

## Reflections

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(Ph.D. '89)

The first thing I'd like to say is that I'm happy to be here. I guess I'm here because I got Mike Finch's money in 1977. I was accepted to both Madison and here, but Madison didn't offer me money, so I came here. I'm even happier since they got Jim McCartney's first name corrected on the program, because the very first one I got said Paul. When I saw that, I thought to myself, I didn't know the cute Beatle was a MN sociologist--and do I really want to be his opening act?

Actually, the confused name business was not the first question that arose in my mind when I saw the preliminary program. Like Nancy Wisely and others, I wondered what I was doing on this panel, because with a dissertation entitled "Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction in Spouses Experiencing the Transition to Parenthood," (which was advised by Don McTavish and abetted by Bob Leik--both of whom were unwaveringly supportive in that as well as everything else I've done), I tend to think of myself as belonging on either one of the two morning panels. However, when I sat down and looked at my vita, I realized that quite a number of my publications fit in this categorization--beginning with my very first one, coauthored with my fellow MN alum, Ralph Cherry, on "Modernization and the Status of the Aged in China," published in *TSQ* in 1981.

Shortly thereafter, my graduate student office was moved to the bowels of Wilson Library. Surely this was excellent preparation for the marginality I've experienced having spent my career in what Pierre Van de Berghe referred to as "academic Siberia" in his book *Academic Gamesmanship*.

A few years later, I published a piece in the *Rural Sociologist* with Jean Bauer from Family Social Science here at Minnesota, in which we examined the effects of ethnicity (among

other things) on “Family Farm and Estate Planning.” This conformed with my identity salience, and also the parameters of this panel

The next year, I authored a paper published in *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*, that examined the effects of institutional context on educational outcomes between a major university and a community college. I was still in graduate school and I happened to be teaching at both. This would become the hallmark of my research, because when you teach five courses a semester, if you going to find time to do any research, it has to be opportunistic--and I had long ago learned from Gary Fine, (while I was his student, I don't believe that this was a lesson he intentionally taught), that you can do research on just about anything!

It was about 10 years before I wrote anything else that fits this panel, but in 1998, the *Great Plains Sociologist* published my piece, “Citizens’ Academy: Police Culture, Community Policing, or Public Relations.”

My most recent peer-reviewed publication also fits this panel’s categorization. My study of “Cancer Care Across Two Contexts” (published in *Illness, Crisis and Loss*), compares the impact of organizational climate on care at a major university medical center and a private, religiously affiliated hospital, using Tonnies’ seminal concepts of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*.

Additionally, the two pieces I’m working on now probably fit, as well. The first of these (with Karen Seashore, from the Department of Educational Policy and Administration here), is a critique of the current direction of our discipline of sociology--in which I believe we’ll be able to use some of the ideas Craig Calhoun expressed in his address. We’re preparing this for submission to *The American Sociologist*. The second on my current efforts is a comparative piece on the tourist experience of Ixtapa and Havana--both of which I had the opportunity to visit (legally, I might add) in the past few months, which I will present at the fall meetings of the Sociologists of Minnesota Oh, the arduous nature of field research!

So, despite my initial skepticism about being included on this panel, I guess I probably do belong here after all. Thanks for listening.