Deductive and inductive approach

1. I see many differences from a deductive approach to the research: the fact itself that this research is qualitative, often lead to implement the " opposite" approach, the inductive one. Evidence of this are various and enough clear: - to go there on the field is not really a prerogative of the deductive approach: instead, what usually happens is that many quantitative data are gathered, with strongly structured and often impersonal methods. So, what happens in the case we're dealing with is clearly contrasting with what we expect: to get feelings and perceptions, researchers talk and listen to people, and, sometimes, they even participate to the context (meetings, …). Eventually, we could say that researchers effectively become part of the research itself - the already discussed lack of quantitative data is itself another evidence of the distance from an approach who's mainly based on scientific principles, that is numbers, measures. Considerations starting from the tone of the voice, or the coherence of his/her speech cannot be regarded as quantitative. Also such a commitment to collect this kind of data, in terms of time and attention given to individuals, is again typical of the opposite approach - the generalizability issue is another clear evidence: the authors themselves declare " However, our intention was not to seek generalizability. Instead, we sought to embrace all the richness and complexity of a real organization(…)". Such an intention is hardly compatible with the deductive approach, which really cares about rigor in controls, methodology, sampling and other factors which have the role to guarant the process of generalization, and try to eliminate uncertainty. It's easy to sense how the coding included in this research (in particular the categorization of impressions) doesn't really provide such a approach deeply grounded in theory, although experts were consulted - an extremely important part of the

deductive approach, involves a deep understanding of causal relationships. The attempts inside this case study to explain causes and consequences are negligible. And the same is true for the operationalisation. In fact what we find here, is a kind of work which is much more intensive than extensive: it could happen to get lost into the conversation, into the convictions or fears of the interviewees, without even being able to measure the importance or significance that these findings contain - there's an high attention to the context. To this end, they widely present this mid '80 trend and large initiatives to promote a more customer-focused approach at every level, especially, of course, at the shop floor level 2. Even if this research is mainly designed to follow a bottom-up approach, that is from observations to theory, and mostly lack of the typical logic process of excluding the impossible, by slow and possibly unquestionable steps… still some elements are somehow surprising: - it's not that rare that in a qualitative research, a first introduction is presented through a literature review. The fact here is that it seems that they really start from precedent theories to arrive at a new one. In a let's say pure inductive approach, the researcher is thrown on the field, essentially uninformed, without any preconception or prepared structure on how the findings could or could not be. But this doesn't happen here. They do go on the field without precise structure, but they've already an idea of what they're looking for, and they got this idea starting, also from literature. Plus they sometimes refer to previous studies to support their conclusions: they don't completely walk alone in new fields - the previous consideration leads us to notice an element extremely central of the deductive approach: the hypothesis testing. Even if we are really far from clean and solid seen in other works, they have an hypothesis, or just a

concept to test: " the aim was to uncover whether manager were more likely to share espoused organizational values than employees at lower levels(...)" - the obvious consequence is that they don't come up with a new theory, but they rather correct an old one, making a step forward but in the same direction. Such a situation is definitely more often linked to a deductive approach - another interesting point that leaves us with some doubt is the one regarding the effort to explain individual behavior: the exploration to understand reasons and motivations is pretty limited, and there's few elaboration on them. It seems that every impression is more utilized to confirm an hypothesis that the author have in mind, rather than creating a new perspective - a probably less important and much more debatable issue is the one regarding the methodology: they at least try to give a precise overview of the way they've conducted this research. Nonetheless the chapter that cover this part isn't that wide, and the authors themselves are aware of how this way to proceed doesn't possess a real rigor, and therefore justify this absence 3. It's my opinion that this study touches a definitely interesting aspect of organization change, but lose much of its credibility, or better its values that should come from generalization. The main undermining aspect here is ambiguity: even if the combination of two approaches could be by all means valuable, in this case it has been a drawback. This qualitative research, being conducted through induction could have conserved its important contribution, if it had been able to stay away from the " ambition" to change a theory as a deductive approach would be able to do. Inside the text, it happens frequently that authors evidence how they don't pretend to reach a wide generalizability, but in the end they come up with what they pretend to be a lack in the literature, which

could definitely convince the sustainers of the top-down approach that they are considering not the right instead a narrower target. They somehow lost the dimension of what they were doing. This doesn't mean that the finding (before the interpretation) aren't at all valuable. As cited in the text, to study organization qualitative research, together with an inductive approach, could be really fruitful. The reason is simply because the scientific method contained in the deductive approach, isn't completely adapt to follow the smallest unit's dynamics inside the organization: human beings. Plus change is dynamic itself. Such a research could really fill many of the gaps that today's theories present creating new point of view, even if what they couldn't probably do is to change the actual ones. So there are data which we don't really want to lose. Between the three sources, the examination of documents, the observations of managers (training sessions, informal interviews), and in-depth reviews, I would really keep the second one. The reason why I think we should really take into consideration inputs coming from such studies, and expand the research in that direction, is highly pragmatic. My really humble, personal thought is that organizational is possible, but it's much harder than we may think. Moreover, it's even impossible if we don't recognize and admit which the real obstacles are. The main reason why such initiatives fail is implicit in the design itself: to change an organization, the system of incentives is fundamental. And when we don't consider every incentive, even If undesired or tacit, our effort is likely to fail, no matter the intensity of it. This is really what this research could have demonstrated: something, also in the middle happen, and the informal ambient could play an important role in it. Of course, the treatment of the impressions should be at the same time more structured, and the sample

should have been better designed (stratification,…), if we really want to be able to move from the specific to the general. Unfortunately, the conclusions they came up with are pushing more the demonstration that old theories should be revisited, and aren't trying to understand the real reason of it, after pointing out that in the middle something really happens. Mixing these two purposes, this research doesn't seem to be able to accomplish neither the aim to " improve" a theory, and nor the aim to create a new one.