

Multigenerational Relations of the Older Worker: Pathways to Productivity

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Presented at the Why Workplace Flexibility Matters: A Global Perspective
Conference
Chicago, Illinois
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Sustaining the Elder Worker through Social Relations

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Overview

- Goal: Ideal Policy(ies) for the Older Worker and their Families
- Understanding Generations, Families, Convoys
- Old Roles for New Times
- Strain and Gain or Gain and Strain
- How/Why Do We Need Workplace Flexibility
- Directions for the Future- Ideal Policies

Changing Nature of Family/Work Structure

- Beanpole versus Pyramid
- Fertility Patterns and Employment Policies
- In US: dual career families, potential of older workers, pensions, health care benefits, care providers
- In Japan: single career families, few or no children, mandatory retirement, long term care benefits

→ Changing role of the older person at work and at home

Multi-Generational Longitudinal Panel Survey Design



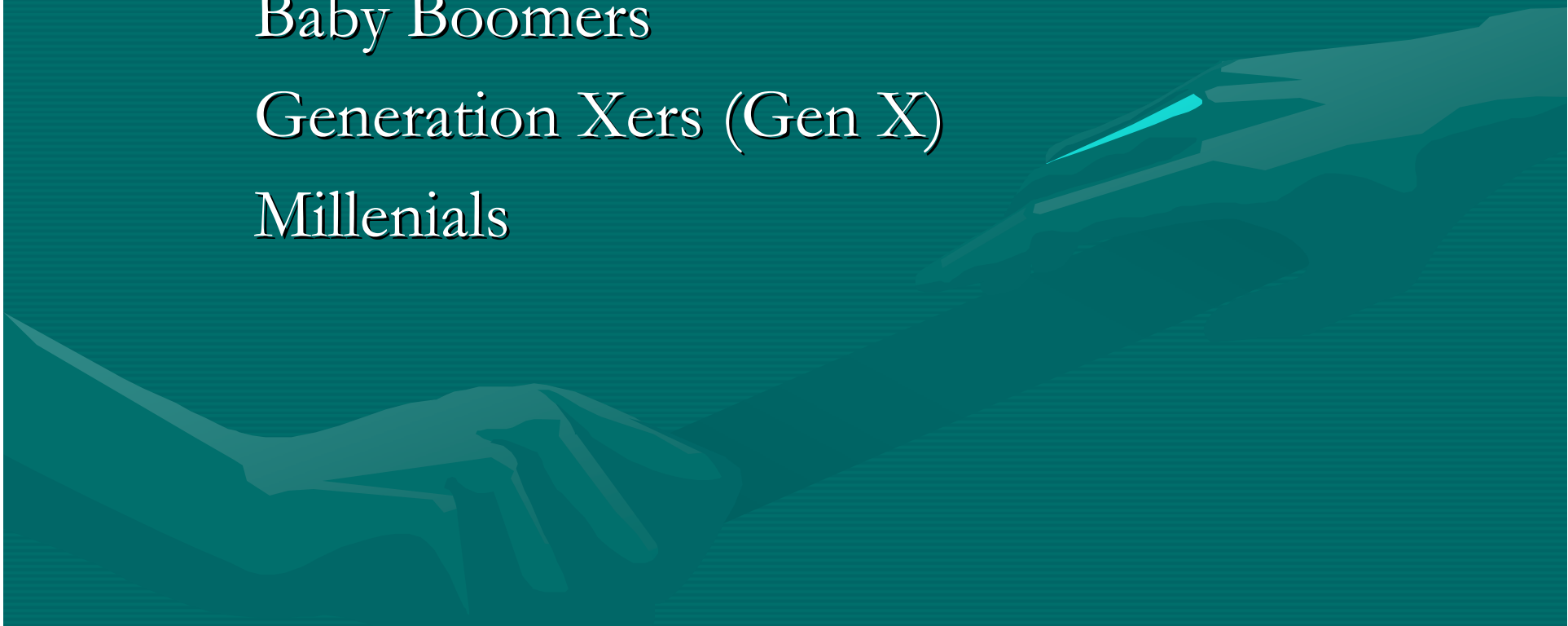
Different Generational Cohorts

Matures

Baby Boomers

Generation Xers (Gen X)

