Neither of the two explanations commonly given for this anomaly—a shortage of affordable housing and more "at risk" families—adequately accounts for the problem. Between 1983 and 1987, the city's welfare housing allowance rose by 25 percent and the supply of cheap apartments was as great as in other cities, yet the number of homeless families rose steadily. New York families are more vulnerable, Filer concedes. But while there are 30 to 50 percent more poor, female-headed families in New York than in other large cities, the city's family homeless rate is 250 percent higher.

Filer suggests a third, perverse possibility: New York's generous homeless and housing policies *encourage* families to become homeless.

Since 1984, becoming homeless has been a good way for a family to jump to the top of the monumental waiting list for public housing. Moreover, Filer writes, becoming homeless increases income, especially "if the family is able to secure placement in a hotel room rather than a city shelter." In 1987, a poor family of four in its own home typically received $326 in welfare each month, a housing allowance of $270, and $62 in food stamps. If the same family became homeless and was assigned to a hotel room, Filer points out, it would receive additional transportation and restaurant allowances worth more than $362 a month. (Overall, the city spends $25,000 annually on each sheltered homeless person; Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia spend an average of $5,500.) Not surprisingly, in 1985 more than half of New York's homeless families said that they would accept only an apartment or hotel room as shelter.

Filer argues that contrary to popular wisdom, providing more housing will only increase the number of homeless families. Since 1987, he notes, family homelessness has been dropping steadily in New York. Not coincidentally, the city began cutting back the number of hotel rooms available for homeless families four years ago.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Biting the Hand That Feeds

"Sex, Lies & Advertising" by Gloria Steinem, in *Ms.* (July–Aug. 1990), One Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036.

"If *Time* and *Newsweek* had to lavish praise on cars in general and credit General Motors in particular to get GM ads, there would be a scandal—maybe a criminal investigation. When women's magazines from *Seventeen* to *Lear's* praise beauty products in general and credit Revlon in particular to get ads, it's just business as usual."

So writes Gloria Steinem, founding editor of *Ms.*, in the premier issue of the feminist magazine's latest incarnation in a new, no-ads format.

When she started *Ms.* in 1972, Steinem was appalled to discover that many advertisers would buy space only on the condition that the magazine run "complementary" articles alongside their products and mention their products by name in articles. Pillsbury, Kraft, and other food manufacturers refused to advertise with *Ms.* because the magazine didn't print recipes. Cosmetic companies such as L'Oreal and Estee Lauder demanded that the magazine run a "beauty tips" column to put readers in the right "frame of mind" to buy their products. (Steinem says that a cover story on Soviet women undid years of negotiating to get Revlon cosmetic ads: The Soviet women on the cover weren't wearing makeup.) Other large companies, such as Procter & Gamble, wouldn't place ads in any women's magazine that included articles on gun control or abortion, among other hot topics.

Many women's magazines are nothing more than "giant ads," Steinem laments. Of 326 pages in the May 1990 edition of

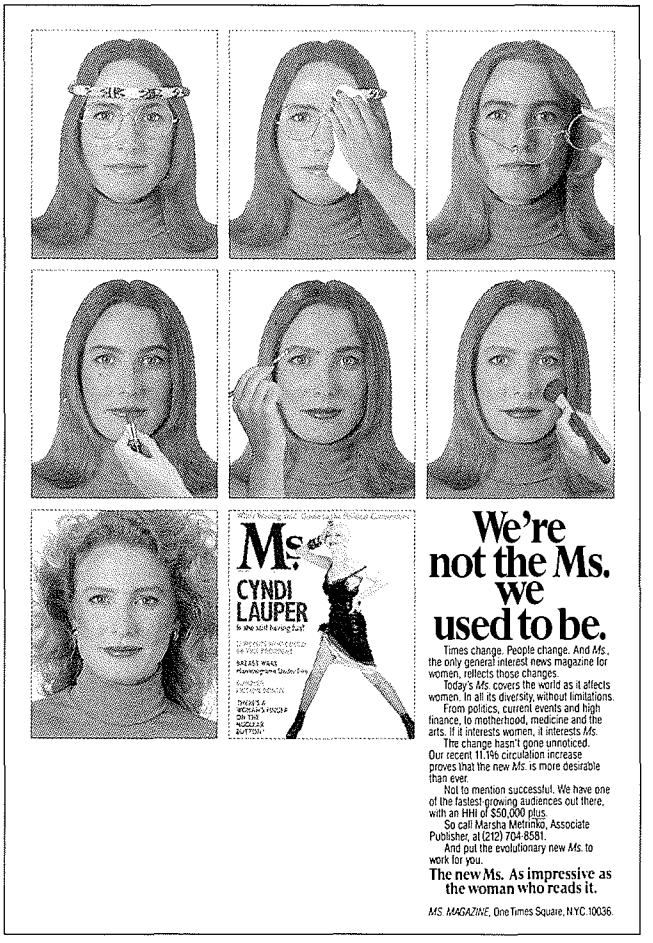
Elle magazine, for example, only 39 weren't ads or ad-related. *Glamour*'s April 1990 edition had 339 pages; 274 were either ads or ad-related articles. Similar ratios hold true for *Vogue*, *Redbook*, and *Family Circle*.

She points to *Lear's*, which recently featured a woman executive on the cover. The contents page said she was wearing Guerlain makeup and a new fragrance by the same company. Inside the magazine were full-page ads for two Guerlain products. The woman on the cover, it turned out, was Guerlain's public relations director.

Food and cosmetic companies regularly advertise in magazines such as *People* and the *New Yorker* without demanding recipes or beauty columns, Steinem adds. So where does the habit of controlling the content of women's magazines come from? "Tradition." Since the invention of the clothing pattern in 1863 and the mass-manufacture of patent medicines, women's magazines have been little more than catalogues of products alongside articles on how to use them.

This "ad-edit linkage" is slowly creeping beyond the women's magazine market, Steinem warns: The *New York Times Magazine* recently ran an article on "firming creams" that mentioned advertisers; *Vanity Fair* profiled a major advertiser, Ralph Lauren.

"What could women's magazines be like if they were as free as books? as realistic as newspapers? as creative as films?" The only way women will ever find out, says Steinem, is by refusing to buy magazines "that are just editorial extensions of ads."



Ms. *courted skeptical advertisers with this 1988 trade magazine advertisement, which suggests that even feminists, such as the Gloria Steinem look-alike pictured, buy makeup.*

Not Necessarily The News

"About Face: Blacks and the News Media" by William J. Drummond, in *American Enterprise* (July–Aug. 1990), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

During the 1960s, black leaders and the news media were allies in the struggle against Jim Crow. Today, however, says William J. Drummond, a professor of Journalism at Berkeley, "a deep suspicion of the news media" appears to be endemic among blacks.

The civil rights movement, Drummond recalls, provided reporters and editors with the kind of predictable storyline and easily identifiable heroes and villains that they yearn for: "Negroes heroically mount