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## [ **“Gospodyni” – a social magazine for women living in rural areas. Characteristics of the content and functions in 1985–1986**

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**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to present a social magazine for women living in rural areas. The analysis concerns the years 1985–1986. The publication consists of two parts. In the first one the content of the periodical was discussed, in the second one it was indicated what functions the journal performed in selected years.

**Keywords:** women’s press, Polish People Republic’s press, functions of the women’s press

The following article aims to present the contents of the “Gospodyni” [“Housewife”] magazine and specify its functions in 1985–1986. At that time, the periodical was the weekly of Krajowy Związek Rolników [the National Union of Farmers], Kółka i Organizacje Rolnicze [Agricultural Clubs and Associations], for Koła Gospodyń Wiejskich [the Country Housewives’ Clubs], for women of the countryside. “Gospodyni” was published by Państwowe Wydawnictwo Rolnicze [the National Agricultural and Forestry

Publishing House]. The editorial office was located in Warsaw at Al. Jerozolimskie 28 (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 2, p. 15).

It is worth emphasizing that the magazine has a long publishing tradition and has been on the press market since 1957. As the magazine editors inform:

In post-war Poland, it was the only magazine addressed to women living in the countryside. In the 70s of the twentieth century, every week, “Gospodyni” reached over 500,000 Polish homes (*Gospodyni. O nas*, 2019).

Today, “Gospodyni” is a magazine for active and busy women looking for some inspiration – for women attached to universal values like family, love and friendship as well as women who boldly go through life and are able to share their experience. Tradition, closeness and credibility are the three words most often used by readers regarding “Gospodyni” (*Gospodyni. O nas*, 2019). Enthusiasts of “Gospodyni” are very often engaging in social activities, for example in the country housewives’ clubs” (*Gospodyni. O nas*, 2019). Periodical – as the editors say:

(...) is a magazine which covers a wide range of issues related to the life of a modern resident of village. In each issue of this bimonthly, published by the Cogito Group, we present women’s portraits. In interviews and reportages we present social phenomena and customs. We advise on how to care for health and beauty and how to care about your garden. The magazine is complemented by a wide culinary section based largely on the recipes of the Readers (*Gospodyni. O nas*, 2019).

The magazine is currently being published as a bimonthly and costs 6.90 PLN.

### **Purpose of research**

As indicated above, the aim is to present content and description of the function performed by the “Gospodyni” magazine. The text is of preliminary nature and could be an inspiration for further research on this type of press. The 104 issues, representative of the 1980s, from number 1 (from 6.01.1985) to 52 (from 30.12.1986) were analysed. According to the author, these editions comprehensively show and define the character and functions of the magazine.

It is a pioneering research. Never before had the title been the subject of the scientific reflection which results have been published in the form of articles or books. The only researcher who mentioned “Gospodyni” is Zbigniew Bajka. Author in *Czytelnictwo Prasy w Polsce Ludowej* [*The Press Readers*

in *People's Poland*] from 1976 defines the magazine's recipients and speaks about the popularity of the magazine in the 1970s<sup>1</sup>:

“Gospodyni”, in the years 1973–1974, reached the greatest popularity among people with lower education than secondary. (...) A certain percentage of older women rarely read other titles, especially the regular use of dailies, at the same time reaching for “Przyjaciółka” [lit. “Female Friend”] and “Gospodyni” and less often for “Kobieta i życie” [“Woman and life”] (Bajka, 1976, p.61).

The most important source for the author of this text was the analysis of the magazine's content. The starting point for these considerations have also become the following publications: *Wizerunek kobiety jako matki, pracownika i działaczki społecznej prezentowany na łamach prasy kobiecej w latach 1948–1956* [*Image of woman as a mother, employee and social activist presented in the women's press in 1948–1956*] (Hajdo, 2006), *Rynek prasowy w Polsce po II wojnie światowej* [*The press market in Poland after World War II*] (Tatarowski, 2010), *Prasa kobieca w Polsce w latach 1945–1995* [*Women's press in Poland in 1945–1995*] (Sokół, 1998), *Typy kultury popularnej na łamach czasopism kobiecych* [*Types of popular culture in women's magazines*] (Trzop, 2007) and *Prasa kłamie czy wychowuje? Fenomen prasy kobiecej* [*Does the press lie or educate? The phenomenon of the women's press*] (Lizurej, 2002).

The fundamental method used when describing and characterizing “Gospodyni” is the analysis of its content. The one used here was: “a research technique with the intention of objective, systematic and quantitative description of the explicit content of messages” (Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2004, p. 13). It should be added that the content analysis, as a research method, is assigned quantitative nature. It consists in counting specific, occurring in the tested material, elements or characteristics of the message and measuring their intensity, or comparing texts with a certain pattern and consequently deriving conclusions based on the ones captured numerically dependencies, regularities or tendencies (Szczepaniak, 2012, p. 85).

