

Mapping social relationships of older workers' employment: The meaning and organization of work, health and safety

Sue Ann Mandville-Anstey

January 20, 2008



Employment

□ Latest statistics

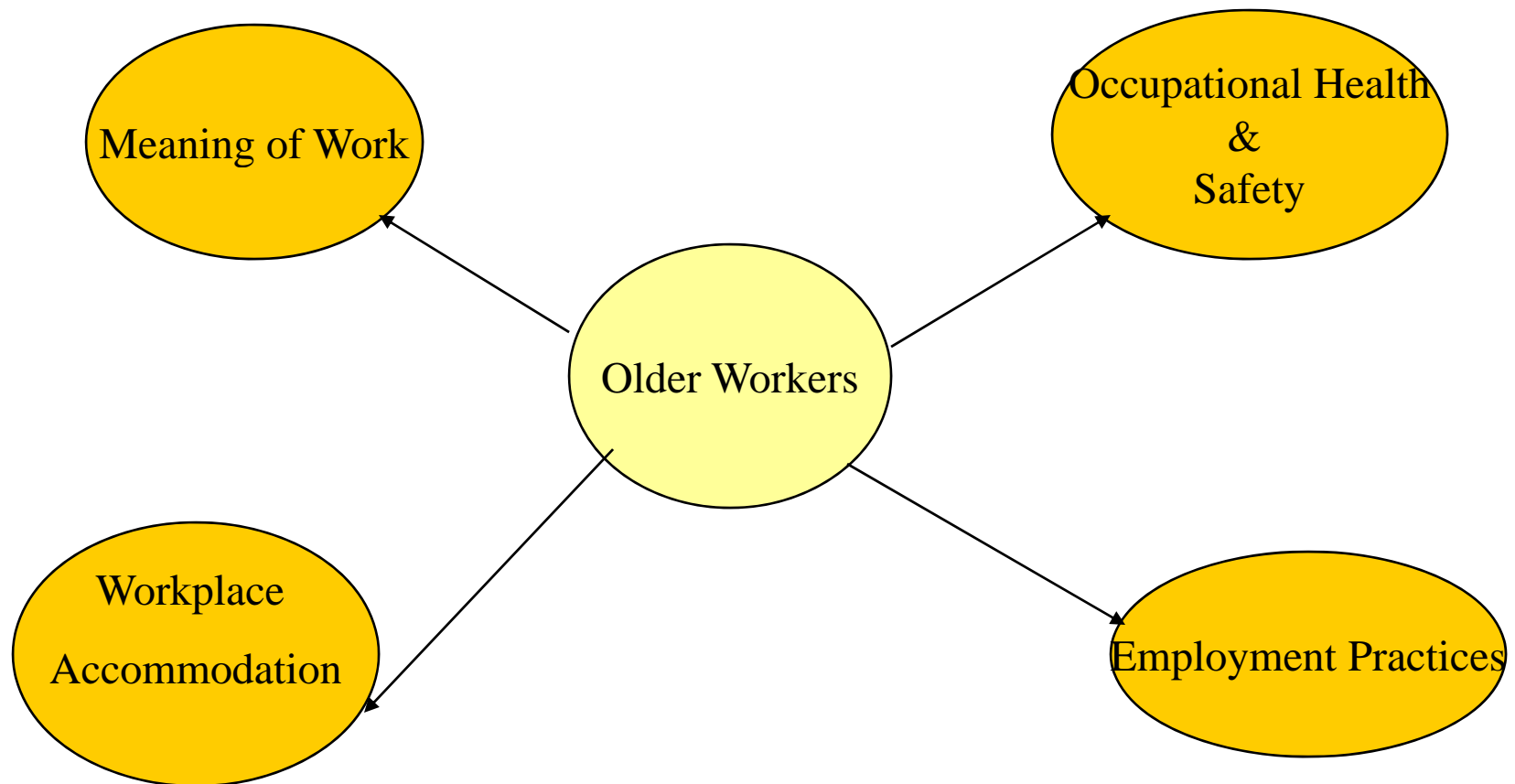
- By 2011, the baby boom generation is expected to represent 41% of the workforce in Canada (Human Resource and Development Canada, 2007)
- Labor force employment of seniors grew 7.9 % from 2004-2005 (Labor Force Survey, 2005)



Theory of Productive Aging

“Will 69 million baby boomers suddenly drop out of the workforce when they turn 65? It is difficult to imagine this generation, with its talent, education, and experience, idling away the last 30 years of life” (Butler, 2001).

