

**BUILDING LASTING TRUST:
ANALYZING THE RESILIENCE OF SCIENCE-TO-POLICY
INSTITUTIONS IN QUEBEC AND SWEDEN
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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Abstract

This article examines institutional resilience—commonly defined as the ability of institutions to absorb, adapt, and respond effectively to external shocks while maintaining their core functions, but here specifically focusing on the capacity to sustain a long-term, trust-based relationship with the population in pursuit of shared policy objectives (such as combating a pandemic)—by comparing the public health responses of Quebec and Sweden during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Sweden, the Public Health Agency operated with substantial autonomy in relation to the government, whereas Quebec’s National Institute of Public Health (INSPQ) was more closely integrated into a politically centralized approach. Drawing on comparable yet previously uncombined public opinion data from both countries—covering adherence to public health measures, trust in government, population anxiety, vaccination, and risk perception—this study investigates how different institutional arrangements shape the public’s ability to cope with the crisis and maintain confidence in health agencies and institutions. Supplemented by a review of official pandemic evaluation reports from both jurisdictions, the analysis underscores key organizational factors that contribute to this form of institutional resilience. Ultimately, this comparative inquiry underlines which institutional configurations are more likely to uphold public trust, support individuals’ capacity to withstand the crisis, and effectively manage health emergencies, thereby guiding the development of robust and adaptive public health governance structures.

Project details

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