Among the research methods and techniques that were used when writing the article, we used the historical method – to which, above all, we owe the possibility of chronological and thematic ordering of the press, embedding an analysis of its activities and determination of the status in specific historical circumstances and social, political, structural, economic and cultural conditions that accompanied them.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1973, the magazine had a circulation of 215,000. copies, in 1974 – 262 thousand copies of “Przyjaciółka” at that time had a circulation of 1882 thousand copies (1973) and 1825 (1974).

The author's research task was also to define the functions fulfilled by the weekly "Gospodyni". The key assumptions are those presented by Marzena Lizurej which concern the roles played by titles addressed to women. Among them she lists the functions: informational, ludic (entertainment), advisory and educational (Lizurej, 2002, pp. 81–83). The two other functions, relaxing and aesthetic, have also taken in consideration. Other researchers have spoken about them: Izabela Kowalczyk and Edyta Zierkiewicz (2002, p. 91).

### **Content and characteristics of "Gospodyni" in 1985–1986**

[ *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie* [*The encyclopedia of knowledge about the press*] states that the women's press is:

a group of magazines (usually weeklies) whose profile is shaped in terms of women's reading needs and their current social position. (...) Their content usually consists of sections or columns devoted to fashion, household issues, raising children, family issues, etc. (Maślanka, (Ed.), 1976, p. 172).

Zofia Sokół writes that:

women's press shall be understood as a set of periodical publications intended for women, which has been indicated in the title, subtitle, program, content, manner of approaching topics, structure and language (Sokół, 1998, p. 8)

This press is edited in terms of women's interests depending on their age, education, profession, social origin, living and working environment, role and place in the family and society. In terms of content, these are the most often publications similar to the magazine's formula (Sokół, 1998, p. 8). The aforementioned definitions strictly define what the women's press is, they indicate the writing-publishing character of this type of press and also correspond to the given periods of the historical development of the women's press.

Referring to the main features of women's press given by Zofia Sokół, it should be noted that in terms of form women's press falls in the category of high volume illustrated magazines. Its content concerns issues related to family, beauty, fashion, health as well as the current position of women. Beata Trzop also suggests that the message of the magazines in this press market segment can have a diverse character. They can be feminist, family, guide, entertainment, boulevard magazines or they can also be a press for successful women (Trzop, 2007, p. 34). Therefore, the women's press is divided depending on the presented subject.

In Polish People's Republic, the women's press was understood as this group of magazines whose profile was shaped in terms of women's needs. In

this press segment, important social issues were to be addressed and problems faced by society had to be discussed. It is also worth adding after Zofia Sokół that:

(...) personal patterns and images of women in the press showed forms of women’s participation in public life. Various images and personal behavioural patterns of women were promoted, in line with the guidelines of party and government authorities (Sokół, 2012, p. 12).

Another feature of the socialist women’s press was “the constant pursuit of raising knowledge (especially practical) and the cultural level among women as well as a steady increase in their participation and position in social life” (Mielczarek, 2008, p. 58). By using the advantages of the printed press, such as: low price, topicality, speed and ease of access, mass character, periodicity and the widespread belief in the credibility of the written word, the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic tried to shape a new picture of the surrounding reality (Ćwik, 2016, p. 68). The assumptions that guided the editors of “Gospodyni” were also subordinated to this goal.

The single issue of the periodical<sup>2</sup> in 1985–1986 had an average of 16 pages and cost 15 PLN. The editor-in-chief was Renata Sławińska<sup>3</sup>, and the secretary of the editorial board was Kazimiera Toniak. Bożena Wahl and Marzena Włodarczyk (technical editor) worked on the technical development.

The editorial office consisted of the following departments: department of the communication with Readers<sup>4</sup>, overseas department, department of agriculture, social department as well as department of the household and nutrition. In the periodical, we can also find information on the terms of subscription: the magazine could be subscribed to in places where there were no branches of the RSW “Prasa-Książka-Ruch” [Eng. RSW “Press-Book-Movement”]. In cities where these were located, readers paid for subscriptions at post offices. In addition, the magazine could be subscribed abroad. At that time, the RSW “Press-Book-Movement” and Centrala Kolportażu Prasy i Wydawnictwa [The Headquarters of Publishing Houses and Publication Distribution] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 2, p. 15) dealt with distribution.

The magazine in question was characterized by an eclectic form. The editors tackled many topics, raised various problematic issues and provided entertainment, too. It should also be added that no advertising messages<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The format of the magazine was 32 x 22 cm in 1985–1986.

<sup>3</sup> She had her two deputies: Krystyna Sygnowska and Alicja Sztukowska-Królczak.

<sup>4</sup> Original spelling.

<sup>5</sup> Probably it was due to the fact that: “The development of advertising during the Polish People’s Republic was not supported by the market troubled by constant shortages. The market

appeared in the issues of the journal from 1985–1986. The journal did not maintain a permanent set of sections. However, in favour of the title, it can be added that its colourful cover fulfilled an aesthetic function; most often it presented a landscape significant for a given season.

