Agile Government and Trust in Democracy
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WG3: Public Administration Reform in CEE and CA

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Abstract:

This paper explores the potential for the model of Agile Government (DeSeve, 2021) to provide a practical framework for addressing reforming public administration to be more responsive to the range of crisis facing CEE and CA. The paper places crisis management within the context of responses needed to build public trust as enduring challenge of government (OECD, 2011 and 2024) explores the links between service performance and building trust. The connection to crisis responses is then explored in terms of reform for crisis response addresses a set of wicked problems (Kettl, 2006) essential for building trust.

The conceptual framework connects Agile Government to explore the theoretical and empirical foundations of the received wisdom that service delivery improves state legitimacy" (McLouglin, 2015, 342: Jean, 2019). Specifically, the conceptual research considers how Agile Government best practices. address barriers to building performance to increase trust in public agencies (Pahlka, 2023). Methodologically, the best practices of Agile Government are identified, then specifically related to the challenges identified by Mcloughlan (2015) and in creating public value (Kirlin, 1996) in building state legitimacy. The methodology will consider examples from three case studies written in 2024 employing Agile practices at the state, regional, and federal level. Agile government is described as "A mindset and actions designed to achieve the missions of government by developing and implementing policies, regulations and programs in an integrated way to increase trust in government through improving competence while promoting values people care about" (DeSeve, 2021).

The best practices of Agile Government (DeSeve, 2021) are summarized as
- Integration is critical to execution.
- Leaders at all levels need to analyze and understand trust in and across their organization.
- Agile government must begin with understanding end-users
- Public values must be respected and the public must be engaged.
- Networks should form the default development and implementation pathway wherever possible.
- Cross-functional teams should drive integrated solutions to problems.
- Appropriate speed and persistent iteration will enable the organization to shape and reshape successful approaches.
- Simultaneous execution of agile government actions is required.
    These steps are applied to the four key challenges identified by McLaughlin facing building state legitimacy.
- Shifting expectations
- perceptions of impartiality
    relationship – who is perceived as delivering
- who gets cred

The methodology identifies how the three case studies anticipate and address the obstacles identified by Mclaughlin (2015). The paper concludes with a consideration of the implications of how Agile Government best practices to build public trust. The paper concludes with a consideration of how Agile can address foreseeable patterns of wicked problems (Kettl, 2006), including relationship between politics and administration (Callahan and Mau, 2024), In addition, such trends have implications for the future of the democratic anchorage of the Neo-Webarian state (Boukhaert, 2023), as well as how public administration shapes representative government (Bertelli, 2021).