

Samuel R. Cohn, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Sociology
Class of 1972



Samuel Ross Cohn is an author and an Associate Professor of Sociology at Texas A and M University; he graduated from Needham High School in 1972. His junior and senior high school years coincided with the Vietnam War and a turbulent society which was forcing a reevaluation of basic cultural beliefs. Cohn believes these changing times and his Needham High School experience greatly influenced his choice of careers. During these eventful days Cohn remembers his teachers as making school innovating and challenging without stifling the fun of students and teachers working together to accomplish the substance of learning. Another NHS element that directed Cohn toward sociology was an independent study course which focused on racial problems in American cities. These readings spiked his curiosity about the causes of poverty and social conflict and to this day his research returns to these questions.

While at NHS Cohn was active on the student committee which worked to secure the establishment of the Alternative High School. Given the unrest of the society, the establishment of the Alternative High School was seen as a positive response to the questions of power and diversity by allowing students to "own" their education by tailoring it to their own interests and needs. In spite of the era's horrors of war and racial and generational conflicts, Cohn's NHS experience was a positive influence on his future career.

After NHS Cohn matriculated to Yale University where he received a B.A. degree in 1976. Already convinced of what he wanted to do, Cohn went to the University of Michigan to earn a Masters and Ph. D. in sociology. He left Michigan in 1981 and went to the University of Wisconsin in Madison to teach in the depart-

ment of Sociology and Industrial Relations. In 1989 Cohn left Wisconsin to go to the Department of Sociology at Texas A and M University.

In addition to many journal articles, Cohn has published two books based on his research. These books attempt to delineate a societal problem and offer solutions or at least a better understanding of the underlying causes of those problems. The first book is the *The Process of Occupational Sex-Typing* in which the research empirically demonstrates that sex-typing in the workplace is based on economics, specifically the cost structure of the firm. Cohn's model allowed him to predict the timing of equal opportunity for women in the American economy as a whole and in particular occupations and particular industries. Cohn was awarded the American Sociological Association's Jesse Barnard Award for this book.

Cohn's second book *When Strikes Make Sense and Why* is the first book to test which strategies of union conflict actually result in added benefits for workers. This book includes a rigorous statistical analysis of the effectiveness of various tactics available to unions in labor negotiations and suggests the most effective strategies.

Cohn is currently working on two books. The first refers directly back to his independent study project at NHS. With the help of a grant from the National Science Foundation, Cohn has undertaken a statistical analysis of black-white unemployment differentials in twelve major American cities. His work investigates the same influence of urban transportation and planning on employment that he read about in the first month of his independent study. Cohn's other book in process is an investigation the origins and causes of small business development in Brazil.

In addition to his research and teaching Cohn is a practicing Buddhist and is very active in the Austin Buddhist community. He founded their Sunday School and is very active in state-wide activities involving other Buddhist professionals.