Page two of the magazine was devoted to information on conferences and conventions during which debates about Polish countryside were led. An example is *Wszechnica Rodziny Wiejskiej. Najważniejszą jest rodzina* [*The Rural Family University. The most important is family*]. The text concerned a session that took place in Lublin in 1985. The article presented an overall view of the researchers' papers concerning rural household issues. ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, p. 2). It should be added that this column was not permanent. Depending on the magazine's issue, the column could be replaced by "Czytelnicy piszą" ["Readers write"] section, in which struggles of the magazine's readers were discussed. As an example one may take *Nie rozumiem ich* [*I don't understand them*] by Stanisław W. from the Kielce Voivodeship ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 5, p. 2)<sup>6</sup>.

On pages two and three<sup>7</sup> there was a column "Praca wyróżniona w konkursie" ["Work favoured in the competition"] (interchangeably with "Prosto z życia" ["Straight from life"]). The stories told by the readers were printed in "Prosto z życia". Examples include the text of Krystyna entitled *Moje pragnienia* [*My desires*], in which the author shares her reflections on life, human existence and problems faced by people. Krystyna encourages to abandon selfishness, calls to learn to see other people, to care for family relationships: "We want to change the world for the better, if only the one around us. Maybe start from changing yourself? As long as the Earth spins, we have a chance for a better tomorrow. If we are not indifferent to the evil and the pain of other people, we can always be human, despite such difficult times. Let's stop fighting for a piece of sausage when every few minutes a child dies of hunger in the world" ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, pp. 2–3). The second example is Sławka's article entitled *Dylematy* [*Dilemmas*] ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 2, p. 4). The author points to the destructive impact that alcohol can have on family life. It should be emphasized that these columns were an important element of the magazine because they were associated with the social and educational character of the periodical.

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that throughout the entire Polish People's Republic belonged to the manufacturer. The majority of manufacturers easily found buyers for their products so they did not need to search for customers via advertising" (Perczak, 2007, p. 137).

<sup>6</sup> It has been emphasised in the article that a lot of young people are not familiar with the values of Christianity.

<sup>7</sup> In some issues this column was moved to page four, e.g. in the issue No. 2 from 13.01.1985.

The fourth page of “Gospodyni” contained a column entitled “Z sali sądowej” [“From the courtroom”]. It discussed the tragic fates of people. An example would be here *Powrót do miasta* [Return to the city] by Agata Bilka. The text describes the story of a young girl who murdered her child as a result of tragic events in her life – the lack of financial resources and prospects (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 4). Pages four and five of the weekly were reserved for articles about places which are worth visiting due to their aesthetic and cognitive aspects or important historical events (e.g. Under the patronage of J. Kuźnicka-Kucharz circles, in which the characteristics of the Kashubia were made, “Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, pp. 4–5). This column, as indicated by the carried out analysis, also changed its position in writing. It was published on pages eight and nine of the weekly – e.g. *Sfinks z Deli* [The Sphinx of Deli] by Teresa Marzyńska – “Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 9).

Page six contained a column with articles presenting women of merit for their town, e.g. *Kobiety z Ożarówic* [The women of Ożarówice] by Jerzy Mazur. The article presented the active members of the Koło Gospodyń Wiejskich [the Country Housewives’ Club] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 6). On the aforementioned page, the column “Śladem publikacji” [“Following publications”] was also placed by the editors, where the further life of the magazine’s earlier protagonists was being described. An example of this could be an article *Nie spisana na straty BAMA* [BAMA saved]. Pages seven and eight are devoted to sartorial advice (e.g. *Roboty i robótki* [Handcrafts] “Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 8) enriched with photographs and infographics, e.g. of a pleated sweater and knitted slippers. Page nine of “Gospodyni” was dedicated to the presentation of interesting personages. In the issue dated 20 January 1985, in the article titled *Serce i pióro dla Warszawy* [The heart and pen for Warsaw] by Krystyna Kolińska (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 9) the figure of Alceo Valcini was depicted: Italian by origin, permanently living in Paris, enamoured with Poland, its traditions and customs. Alceo Valcini wrote a book titled *Golgota Warszawy* [Warsaw’s Golgotha] which has been translated into Polish.

The column “Odpowiedzi, porady” [“Responses, advice”] was placed on pages ten, eleven and twelve. It contained tips considered as useful to the readers of “Gospodyni”. Among them we can highlight *Dziedziczenie testamentowe* [Testate succession] written by Krystyna W. from the Olsztyn Voivodeship, *Uprawa gorczyzcy czarnej* [The black mustard cultivation] by Barbara K. from the Lublin Voivodeship, *Wybór szkoły* [The choice of school] by Anna from the Radom Voivodeship (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 2, pp. 10–11). The permanent elements [of the weekly] were also the how-to column “ABC żywienia rodzi-

ny” [“the ABC of family nutrition”] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 2, pp. 11–12) and “Gospodyni rady mini” [“Housewife’s tiny tips”].