Millenials



Different Generations: Matures

Born 1920-1945, 5 Million People,

5% of Workforce, Wealthiest Group in U.S;

Defining Events: World War II, the Great Depression, Radio, the Silver Screen

Core Values: Dedication, Respect for Authority

Sacrifice, Patience, Law and Order,
Conformity

Different Generations: Boomers

Born 1946-1960, 80 Million, 45% workforce,
largest group ever born in the US

Defining Events: TV, Vietnam, 50's Prosperity,
Civil Rights, Cold War, JFK/MLK, Suburbia

Core Values: Optimism, Team Orientation,
Personal Growth/Gratification, Work, Health
and Wellness

Different Generations: Generations X

Born 1960-1980, 46 Million, 40% workforce,
smallest of generations; most unsupervised

Defining Events: PCs, Watergate, MTV, 80s
recession, Fall of Wall, Single Parents, Aids

Core Values: Self-reliance, Diversity/informality,
Adaptability, Thinking Globally, Balance
work/fun, Pragmatism, Techno-literacy

Different Generations: Millennials e-generation

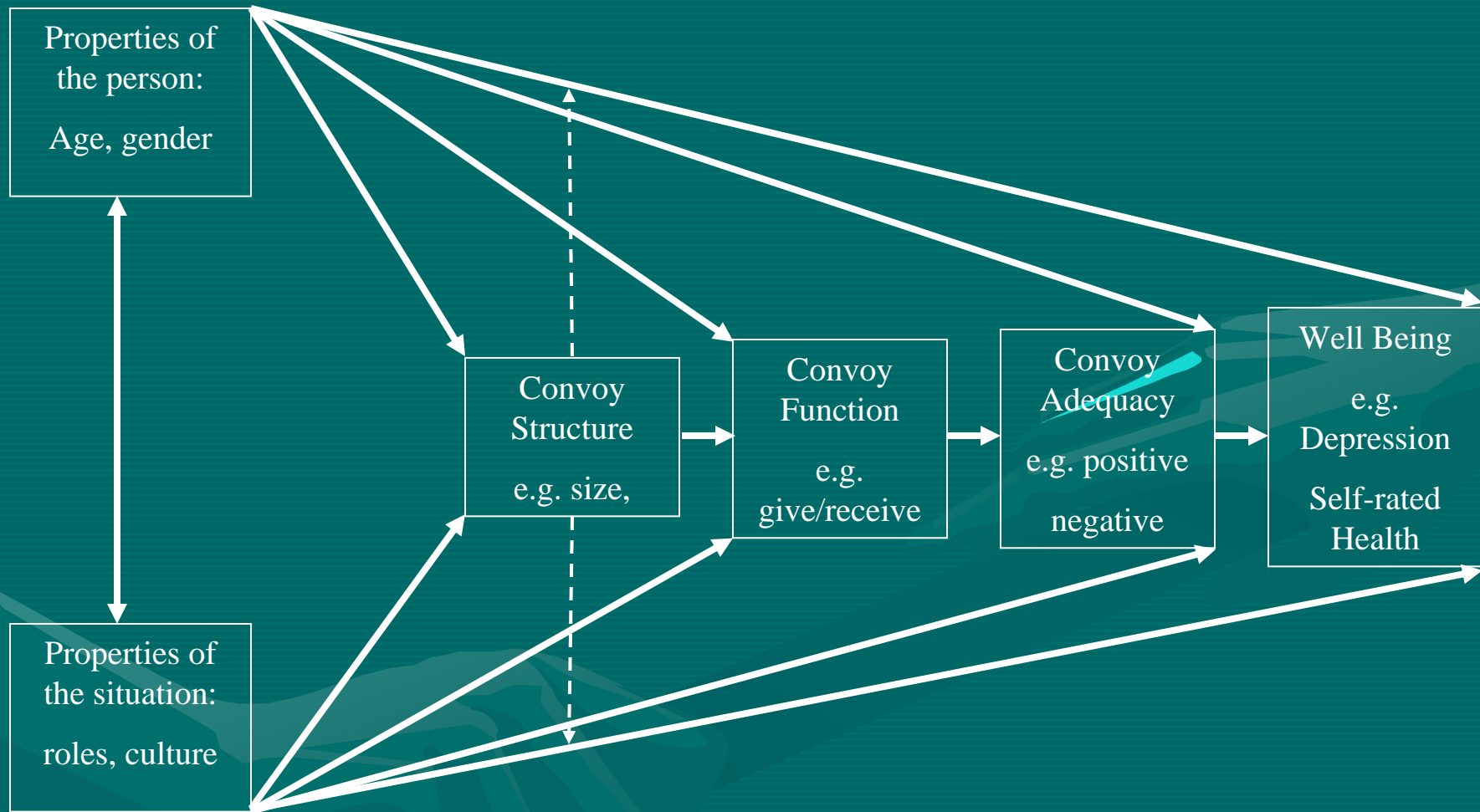
Born 1980-2000, 68 Million, 10% workforce,
most globalized generation

