

# On the Structural Admissibility of Agile Transformation Claims under Recurrence

## A Formal Audit Protocol for Structural Claims in Iterative Organizational Coordination Systems

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Closed Output:  $\Psi = 0 \cdot \Psi \neq 0 \cdot \Psi = \text{undefined}$

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## Abstract

This paper audits the claim that repeated agile practices produce adaptive decision structures. The audit is conducted under a restricted organizational scope: recurring agile delivery systems operating under fixed sprint cadences, fixed coordination ceremonies, backlog-based work intake, and stable delivery constraints. Rather than presupposing agility, adaptation, or structural responsiveness, the paper forces the declaration of recurrence and structure and evaluates whether both are admissible under stable reference conditions. It then applies Rule–State Separation and a proxy discipline that prohibits structural inference from velocity, burndown movement, delivery predictability, and flow metrics. Under the declared fixed-coordination regime, repeated improvement remains compatible with more efficient execution within a fixed coordination schema unless an explicit coordination-rule modification is declared. No such rule modification is secured under the claim. The resulting structural classification is therefore:  $\Psi = 0$ . No adaptive decision-structure claim is licensed under the declared conditions.

## 1. Introduction

Agile discourse routinely treats repeated agile practice as if it produced structural adaptation. Terms such as agility, responsiveness, empowerment, and self-organization often bridge from repeated coordination outcomes to structural claims about how the organization now decides. This produces a classification gap: structural language is used where repeated movement may remain fully compatible with fixed coordination rules under stable delivery conditions.

This paper does not evaluate agile practice semantically, normatively, or managerially through narratives of responsiveness, modernity, or team maturity. It performs a restricted audit of a single claim under explicitly declared conditions. The question is not whether teams deliver faster, communicate better, or reduce blockers. The question is whether the claim “*repeated agile practices produce adaptive decision structures*” can be structurally classified at all when recurrence and structure are treated as declarable, testable objects.

The method consists of four steps: forced declaration of recurrence (R) and structure (S), application of Rule–State Separation (RSSA), enforcement of proxy discipline, and classification within a closed output space. The audit follows the same admissibility logic already fixed in the earlier audits: no semantic rescue, no proxy substitution, no structural claim without declarable R, declarable S, and enforceable RSSA.

## 2. Claim

### **Repeated agile practices produce adaptive decision structures.**

This claim is not assessed through narratives of agility, empowerment, or cultural change. It is examined only for structural admissibility. The task is to determine whether the claim licenses a structural interpretation under declarable recurrence, declarable structure, enforceable Rule–State Separation, and explicit proxy discipline.

## 3. Scope

The audit is restricted to recurring agile delivery systems operating under fixed sprint cadences, fixed ceremony schedules, backlog-based work intake, repeated planning and review routines, and stable delivery constraints. This includes sprint planning, daily coordination, backlog refinement, sprint review, retrospective practice, and delivery conditions in which the class of admissible coordination decisions remains stable unless otherwise declared.

The scope is deliberately narrow. This paper does not claim that agile systems never improve coordination. It does not deny local gains in flow, predictability, or transparency. It examines only whether the stated claim is structurally admissible within this restricted fixed-coordination regime.

## 4. Audit Method

The audit proceeds in four steps:

1. **Forced declaration of recurrence (R)**
2. **Forced declaration of structure (S)**
3. **Rule–State Separation (RSSA)**
4. **Proxy discipline**

The output space is closed:

- **$\Psi = 0$**
- **$\Psi \neq 0$**
- **$\Psi = \text{undefined}$**

No additional interpretive output is admitted.

## 5. Forced Declaration of Recurrence

To evaluate the claim, recurrence must be declared.

A recurrence unit is admissible only if:

1. the same class of cases can be identified across repetitions,
2. the triggering conditions remain invariant,
3. the coordination context is comparable, and
4. the governing rule object remains referenceable across cycles.

Within the present scope, three candidate recurrence units are considered:

- sprint / iteration cycle,
- coordination ceremony loop,
- backlog prioritization cycle.

These candidates do not occupy the same status.

**Sprint / iteration cycle** is admissible only if sprint cadence, team boundary, work intake class, delivery constraints, and decision-right distribution remain stable across repetitions.