On page thirteen of the periodical advisory articles appear, e.g. *Poporodowe wypadnięcie macicy u krowy* [Uterine prolapse after calving] by the veterinarian W. Fijałkowski who proposed a way of healing animal (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 13).

The next two pages were meant for texts about crop and plant care: *Drzewa owocowe w ogrodzie biodynamicznym* [Fruit trees in the biodynamic orchard] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 14) or *Szkodniki jabłoni* [The apple tree pest] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 14). On page fifteen crossword and editorial page were being printed by editors whereas the last page was meant for entertainment.

### **Functions of “Gospodyni”**

As the analysis showed, “Gospodyni” fulfilled all the aforementioned functions at the examined time. The informational function was the primary goal of the magazine’s editors. Journalists tried not only to take up the most current topics relevant to readers, but also to broaden the horizons of their recipients and provide them with curiosities. It should be emphasized that the editors of the weekly did not raise political issues<sup>8</sup>.

Among the most relevant and current topics we can point to those related to the life of the village and the problems faced by its inhabitants. The article *Abysmy mogli żywić się sami* [That we could feed ourselves] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 2) presented problems in agriculture caused by crop failure, as well as high prices of food products. The editors encouraged readers to use the drainage programme:

In a situation where food self-sufficiency is the point of honour for every farmer, the dream of every citizen and the care of the authorities of our country, everyone who can – should think about what to do to accelerate the implementation of the drainage program, because our land must give abundant crops so that we do not have to buy cereals abroad (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 2).

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<sup>8</sup> The women’s press in the discussed period was mainly of social, advisory and ... nature. It differed significantly from the women’s press published in 1948–1956 which did not follow this pattern. The communist authorities in Poland, following the Soviet Union example, attached great importance to the press because it was supposed to convey the resolutions and decisions of the governing (Hajdo, 2006, p. 55).



The journalists of the weekly also made their readers aware of issues related to the development of villages abroad. It can be illustrated, for example, with the article *Boso, ale Poloneżem* [*Barefoot but driving a Poloneż*] by Danuta Rafał (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 19, pp. 2–3):

There are countries where services for agriculture are so well developed that the farmer does not have to bother with putting his products off the farm or buying and importing inputs. All this is handled by companies that support agriculture. He also does not have to drive and order services personally. He will do it over the phone, even in the case of purchase of a suit and a regenerative meal with delivery to the field.

As the author of the text adds, there is still a lot to do in Poland:

Rigid limits, tax policy, bureaucracy, material shortages, are not conducive to development. Perhaps, apart from cooperative and craft services, some new companies will be interested in rural services, and it will start to pay off? (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 19, pp. 2–3).

The editors also encouraged residents to care for national property. An example of this is *Piękno niepowtarzalne* [*Inimitable beauty*] – an interview by Alicja Sztukowska with Franciszek Midura, deputy director of Zarząd Muzeów i Ochrony Zabytków [Department of Museums and Monuments Protection] by Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki [The Ministry of Art and Culture]<sup>9</sup> (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 10, p. 4), who talked about the need for protection of native cultural goods by the society:

I would like to appeal to the village community and organizations operating there for an interest towards abandoned buildings which the restorer does not allow to dismantle. They could be revived and it is not something that could be made from Warsaw. Any community can do it on its own (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 10, p. 4).

Journalists also informed about the possibilities of self-development. The article *Kursy dla dziewcząt* [*Courses for girls*] encouraged to undertake education within the Uniwersytety Ludowe [Folk High Schools]<sup>10</sup> of ZSMP [Polish Socialist Youth Union]. Candidates could choose the following subjects: literature, history, psychology, pedagogy, methodology of social and cultural work, organization of a rural household, vegetable growing, gardening (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 19, p. 6).

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<sup>9</sup> Those are historical names. [translators’ note]

<sup>10</sup> In Poland there existed *uniwersytety ludowe* [lit. *folk universities*] and *uniwersytety powszechnie* [lit. *common universities*] which in English are described by the same term: ‘*folk high schools*’. [translators’ note]

In addition, the editors of the weekly tried to expand the reading interests of the magazine's lovers. "Inspiracje" ["Inspirations"], a monthly of the socio-cultural movement, was considered a noteworthy journal:

"Inspiracje", together with the readers, are the organizers of cultural initiatives and present the experiences of amateur movement activists in their magazine. (...) You can learn how to popularise reading, chess, how to organize a collector's club, how to make various games and plays by yourself. (...) There are plays for children and adults, proposals of choral and early music within the magazine. (...) We encourage you to read "Inspiracje" where everyone will find something for themselves ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 2, pp. 4–5).