Defining Events: School Violence, Internet,
Oklahoma City bombing, Reality shows,
9/11

Core Values: Optimism, Diversity,
Confidence, Achievement, Sociability

Old Roles for New Times

- The structure of the family
- Sociodemographic factors in the life of the older worker
- Structural Lag
- Work as meaning; work as lifeline
- Mobility of the family
- Needs of the family
- Older Worker – Experience, Mentor & Stability



Convoy Model of Social Relations

Social Relations and Health

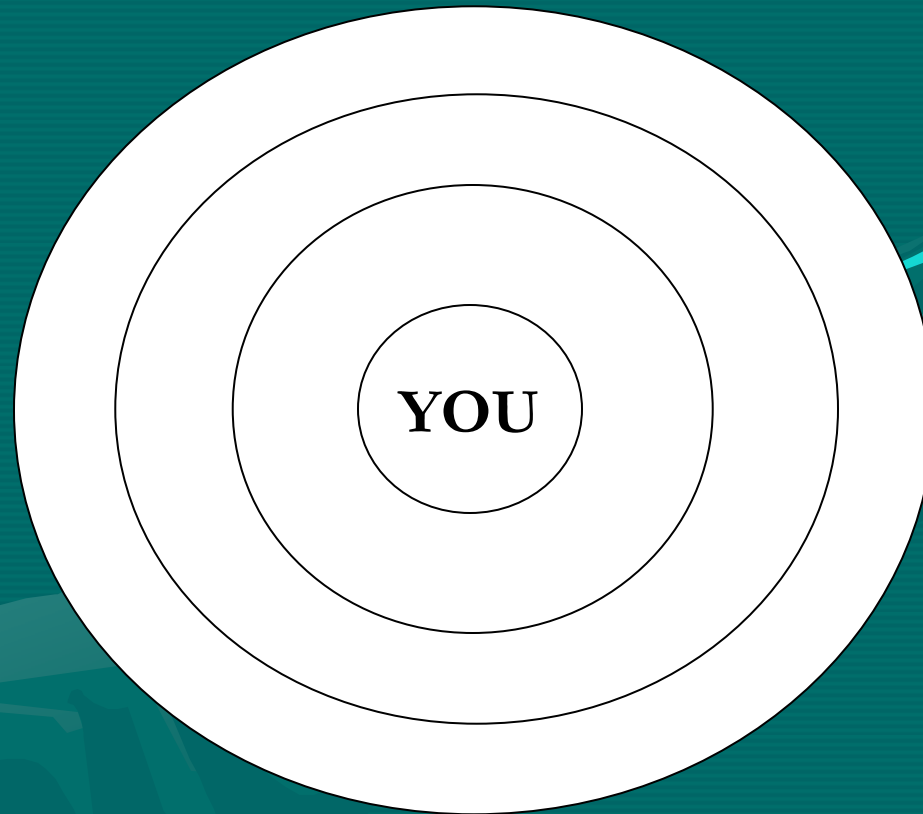
Sample Characteristics

	Detroit	Yokohama
Total	1703	1846
Age Range	8-93	8-96
Interview Length	60-90 min	60-90 minutes
Date of Interview		
Wave 1	1992/3	1991
Wave 2	2005	2005

