
SOCIETY

core group, but only 5.3 percent of the people in the survey. But Coe argues that race and sex discrimination, not the lure of welfare, is the cause. And while more than half of all black women in the entire survey group received welfare at some time, only 15 percent of black women became long-term dependents.

Coe disputes the belief of some critics that welfare does more to hurt the poor than help them. The basic function of the system is to help those experiencing temporary hard times to make ends meet. The existence of a small dependent population facing long odds in the marketplace, he contends, does not justify "the wholesale condemnation of the liberal welfare state."

PRESS & TELEVISION

**Journalists vs.
Businessmen**

"Media and Business Elites: Two Classes in Conflict?" by Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1982), Subscription Dept., 20th & Northampton Sts., Easton, Pa. 18042.

Little love is lost between America's top journalists and business executives. This conflict should surprise no one, say Rothman and Lichter, political scientists at Smith College and George Washington University, respectively. Not only are the two groups at odds on social and political issues, but each views the other as the most powerful group in America.

The differences emerged in the authors' survey of 240 "Big League" journalists (TV networks, the *New York Times*, etc.) and of *Fortune 500* top and middle level executives. The businessmen tended to embrace traditional morality far more than did the journalists. Nearly half the executives, for example, felt strongly that adultery is wrong, as opposed to 15 percent of the newsmen. Half the journalists, but only 12 percent of the businessmen, identified themselves as agnostics or atheists.

Media professionals were also more liberal on economic issues: 68 percent favored government redistribution of income, while only 29 percent of the executives did so. In addition, Rothman and Lichter found that 45 percent of the journalists—twice as many as the businessmen—believed that the U.S. legal system favors the wealthy. (Television personnel surveyed were far more liberal than their print media brethren.)

Differences in social background accounted for much of the business-media divergence, the authors say. Journalists had more "urban, secular, highly educated, and affluent upper-middle-class professional backgrounds" than did businessmen. They were more likely to have inherited wealth or to have attended a prestigious university; 12 percent of the journalists and 28 percent of the executives grew up in blue-collar families.

Underlying attitudes affected both groups' perceptions of reality. Most

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journalists and businessmen objectively summarized news stories. But when they were asked to concoct stories based solely on pictures, their latent political and social views surfaced. Even though two-thirds of the journalists felt that newsmen can (and should) be impartial, it is difficult, the authors argue, to guard against subjective judgments when making basic editorial decisions—which stories are important, what “angle” they should be given.

Their divergent views make journalists and businessmen natural antagonists, the authors suggest. But because journalists “help depict reality for the rest of society,” their biases take on special significance.

*A Prime-Time
TV Censur*

“The World According to Television” by George Gerbner and Nancy Signorielli, in *American Demographics* (Oct. 1982) P.O. Box 68, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

Americans watch an average of over four hours of television daily, one-third of it during prime time. They see a world of adventure, melodrama, and fantasy. Gerbner and Signorielli, of the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Communications, add that even the population of these shows is a poor reflection of reality.

In an analysis of some 14,000 characters appearing in 878 prime-time entertainment shows from 1969 to 1981, they found that men, who make up 49 percent of the U.S. population, were 73 percent of the prime-time population. Nearly half the white men were between 35 and 50 years old—the “age of authority” on TV, the authors say—while nonwhite men tended to be younger. Blacks were underrepresented by 27 percent compared to the real world, Hispanics by 63 percent.



The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, which aired from 1952 to 1966, idealized family life. Today's shows depart from reality in other ways: Single white women appear more than twice as often as in real life.

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