The forms that supported children's education were also presented to recipients. The editors favoured e.g. a TV programme called "Domowe przedszkole" ["Home kindergarten"] and, at the same time, were encouraging parents to complete the survey about it ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 19, p. 15). Its results were to be helpful in improving the formula of the programme.

Among the curiosities that appeared in the pages of "Gospodyni" the following articles can be indicated: *Ona czy on?* [*She or he?*]<sup>11</sup> ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, p. 16) or *Mniej warte* [*Less worthy*]<sup>12</sup> ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, p. 16).

The ludic (entertainment) function in the case of "Gospodyni" can be combined with the relaxation function. Its task was to provide entertainment, fulfil the need of fun and curiosity, to contribute to rest (Worsowicz, 2016, p. 86). This function was performed in the text by placing crosswords or numerical puzzles ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, p. 15). An additional incentive to fill them out were prizes – books or cosmetics ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 2, p. 15). In addition, the sections "Niedzielny relaks" ["Sunday relax"] or "Poznaj swój kraj" ["Get to know your country"] served nice and relaxing leisure time. Interesting facts about Poland appeared in the last column. Entertainment was also to be favoured by the witty "Przysłowia Polskie" ["Polish proverbs"], jokes, "Na wesoło" ["In a cheerful way"], "Anegdoty" ["Anecdotes"], "Humor zagraniczny" ["Foreign humour"] and funny articles posted in "Z książki humoru ludowego" ["From the book of the folk humour"], e.g. regarding the harmfulness of human drugs (*O szkodliwości alkoholu* [*About the deleterious effects of alcohol*] – "Gospodyni", 1985, No. 3, p. 15).

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<sup>11</sup> A nineteen-year-old Italian teen miss turned out to be a man.

<sup>12</sup> The text referred to the situation of women from Oman who, according to the norms and regulations in force there, had less rights than men.

In turn, the implementation of the function related to the provision of advice was favoured by guide sections, e.g. “Dla Ciebie i domu” [“For you and your home”] (stain removal, rules for wicker care) (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 12) or “ABC żywienia rodziny” [“ABC of family nutrition”] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, pp. 11–12) (cooking recipes). The publication of this type of guidelines resulted from the fact that home and family were considered one of the most important domains of female activity. Caring for the household, cultivating tradition, organizing everyday and visiting life, caring for social relations, and above all for the comfort of the household members were among the important tasks of women.

It is also worth adding that in the pages the journal also included advice on growing plants, e.g. the health medicinal section “Rośliny lecznicze” [“Healing plants”] discusses the health benefits of common juniper and blackthorn (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 3, p. 15). In addition to the short tips contained in the above mentioned general columns, there were advisory articles that have cognitive character. They referred to the various areas of life (farm, family, social relations) and showed ways of solving problems. Advice was based on the specific guidelines, which were written in the imperative style. The intention of this type of articles was also to establish closer, friendly relationship between readers and editors. “Gospodyni” printed many practical recommendations – how to raise children well, without lapses and mistakes. The magazine covered every problem of a child’s life, mentioned specific topics and problems related to an adolescent descendant. Thanks to this, women who were unable to find themselves in the position of a mother – e.g. did not know how to deal with a tiny child – could find a set of guidelines in the magazine every week. There was also a guide on how to protect not only yourself, but above all the children, against diseases:

It should be remembered that it is necessary to take care of the child’s health before its birth, providing health care for the future mother. This will increase birth ads for a healthy child. It is also important in what conditions it will be born (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 16, pp. 6–7).

Examples include the article *Moje dziecko i ja* [My child and I] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 10) which discussed the problem of jealousy between siblings. The editors among the solutions that could be a remedy to this difficult situation pointed out:

Aware of the reasons and consequences of the jealousy of an older child for a younger, we should not exaggerate in the use of remedies when they are not needed because we will torment ourselves, and the situation between siblings before we improve it – we will worsen it. You need to be sensitive

to any changes in the behaviour of an older child to intervene in time. However, we should do it gently, with tact and without exaggeration (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 10).

Interestingly, one of the roles assigned to the woman by the editors was the role of interior designer. Ladies were inspired to arrange their own houses and apartments in an amateur fashion. This was due to the fact that the image of an energetic, resourceful, active and economical woman was propagated at that time. Practical advice was also presented to make the space look beautiful and modern. This thesis is illustrated by the following examples: *Stare jak nowe* [*The old one as new one*] by Joanna Domańska (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 30, pp. 8–9) or *Parawany* [*Folding screens*] by Joanna Domańska (“Gospodyni”, 1986, No. 2, pp. 8–9).

It should also be added that the readers of “Gospodyni” were also encouraged to sew clothes on their own. For this purpose, tailor patterns were added, enriched with colourful pictures of clothes, presenting various fashion trends: *Na wizytę* [*For a visit*] (“Gospodyni”, 1986, No. 2, p. 8) or *Swetry jak malowane* [*Beautiful sweaters*] (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 46, p. 8).