Review of the Literature on Aging Workers





What do I want to know?

- What influenced the decision to work and what is the meaning of work for them?
- What is it like to be an older worker in the service sector, more specifically, what is the “work” that they are describing?
- What are the challenges / stressors as well as benefits of the work they do?
- How is their work constructed with and influenced by the work of others and coordinated with outside events, policies and regulations.

Institutional Ethnography



- ❑ Concerned with the “work” involved in ...
- ❑ Explains how things are socially organized, or put together so they happen as they do that may or may not be visible to those experiencing them
- ❑ Starts with a research “problematic”

Retrieved From:

http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mdevault/dorothy_smith.htm



Qualitative vs Quantitative

- Neither.....it is a method of inquiry
- It is an alternative sociology that explores and discovers rather than theorizes
- Learns from people's everyday knowledge of their lives and doings rather than imposing pre-formulated interpretations
- Does not start with theories / concepts...stays with the actual individuals, with their doings and how what they are doing is coordinated with others



Epistemological Standpoint

- Social constructivism
 - How people see and describe their world is a result of historical, social & political processes
 - The realities of older workers can be explained as being socially constructed by their experiences influenced by social and political processes that guide employment practices as well as the social impacts of work and values

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the working lives of older workers, age 60 + working in the service sector, using a method of inquiry called Institutional Ethnography (IE).



http://msnbcmedia1.msn.com/j/msnbc/Components/Video/050317/tdy_brown_retirees_working_050317.300w.jpg



Recruitment of Participants

- Inclusion criteria
 - Males & Females
 - Age 60+
 - Working either part time or temporary/call in
 - Working in the service sector in retail, restaurant or food sector



Data Collection / Building

- Goal is to study social settings and interactions in everyday life of older workers
- Dorothy Smith refers to “building” data rather than collecting data
- To be able to explicate what is happening in a local setting as people know and live it (Campbell & Gregor 2004).



2 Levels of Data

Level 1

Local settings (workplace)

- how the individuals interact and describe their experiences

Level 2

- With the problematic emerging, now look for data that will explicate it (Campbell & Gregor, 2004)
- Data beyond experiential accounts
- Participant observation & analysis of texts



Data Collection

1. Interviews/Focus Groups
2. Participant Observation
3. Analysis of Texts



1. Interviews

- Interviews helps us understand biographical, contextual, historical and institutional elements that are brought to the interview by both parties (Rapley, 2004)
- Semi structured
- Interviewees will be chosen as the research progresses and the more that is known about the area of interest

Focus Groups

- 8-10 participants
- Facilitate group discussion rather than ask specific question
- Advantages of focus groups
 - Enhance comfort level
 - Synergistic effect (Wilkinson, 2004)
 - More attention to the 'language'
 - More egalitarian





Questions...

1. Why have you chosen to work? What influenced your decision?
2. Tell me about your typical daily schedule, your routines, responsibilities.
3. Was there a time that you may have been involved in “risky” behavior where you felt that your health and safety were jeopardized? What did you do?
4. Describe some of the challenges you encounter at your workplace.



2. Participant Observation

- Allows the researcher to document social life in its “natural” state (Green & Thorgood, p. 36)
- Listen to the talk and conversation that express their expertise of their “work” lives
- Continue to look for recurring events and recurring words to explicate the experiences



3. Texts

- Material in form that enables replication of what is written, drawn or otherwise reproduced (Smith, 2005)
- Examples are books, ads, websites, manuals, policies, health insurance, income tax forms, employer policies.....etc...etc...

