

## Accreditation as a tool for organizational change in hospitals

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## Study Context

- In France, obligatory accreditation introduced in 1996
  - 5-year grace period for institutions
  - National agency for health accreditation and evaluation created (ANAES)
    - Responsibilities :
      - » patient management
      - » institutional management
      - » quality
      - » safety
    - Public report transmitted to administrative authorities

## Research hypothesis

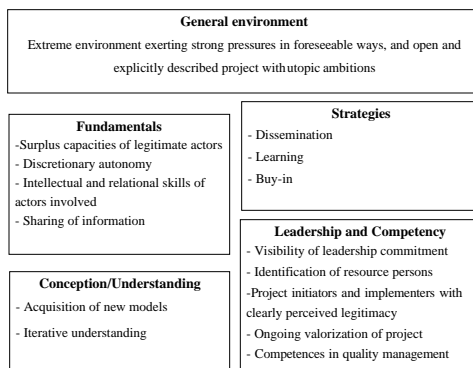
- Accreditation can be considered an innovation in the French healthcare system, and as such is likely to bring important changes
  - At the health system level
  - At the institutional level, in particular in terms of organization

## Research Questions

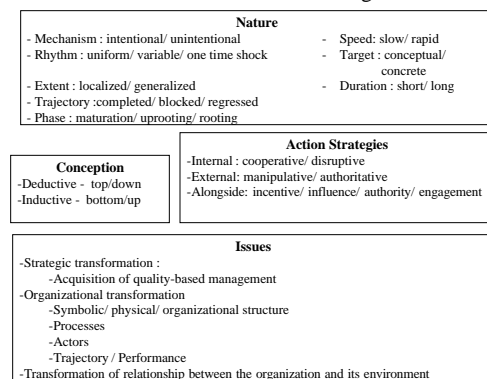
Two principal questions

1. Can we identify conditions that predispose the generation of change via the process of preparing for accreditation?
2. What changes actually occurred in institutions during the process of preparing for accreditation?
3. ...and two complementary ones:
3. What changes occurred in terms of relations between the institution and its environment, due to the process of preparing for accreditation?
4. Did the process of preparing for accreditation enable the institution to better fulfil its mission ?

## Conditions favouring emergence and diffusion of change



## Characteristics of Change



## Methods

- Single detailed case study
- Longitudinal
- 6 interwoven units of analysis
  - Care services
  - Thematically defined auto-evaluation groups
  - Operational, strategic, community/ environment and the health care authorities.
- Data sources : questionnaires, interviews, observations, documents
- Triangulation

## Research Steps

- Data collected in a University-affiliated hospital with 4500 professionals
- Data collection from January 1995 to July 2001
- 65 interviews with key actors
- 73% of employees targeted by questionnaires (response rate 48,6%)
- Assembly and analysis of all documents related to accreditation
- Observation of means made available to achieve accreditation

*Can we identify conditions that predispose the generation of change via the process of preparing for accreditation? Context (1)*

- National Level
  - Strong and foreseeable external constraints without positive incentives
- Organizational Level
  - Obligation to conform
  - Accreditation not perceived as means of change
  - Perception of situation as precarious, necessitating combative survival strategies

*Can we identify conditions that predispose the generation of change via the process of preparing for accreditation? Leadership (1)*

- Senior management involved at the national level, but had poor visibility at the level of strategic preparation
- Complementary constellation of actors at the operational level, but lack of trust among them
- Initial medical leadership, but evolved towards an administrative leadership

*Can we identify conditions that predispose the generation of change via the process of preparing for accreditation? Strategies (1)*

- Jobs and infrastructure created, but absence of debate concerning implementation strategy and division of roles
- Quality commission created, but difficulties in positioning of institutional steering committee

*What changes actually occurred in institutions during the process of preparing for accreditation? Power Relations (2)*

- Restrictive external environment
- Deductive (top-down) approach
- Reinforcement of legitimacy of management
  - And, simultaneously
- Development of non-hierarchical discussion fora
- Increased voice for persons lower in institutional hierarchy
- Yet failure to question organizational structure

*What changes actually occurred in institutions during the process of preparing for accreditation? A Learning Organization (2)*

- Learning at individual and institutional levels
  - Acquisition of new concepts and work relations especially for lower echelons
  - Acquisition of expertise in terms of preparation for accreditation
- Sharing of patient- and family-centered values
- Instatement of culture of written documentation and self-critique

*What changes actually occurred in institutions during the process of preparing for accreditation? Positioning of Doctors (2)*

- Initial interest in accreditation process
  - Protection against judicial pursuits
  - Improvement of quality of carethen
- Disengagement from organizational aspects of accreditation
- No active resistance

*What changes actually occurred in institutions during the process of preparing for accreditation? Social Capital (2)*

- Many multi-professional and multi-disciplinary meetings
- New formal and informal social links: improved patient management
- Increased organizational belonging and development of a common culture

*What changes occurred in terms of relations between the institution and its environment, due to the process of preparing for accreditation? (3)*

- Development of collaborations with surrounding establishments
- Increased responsiveness to patient satisfaction
- Low impact on relations with other health professionals
- Low impact on relationships with health care authorities

*Did the process of preparing for accreditation enable the institution to better fulfil its mission ? (4)*

- No change in trajectory
- Performance-related impact
  - On values
  - On organizational culture
    - Productivity
    - Adaptation and goal-attainment