Advisory articles addressed to farmers also played an important role. As an example the article *Pomoc może być szkodliwa* [*Help may be harmful*] by Irena Michałowska can be given, in which the author noticed that “premature, unprofessional assistance given to cows during delivery leads to the death of almost 80% of calves” (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 23, p. 13).

It should be emphasized that the advisory articles occupied an important place in “Gospodyni”. These types of publications were a response to “the strong recipients’ perception and mainly culturally generated demand for consultancy” (Worosowicz, 2016, p. 85). They performed various functions: simple and effective ways of solving problems were indicated, the skills of specific action in a specific situation in the future were developed, tips that made the life of the recipient better, more convenient, more simple were given. In addition, these types of texts helped to build a community with people who found themselves in a similar situation and coped [with it], as well as with those who indicated specific solutions.

In turn, the educational function was performed by posting historical articles that were regularly published in the magazine. Their aim was not only to present significant events from the past but also to present profiles of people with merit for Poland (not only due to the underground resistance activity but also, among others, scientific or artistic). Examples include: *Po latach* [*After years*] by Barbara Maćkowiak, in which she describes the fate of the settlers who came to Lubusz Land in 1945 and they had difficulties:

Children were born in wagons. At the stops, people drove horses and cows to the pastures. There were various talks in the wagons that it would be a common land in Poland and no land reform, that fights were still taking place in the vicinity of the Oder. They decided to stick together (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 21, p. 5).

As the author further adds:

It was terribly hard (...) There were no schools, buildings were destroyed, lessons were taught in the open air, there were no books. Only stubbornness and work of people who did not give in to adversity. (...) There were no hospitals or clinics. Grandmothers took delivery.

Another example is the article *Powrót do Macierzy* [*Return to Motherland*] by K.G., which talks about the development of agriculture after joining the Regained Territories to Poland (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 19, p. 2).

Among the profiles of people who made a special mark on the pages of the history of our country, we can mention guerilla fighting with Germany during World War II. In the *Drugi front* [*Second front*] publication by Barbara Maćkowiak (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 6) presented the profiles of women active in the resistance movement (Janina Bigo, Maria Gizówna, Zofia Janczówna, Zofia Rysiówna, prof. Anna Sokołowska) who obtained information regarding arrests, pacifications, informers and even army movements. These messages were often the basis for armed actions or operations weakening the occupier’s strength: “Whatever they did against Germans, it gave moral satisfaction and restored dignity. Every successful action was a gift for Poland” (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 6).

The profiles of outstanding people were also presented in “Mała Galeria Twórców” [“Artist’s Small Gallery”]. In *Za progiem wielkiej sztuki* [*The threshold of great art*] one could read about Stanisława Czech-Walczakowa – a folk artist, highlander, chronicler of mountaineering, and “a living chronicle of the occupation struggles of Tatra couriers, the witness of heroism” (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 7, p. 6). Szczepan Aleksander Pieniążek was also included in the group of outstanding personalities. The article *Czarodziej sadów* [*The wizard of orchards*] by R. Sturlis (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 23, pp. 2–3) describes the profile and biography of a professor, writing:

After World War II, he was the only orchardist doctor in Poland with the title of professor obtained at an American university. He run the Department of Horticulture at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. He managed it, conducting extremely efficient didactic and scientific activity for over 20 years (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 23, pp. 2–3).

As we read further, in 1950 he created the Research Institute of Pomology and Floriculture in Skierniewice. Every year, many scholars from all over the world came to his invitation. As he stated in one of the interviews:

I was lucky that I was able to gather around me a group of young, talented people for whom pomology was a real passion. They were the ones who implemented my ideas brought from the USA.

As it was written, professor Pieniążek:

is a beautiful example of a scholar who, with his research passion, influenced the service of agricultural practice and the service of man. He did things that seemed to surpass the strength of one man. And that is why he was called as wizard of Polish orchards (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 23, pp. 2–3).

Homage was also paid to Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz. In the article *Fenomen Witkacego* [*Witkacy's Phenomenon*], Andrzej Chruszczyński (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 19, p. 9) presented the artist's figure and his artistic works.

The analysis shows that the editors of “Gospodyni” had in mind educating the society not only in the context of current but also historical events in order to shape its historical awareness. A closer look was brought upon figures who played a significant role in the development of the country not only through educational or artistic activity but also through activities contributing to Poland's independence.