Work is co-coordinated by texts





Texts

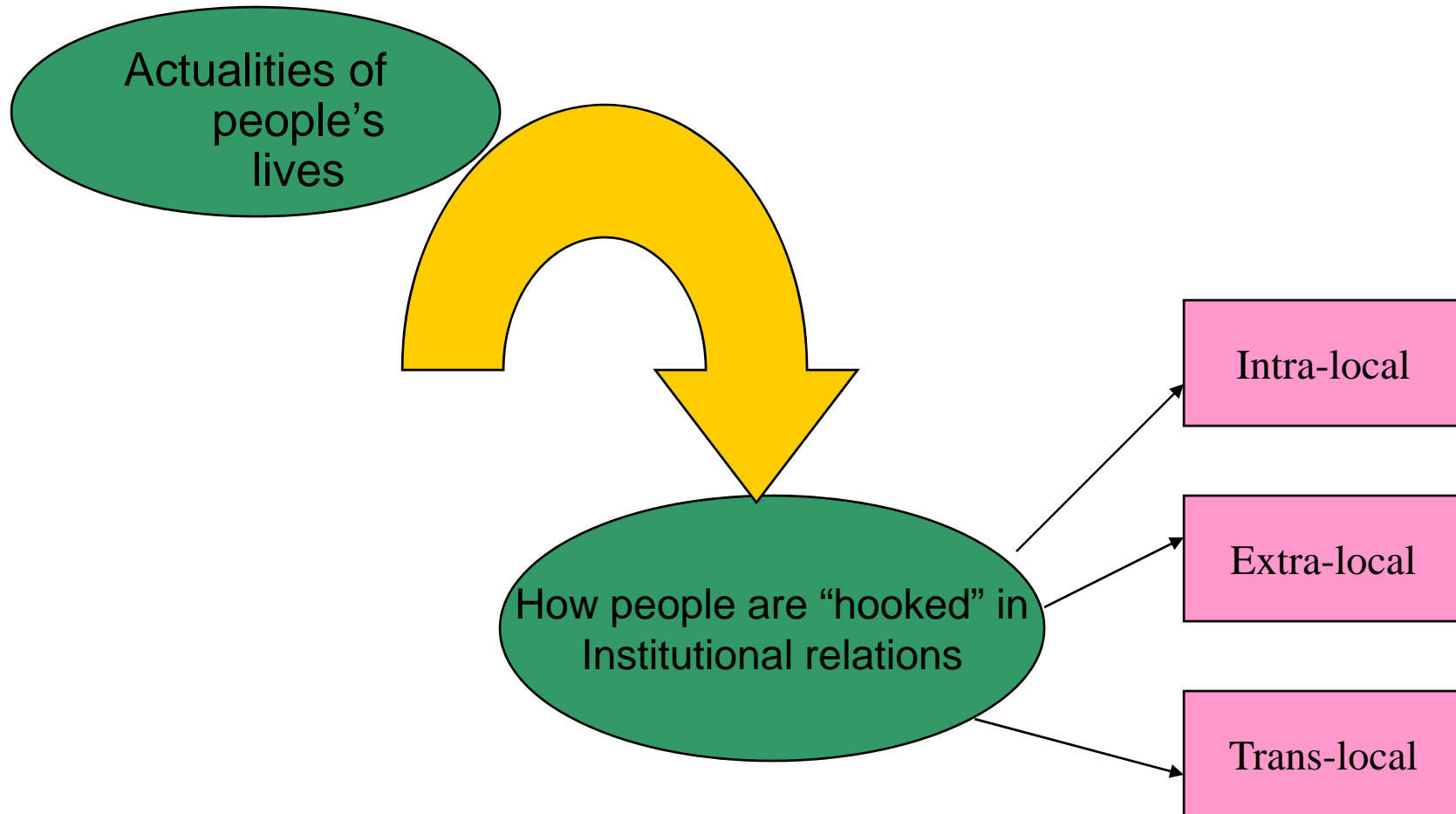
- Employer hiring policies / recruitment
- Job orientation and training programs
- Workers Compensation Policies
 - Section 74 (4) & (5)
- Job descriptions
- Health & safety training practices