**Coordination ceremony loop** does not constitute an admissible primary recurrence unit unless function class, response grammar, escalation semantics, and decision consequences remain invariant across repetitions. In ordinary agile settings, planning, standup, refinement, review, and retrospective do not perform the same coordination function and therefore do not jointly define a single stable recurrence unit.

**Backlog prioritization cycle** is admissible only if prioritization criteria, ownership logic, intake rules, and escalation boundaries remain referenceable across cycles. Where priorities are repeatedly reset by exogenous governance while still being narrated as agile adaptation, the cycle cannot function as a stable primary recurrence unit without re-declaration.

### Result:

**Recurrence is admissible only as repeated application of a fixed sprint and coordination protocol under stable team, intake, and delivery conditions.** Ceremony loops do not suffice as a primary recurrence unit without invariance conditions, and backlog prioritization cycles require explicit invariance of criteria and authority.

This result does not deny iterative coordination. It fixes the recurrence boundary under which a structural agile claim may be tested.

## 6. Forced Declaration of Structure

For structural classification, the governing rule object must be declared.

A structure object is admissible only if:

1. it can be referenced independently of outcomes,
2. it constrains admissible coordination decisions or execution paths,
3. it remains invariant across state variation, and
4. a change in it would alter the admissible coordination or delivery space.

Candidate structure objects in the present field include:

- decision-right distribution,
- backlog prioritization logic,
- handoff topology,
- escalation boundaries,
- role-coupling rules across product, engineering, and delivery functions.

By contrast, common agile constructs such as:

- agility,
- empowerment,
- collaboration,
- responsiveness,
- team maturity

do not satisfy the admissibility conditions for S under the declared claim.

**Agility** fails (1) and (4): it is commonly inferred from observed responsiveness and does not by itself specify a bounded coordination rule object whose modification alters the admissible decision space.

**Empowerment** fails (1), (2), and (4): it is often invoked as an evaluative interpretation of team behavior rather than a declared rule structure governing admissible decision rights.

**Collaboration** fails (1) and (3): it is typically indexed by interaction outcomes and does not remain invariant across state variation.

**Responsiveness** fails (1) and (4): it is outcome-linked and does not itself define the coordination rule object.

**Team maturity** fails (1), (2), and (4): it is a summary label, not an operational structure object unless reduced to explicit rule-bearing constraints.

These constructs do not satisfy the admissibility conditions for S under the declared claim.

Under the declared agile regime, the only admissibly referenceable structure is the fixed coordination-rule object: decision-right distribution, prioritization logic, handoff topology, escalation boundaries, and role-coupling rules.

**Result:**

Under the declared fixed-coordination regime, S is admissibly referenceable only as the coordination-rule object. No adaptive decision-structure object is secured beyond that rule object under the claim.

## **7. Rule–State Separation (RSSA)**

Observed changes in the present field include:

- velocity increase,
- burndown stability,
- shorter cycle time,
- fewer blockers,
- more predictable delivery,
- higher ceremony participation.

RSSA requires that state variation and rule variation be separable. A positive structural adaptation claim is admissible only if the alleged rule change can be referenced independently of these observables.

**If the same observable is used both as delivery indicator and as structural evidence of agility, RSSA is violated by construction, independent of interpretation.**

Under the declared fixed-coordination regime, no admissible coordination-rule mutation is secured by these observables alone. Velocity, flow regularity, ceremony participation, and predictability remain compatible with more efficient execution within a fixed coordination schema. They do not by themselves establish modification of the coordination-rule object.

**In the absence of a declared coordination-rule modification, RSSA yields state-level variation only.**

**Result:**

**Rule–State Separation is admissible under the declared fixed-coordination regime, and its output is state-level only. No coordination-rule modification is secured under the claim.**

This does not deny better coordination. It denies the escalation from repeated agile outcomes to admissible adaptive decision structure without declared rule-object modification.

## **8. Proxy Discipline**

The following indicators are commonly invoked in agile transformation discourse:

- velocity,
- burndown movement,
- cycle time,
- lead time,
- predictability metrics,
- team health scores,
- release frequency.

A proxy is admissible only if it is explicitly declared as non-structural.

