

Salus' Dilemma

In 302 BC, censor Gaius Junius Bubulcus Brutus inaugurated a temple on one of the hilltops of the Quirinale. The occasion for constructing this temple was to celebrate the victory, two years earlier, in the second Samnite war (326-304 BC). Bubulcus dedicated the temple to *Salus*, the Roman goddess of welfare and prosperity. *Salus* was one of Romans' oldest deities. During Bubulcus' times, her job was safeguarding the welfare of the *Res Publica*, the common good. Later, during the Republican era, her portfolio was gradually extended to include also the personal health of individuals.

But simultaneously protecting the common good *and* individual prosperity is a tough, if not to say an almost impossible job for a single deity, even for one as experienced as *Salus*. Individual opportunism and greed may be equally detrimental for the common good as threats from outside enemies, natural catastrophes or pandemics. The continuous challenge for any society therefore is to find out which kinds of institutional arrangements might not only balance individual and collective welfare, but also prevent external and internal threats or mitigate their damages. I call this *Salus' Dilemma*.

The key to solve *Salus' Dilemma* is *collaborative resilience*. This is the ability to continue to cooperate towards realizing shared goals over time, *despite disruptions*. Collaborative resilience is a neglected phenomenon in the social sciences, and the conditions that make it possible or undermine it are still little understood. A collaborative resilience perspective shifts our attention to cooperative arrangements as the major source of collective welfare, but it also highlights the inherent brittleness of these arrangements. The key question then becomes: which kinds of organizational arrangements do we need to safeguard collaborative resilience?

Unfortunately, the collaborative resilience premise so far remains widely neglected not only in the scholarly literature, but also by decision makers and practitioners at all levels of society. *Roma Resiliente*, an initiative of the Roman municipality that was part of the ambitious global 100 Resilient Cities program, is but one example for where such a neglect can lead. Despite some progress that this program could realize, many consider its 500+ interventions as a largely failed experiment. The major reason for this failure was the involved stakeholders' inability to keep the necessary cooperative endeavors going in the face of mounting internal and external pressures. And sometimes the reason was not inability, but

deliberate obstruction.

At the same time, the Roman Metropolitan Area is also well-known for being one of the world's hotbeds for grass-root sustainability transition initiatives of all kinds. These range from cultural heritage protection, to sustainable food production, to neighborhood social support groups, to science-for-society educational projects and much more. How well do they fare, in particular in the face of the Pandemic? Were they better able to safeguard collaborative resilience? We don't know.

Collaborative resilience does not emerge by itself, it needs to be nourished and requires constant maintenance. Our standard organizational arrangements, with their emphasis on hierarchical and centralized allocation of decision powers, often are unable to provide this kind of nourishment and maintenance. But unfortunately we do not yet know much about which alternative organizational structures would instead be suited for collaborative resilience – in Rome or elsewhere. Finding this out is one of the major objectives of the new *Cultures of Resilience (CuRe)* Research Alliance between the KNIR and the SCOOP program, a 10-year initiative funded by the Dutch Government's *Gravitation* scheme. The first *CuRe* symposium (July 1-2, 2022 at the KNIR) hopes to provide some answers.

Salus' temple turned out an example of an extraordinarily resilient building. It stood until the 4th century AD, despite having been struck by lightning twice (in 276 BC and 206 BC), and by a fire in the 1st century AD. Meanwhile, Romans have always kept her memory alive by honoring her birthday, on August 5, during a festival ultimately dedicated to preservation of the community: the *Festa Augurium Salutis*.

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