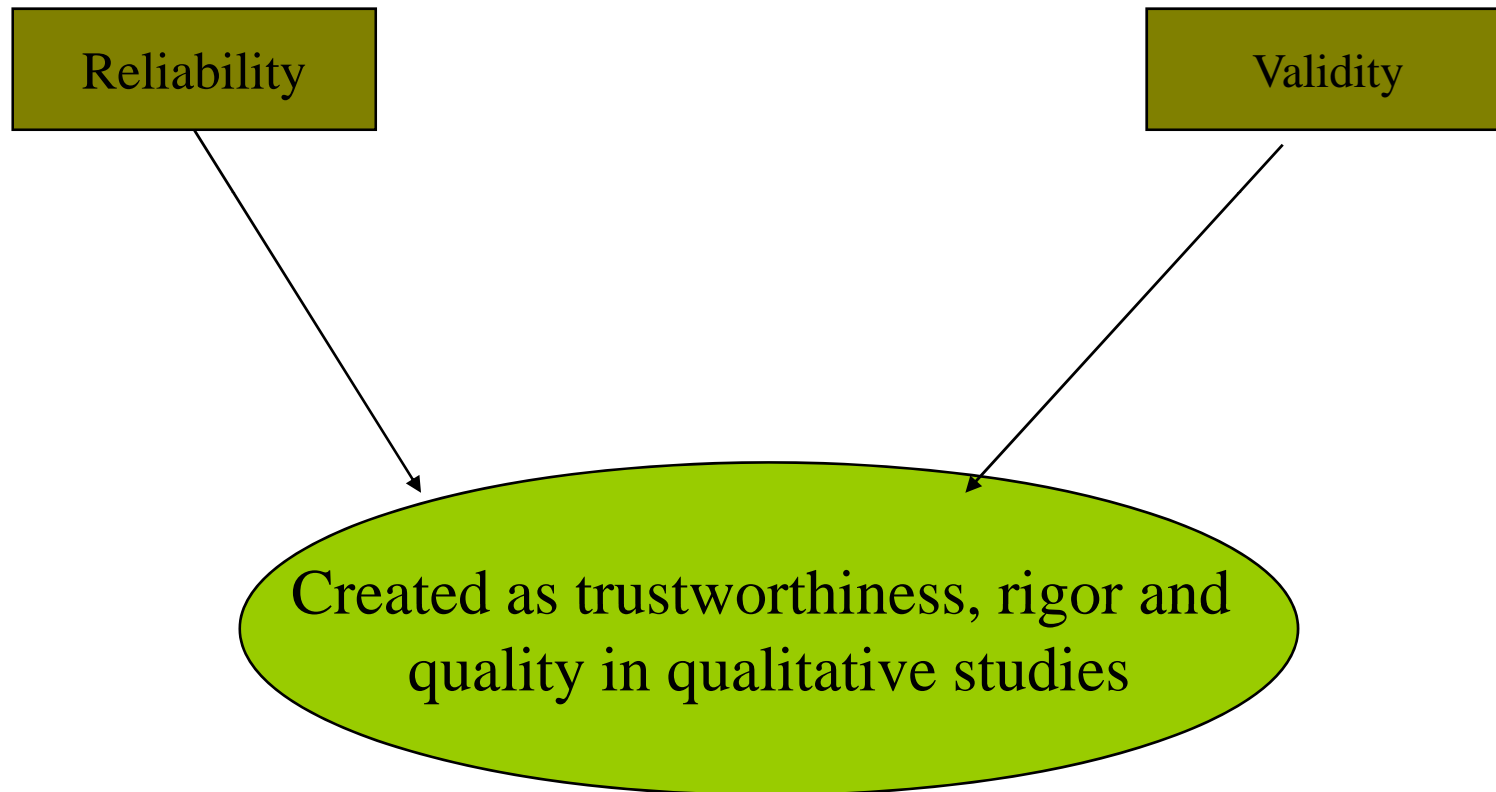
Data Analysis

- Dorothy Smith refers to data analysis as “a learning process”
- Not necessarily collapsed in themes but uses a comparative strategy to explicate the experiences
- Mapping the social relations of the intra local, extra local and trans local texts