**Otherwise, the proxy collapses into a surrogate structure without declaration.**

These indicators may support observation of state behavior under recurrence. They do not constitute structure and cannot substitute for a governing coordination-rule object.

Where such indicators are used as evidence of adaptive decision structure, proxy substitution is detected.

**Result:**

**Structural classification is not admissible under proxy substitution.**

This constraint is not optional. Once velocity, predictability, or ceremony-derived metrics are allowed to stand in for structure, the rule object disappears and the claim collapses into coordination performance description disguised as structural adaptation.

## 9. Output

Under the declared fixed-coordination conditions:

- recurrence is admissible only as repeated application of a fixed sprint and coordination protocol under stable team, intake, and delivery conditions,
- structure is declarable only at the level of the coordination-rule object,
- Rule–State Separation yields state-level variation only,
- proxy substitution recurs wherever agile delivery indicators are treated as adaptive structure.

### Formal output:

$\Psi = 0$

This output does not mean that agile practices do not help teams coordinate. It does not mean that delivery does not improve. It does not mean that agile systems cannot evolve. It means only this: under the declared fixed-coordination regime, repeated agile practices do not by themselves license an adaptive decision-structure claim.

**No coordination-rule modification is declared under the claim.**

**Repeated movement under a fixed coordination-rule object does not constitute admissible adaptive decision structure.**

## 10. Boundary Statement

**No adaptive decision-structure claim is licensed under the declared fixed-coordination conditions.**



## Appendix A — Structural Claim Audit Table

Claim	R Attempt	S Attempt	RSSA	Proxy	Failure Mode	Output
Repeated agile practices produce adaptive decision structures.	Sprint / iteration cycle admissible under stable team, intake, delivery, and decision loops do not constitute an admissible primary recurrence unit without invariance of function and escalation semantics; backlog prioritization cycles require explicit invariance of criteria and authority.	Decision-right distribution, prioritization logic, handoff topology, escalation boundaries, and role-coupling rules admissible; agility, empowerment, collaboration, responsiveness, and team maturity do not secure an adaptive decision-structure object under the declared claim.	Admissible under fixed S; observed change remains state-level only; no coordination-rule mutation secured.	Proxy substitution present wherever velocity, predictability, cycle-time, or team-health signals are used as structural evidence.	<b>NULL_REGIME:</b> <b>Recurrence declared, structure fixed, and all observed variation reducible to state-level dynamics;</b> <b>PROXY_INFLATION</b>	$\Psi = 0$

## Appendix B — Minimal Structural Admissibility Audit Form

### Claim

[one sentence]

### Scope

[one sentence]

### R Declaration Attempt

Candidate units:

Admissibility check:

- ☐ case class stable
- ☐ trigger invariant
- ☐ context comparable
- ☐ rule reference stable

Result:

- ☐ admissible
- ☐ not admissible

### **S Declaration Attempt**

Candidate rule objects:

Admissibility check:

- ☐ independent of outcomes
- ☐ constrains coordination decisions
- ☐ invariant under state variation
- ☐ alters coordination space if changed

Result:

- ☐ admissible
- ☐ not admissible

### **RSSA Status**

- ☐ enforceable
- ☐ not admissible (no rule reference)

### **Proxy Check**

Observed indicators:

Used as structural evidence?

- ☐ yes → PROXY\_INFLATION
- ☐ no

### **Output**

- ☐  $\Psi = 0$
- ☐  $\Psi \neq 0$
- ☐  $\Psi = \text{undefined}$

### **Boundary Statement**

[one sentence]

**Appendix C — Failure / Regime Code Table (Normative)**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Condition</b>
R_NOT_DECLARABLE	No recurrence unit satisfies admissibility conditions
S_NOT_FORMALIZABLE	No rule object satisfies admissibility conditions
RSSA_FAIL	Rule–State Separation not admissible
PROXY_INFLATION	Proxy used as structural evidence
NULL_REGIME	Recurrence declared, structure fixed, and all observed variation reducible to state-level dynamics
UNDEFINED_OUTPUT	At least one admissibility condition fails

**One-Line Execution Format**

Claim → fixed R → fixed S → RSSA(state-level only) → PROXY →  $\Psi = 0$