One of the goals of the aesthetic function was, however, to systematically give dynamics to the layout of the magazine in question and increase its attractiveness (Szyłko-Kwas, 2004, p. 187). The factors that were supposed to have an aesthetic function in “Gospodyni” include mainly press photography. The photographs (mainly on the cover) presented Polish landscapes that were characteristic for a given season. In addition, the cover included photos from photo-reportage or reportage printed within the magazine<sup>13</sup>. An example is *Brama do Meksyku* [*The gateway to Mexico*] by Elżbieta Dzikowska (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 16, p. 9). The aesthetic function was also performed by photographs from reportages or photo-reportages from travel. It was usually three or four photographs. They were characterised by good quality and rich colours, such as Walenty Schweitzer's *Odkrywca z Biskupina* [*Discoverer from Biskupin*] (“Gospodyni”, No. 15, 1985, p. 9). In addition, photographs of

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<sup>13</sup> This include strongly associated with reality photographs of reportages' protagonists. The aim was to show their everyday life, relationships between people and various events in which they took part. Thanks to the photographs, the recipients found their character traits in the people, got to know the environment from which they came from and could understand easier the motives they were guided by.

dishes whose recipes could be found in the weekly magazine were printed, as well as solutions offered to readers who planned to decorate the interiors of their homes according to the presented architectural trends. In each issue of “Gospodyni” there were also published photos of embroidery and proposals of tailoring patterns.

It should be emphasized that the photographs appearing in “Gospodyni” were mostly colourful and clear as well as of good quality. They were definitely different from the photographs published in the press, characteristic of the Polish People’s Republic times, photographs that “resembled black and white spots, requiring extensive reworking so that they could be printed at all and could serve as illustrations to the text” (Ruta, 2009, p. 140).

In addition to the abovementioned functions, “Gospodyni” also fulfilled a social function. It was one of the most important roles assigned to the magazine. The editorial office set itself the goal of influencing the social consciousness of the readers and shaping their attitudes. That is why the magazine often discussed the problems faced by the society of the time. By disseminating this type of information, they were given the status of public affairs (Pisarek (Ed.), 2006, p. 63). Among the examples we can point to the frequently raised problem of alcoholism:

In letters to the editorial office, readers often write about dramas that are caused by alcoholism. Battered wives ask for advice on how to oppose the criminal consequences of their husband’s alcohol abuse. They ask how to protect their children and themselves from beatings and fights. How do you force your husband to support a home? (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 15, p. 5).

The editors were also pointing out the causes of poverty. In the article entitled *Ubóstwo zwinione* [*Poverty – through one’s own fault*] Sławka emphasizes that poverty results from the laziness of some farmers who, instead of working, wait for financial support from the state:

The farmer has a plenty of excuses to justify it. It was SKR [Spółdzielnia Kółek Rolniczych – the Cooperative of Agricultural Clubs] that did not provide him with the service on time, it was aura or illness, and most often he is haunted by a simple bad luck. He was born unlucky and will remain so. Even the land has become very hard on him. (...) As soon as he got married to this farm, the farmer had extensive and ambitious plans. He wanted to change everything, to modernise. When there was both: a desire and a strength, his father-in-law did not allow anything to be changed, when he was gone the desire was over (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 5, p. 4).

The lack of education was also indicated as one of the important issues that concerned the Polish countryside. The blame for this was placed mainly

on parents who did not care about their children's education and did not understand how important it was:

It's far to school so why put the kids at risk of getting cold and tired. They don't lose much because it is difficult for them to acquire science anyway. They will not become professors or officials. They don't stand a chance, moreover there's a lot of both, and there are not many people to work at the farm ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 6, p. 4).

The situation of the elderly, who were very often abandoned by family members, was also described. In the publication *Smutny powrót i co dalej?* [*Sad return and what's next?*] the editorial staff admitted that the article (placed in the issue No. 7 of "Gospodyni" in 1985) was a journalistic provocation:

We were curious how our readers would react to the fate of a lonely, old man. We received more than 100 letters, which made us think and reflect. In our daily editorial work we encounter examples of exceptional heartlessness and indifference to the elderly, often forgotten and abandoned even by their own children ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 18, p. 6).

As the author further added:

Many people came directly to the editorial office, offering help and care. Some of them were very disappointed when we refused to give them the address and name of the article's protagonist. We have no right to do so. There are cases where people are robbed and even killed for money ("Gospodyni", 1985, no. 18, p. 6).

On the other hand, the editorial staff presented also the profiles of people recognized as authorities who could serve as examples for the society. This conclusion is illustrated, for example, by the publication about Zygfryd Dziekański entitled *Spisany na straty* [*Written off*] by A. Sztukowska-Królczak ("Gospodyni", 1985, No. 32, pp. 3–4). The text presents the life story of the article's protagonist. When he became an invalid, he decided that:

he will prove to healthy people who think that an invalid should torment himself with his illness that he can be useful for the society. It is not the lack of an arm or a leg that proves a man but what he represents (p. 3).

The doctors ordered him to practise his hands by typing, as this involved all the muscles. As a result of these exercises, letters to the editorial staff and columns began to appear and Z. Dziekański became the president of the episatolary Klub Otwartych Serc [Open Hearts Club]. He was invited to symposia, scientific conventions and organized exhibitions of works created by disabled people.



