Management
- Quality Management
- Human Resource Management
- Communications Management
- Risk Management
- Procurement Management
- Stakeholder Management
Now, to recap:
let’s propose five key questions to assess projects (anti)fragility!
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Thank You!