Roles Occupied by 60-79 yr olds in 1992 and 2005

	Wave 1 (N=432)	Wave 2 (N=263)
Married	48%	59%
Widowed	32%	20%
Worker (Full Time)	17%	12%
Working (Part Time)	na	9%
Retired	60%	65%
Education	12 yrs (2.88)	13 yrs (2.81)
Volunteer	na	34%
Caregiver	na	17%

Hierarchy of Social Relations



Support Network Structure

	Wave 1	Wave 2
	(N=431)	(N=262)
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Total Network Size	8.97 (5.50)	11.08 (6.75)
Inner Circle Size	3.70 (3.40)	4.47 (3.33)
Middle Circle Size	3.54 (2.96)	3.83 (3.14)
Outer Circle Size	1.74 (2.29)	2.79 (3.03)

Support Quality

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
	Positive		Negative	
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M(SD)
Mother	4.60 (0.66)	4.45 (0.89)	2.20 (1.23)	2.83 (1.34)
Father	4.64 (0.55)	4.23 (1.12)	2.08 (1.24)	1.83 (0.83)
Spouse	4.81 (0.46)	4.76 (0.47)	2.43 (1.21)	2.58 (1.10)
Friend	4.87 (0.30)	4.85 (0.33)	1.64 (0.99)	1.53 (0.81)
Child	4.84 (0.42)	4.83 (0.44)	1.82 (1.12)	1.78 (1.05)

Percentages of Working by Age, Gender & Country

Age	U.S.		Japan	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
50-59	80%	62%	95%	44%
60-69	31%	24%	63%	25%
70-79	11%	3%	36%	7%

Worker + Other Roles by Age: US

Age	One Role			Two Roles			Three Roles
	Parent	Spouse	Child	Parent, Spouse	Spouse, Child	Parent Child	Parent/Sp, Child
50's	2%(2)	4%(4)	17%(19)	2%(2)	23%(26)	14%(15)	39%(44)
60's	4%(4)	0	33%(18)	0	46%(25)	9%(5)	15%(8)
70's	0	0	36%(4)	0	55%(6)	0	9%(1)

Worker + Other Roles by Age: Japan

Age	One Role			Two Roles			Three Roles
	Parent	Spouse	Child	Parent, Spouse	Spouse, Child	Parent Child	Parent/Sp, Child
50's	0	1%(1)	0	1%(1)	4%(6)	2%(2)	92%(128)
60's	0	3%(3)	1%(1)	0	9%(9)	3%(3)	83%(81)
70's	0	0	0	0	16%(7)	0	83%(36)

Effect of Roles on Depressive Symptomology

	U.S.	Japan
Age	.07	.02
Sex	.04	- .04
Parent	- .06	.06
Spouse	- .12**	- .02
Child	.03	- .03
Working	- .1*	- .02

Effect of Roles on Self-rated Health

	U.S.	Japan
Age	- .05	- .09*
Sex	.02	- .03
Parent	.07	.08
Spouse	.13**	- .05
Child	- .13**	.03
Working	.17**	.05

Depression Among Workers 50 - 79

		Spouse	Child	Friend
U.S.	Positive	.09	.09	.02
	Negative	.22*	.20*	.05
Japan	Positive	-.07	.11	.11
	Negative	.08	.05	.14*

Possible sources of problems across generations

Different priorities

Conflicting values

Negative Stereotypes

Guessing replaces information

Morale declines

→ Family and Workplace climate can suffer

How to smooth social relations across generations

Communicate using their style e.g. face to face, email, but encourage the same

Invest in what they value recognition, technology, training

Accept life style and life goals – e.g. Gen Xers want to ‘have a life’

Be flexible, not judgmental

Future Directions/Final Thoughts

- Strain and Gain – family needs, workforce needs; differences by country
- How to accomplish/need for workplace flexibility
- Directions for the future- Ideal Policy – Optimize health, productivity and well being of older person, his/her family and employment