A noteworthy behaviour was also presented in the text *Kto ma rację?* [*Who's right?*] by Renata Sławińska. The protagonist of the publication was a teacher who “born and raised in Warsaw with a university diploma, gave up working in one of the capital’s schools to take up work in the countryside”. Her Warsaw friends thought that:

a country school is not the right place for a single girl. She lives in a bubble, under constant fire. But she doesn’t mind this openness of life. The work in the school, in the common room, in the scouting almost completely pre-occupies her. And on her days off she can always taste the Warsaw entertainment. However, she returns with real pleasure to her village, to her children, because she knows they are waiting for her (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 36, pp. 2–3).

Katarzyna Leśniak, a cleaning lady at a village school, very devoted to her work, was also presented as an example to follow. In the article *Uśmiech spod tablicy* [*Smile from under the blackboard*] by Kazimierz Toniak, it was emphasized that:

Miss Kasia is a treasure in a school environment. Cultural, tactful, inventive, she’ll take care of everything, she remembers everything. She’s nice, modest, she doesn’t push herself forward, and the students respect her. The student’s respect [for Miss Kasia] probably comes from the fact that she trusts them and knows how to deal with them (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 33, p. 3).

By presenting such examples, the magazine also made women aware that professional work makes them economically independent, gives them a sense of freedom, self-esteem and pride in the achieved results.

It should be added that “Gospodyni” performed a social function by popularising book and press reading and education. The editorial team publicized, among others, initiative from the Toruń Voivodeship whose idea was to organize many events to encourage the reading of newspapers and books in the farmers’ environment (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 15, p. 6). Journalists also were encourage young people to enrich their knowledge and reach the next levels of education as well as to participate in various scientific competitions. In the issue 46 of “Gospodyni” from 1985, there was an announcement made<sup>14</sup> concerning Olimpiada Wiedzy o Wsi [the Countryside Knowledge Olympiad], organized by Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej [Union of Rural Youth]. This contest was directed to the people aged 16–35. The awarded attendees were offered the free participation in research and development camps as well as material prizes (“Gospodyni”, 1985, No. 46, p. 13).

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<sup>14</sup> The aforementioned issue of the magazine also features a list of preliminary questions for the first edition of the Countryside Knowledge Olympiad.

The examples discussed above indicate that “Gospodyni” not only was solidifying the values, norms and cultural patterns accepted in society but it was also carrying out its creative verification by initiating processes of social change which, in consequence, changed standards in a given group. In addition, it showed behavioral patterns. It brought closer the profiles of people (of diverse educational level and background) who could have been an inspiration for the magazine’s recipients. The editors, through their actions, made readers aware that it is worth taking risk in life and not being afraid of adversities. The attitude consisting of providing help, meeting human needs, caring for the weak and the sick was recognized by the editors as the most valuable one.

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“Gospodyni” was being published during the existence of the Polish People’s Republic, at the time when the press, the same as radio and television, was subordinated to the then ruling communist ideology and the center exercising political authority in the country, i.e. Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza [The Polish United Workers’ Party]. Media were supposed to be “a factor in revolutionary changes in social awareness, to act as a collective agitator and propagandist as well as an organizer of social and economic life” (Goban-Klas, 1999, p. 167). However, it is worth noting that the magazine was apolitical, which certainly contributed to its popularity. It was no use to search information about events and political changes in our country on its pages. The editor’s main goal was to provide information on agriculture, households and educational opportunities.

A characteristic feature of the socialist women’s press was “the constant pursuit of raising knowledge (especially practical) and the cultural level of women as well as a constant increase of their participation and position in social life” (Maślanka (Ed.), 1976, p. 172). “Gospodyni” was also supposed to serve this last purpose<sup>15</sup>. Conducted analysis shows that the subject of the magazine was very broad and universal. This hypothesis applies mainly to informative, social and advisory texts, thanks to which the magazine was not only read by women, but also by men<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> During the analysis of the magazine, it can also be seen that as the periodic developed, the subject changed and the content was also enriched with socio-economic issues happening in the country at that time and against this background models and forms of women’s participation in public life were gradually developed.

<sup>16</sup> The thesis was put forward by Zbigniew Bajka in the 1970s: “The choice of these most wanted but also the most favored magazines is clearly determined by a gender. At the same time, especially in the rural environment, also men, mostly middle-aged and elderly, read the

Its most praiseworthy function was, however, to awaken and promote a pro-social attitude, which primary goal was to treat human as the highest value.

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magazine, which generally confirmed the thesis about the “familial” nature of the magazine’s reception. “Gospodyni” was very popular in the rural environment” (Bajka, 1976, p. 60).

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## „Gospodyni” – a social magazine...

The text is a translation of the article:

Mikosz, J. (2019). „Gospodyni” – społeczny magazyn dla kobiet mieszkających na terenach wiejskich. Charakterystyka zawartości i pełnionych funkcji w latach 1985–1986. *Acta Universitatis Lodzjensis. Folia Librorum*, 2(29), 139–157. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/0860-7435.29.09>