Mapping Social Relations

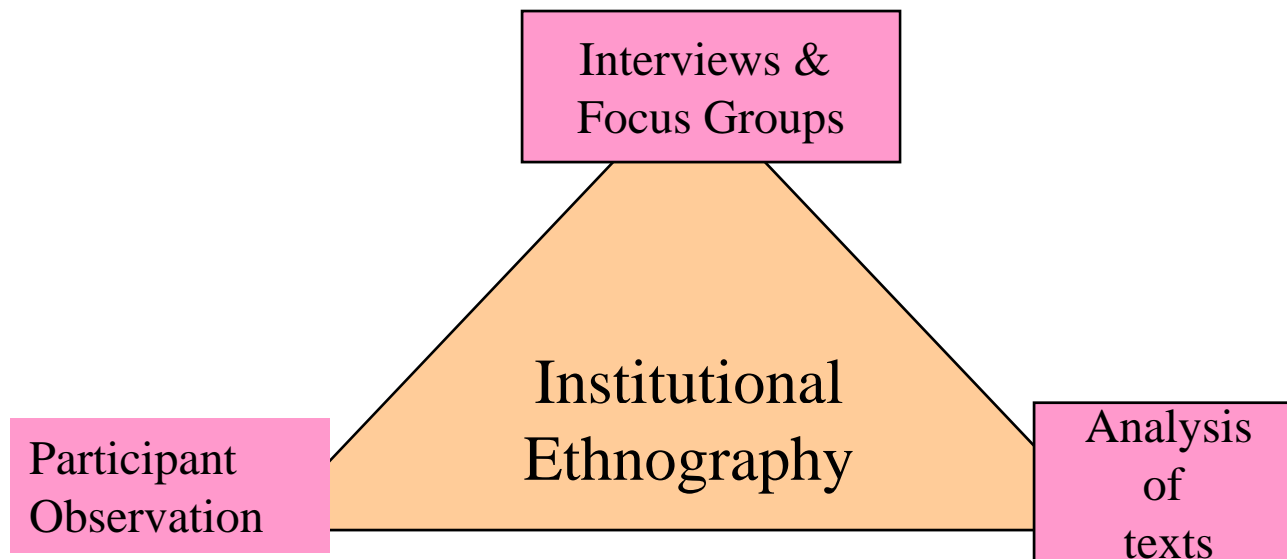


Establishing Trustworthiness



Creating trustworthiness

Using multiple methods of data collection will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities (Golafshani, 2003)





Potential Challenges

- Proposal development / HIC

- Access to older workers
 - Employer resistance

- Participant observation
 - To what extent can I be involved?



References

Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2004). *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8 (4), 597-606.

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2004). *Qualitative methods for health research*. Thousand Oaks/London:Sage.

Hesse-Biber, A.N. & Levy, P. (eds.). (2004). *Approaches to qualitative research: a reader on theory and practice*. New York : Oxford.

Human Resources and Development Canada (2007). Mandatory retirement in Canada. Retrieved July 10, 2007 from www.hrsdc.gc.ca.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage

Mathison, S. (1998). Why tringuilate? *Educational researcher*, 17 (2), 13017.



References

Rapley, T. (2004). Interviews. In Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (Eds.)
Qualitative Research Practice. Thousand Oaks / London : Sage

Smith, D. (2006). *Institutional ethnography as practice*. U.S: Rowman & Littlefield
Publishers.

Smith, D. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: a sociology for people*. Lanham, MD:
AltaMira Press.

Stake, R. Case Studies. In Denzin and Lincoln. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage.

Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus group research. In Silverman, D. (2004). *Qualitative research: theory, method
and practice*. London: New York : Sage.