

Careful consumption

Consumption in Dutch women's magazines from 1946 and 1956.



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Careful consumption

Consumption in Dutch women's magazines from 1946 and 1956.

MA Thesis in History

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1. Introduction

'Once again you feel the greedy urge that developed in the Hunger winter: "It is edible, and it is not rationed, take it!" The hunger is gone now, but that delicious newness of buying something that has been long gone and is now apparently coming back is still a temptation! I for one believe that we are all buying too many things and spending too much, just because things are no longer being rationed or because their relative "newness" makes them seem in vogue and something quite essential to possess. Or we buy them because they are canned and therefore easy to stock up on in case most products would once again be rationed in the future! But I believe that it would be better, not to spend so much of our funds, but to save up for the time, when more important things will be available again, such as textile, furniture and rugs.'¹

This paper is about the Netherlands in the period 1946-1956, the decade after the Second World War. I have researched the ideas and ideals about consumption, specifically among housewives. The quote above shows that these ideals were sometimes conflicting. Being a woman in that time period in the Netherlands meant many things. Women were expected to marry and have children. Most women did not work outside the house and focussed on being a mother and housewife.² Once they were married, they were also expected to take care of the household budget. The Dutch economy had to recover after the war and budgets were tight. Therefore, women in the late 1940s and 1950s were expected to be frugal. Many women meticulously kept notes of all expenses in a weekly account book.³ They were also expected to make things last by repairing or repurposing. At the same time, consumption was once again on the rise. Many products had been unavailable during the war but now that the war was over the Netherlands once again imported from all around the world.⁴ The quote at the start of the chapter shows this conflict between being frugal and taking part in the developing consumption culture. The war was over, and the spending habits that housewives developed during the war no longer made sense. The post Second World War period in the

¹ Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5). Original quote: 'Je voelt dan weer den gretigen impuls uit den hongerwinter: 't is eetbaar, en 't is niet op de bon, nemen! De hongerprikkel is nu wel weg, maar dat heerlijk nieuwe van iets, dat je lang niet gezien hebt en dat blijkbaar terugkomt, dat is ook 'n verleiding! Ik voor mij geloof, dat we allemaal te veel en te dure dingen koopen, alleen omdat ze bonvrij zijn of omdat hun relatieve "nieuwheid" lokt als 'n modestufje, dat je absoluut ook moet hebben. Of omdat ze in blik zitten en lekker gehamsterd kunnen worden als de rantsoenen weer eens omhoog mochten gaan! Maar me dunkt dat we beter deden, de loopende huishoudelijke uitgaven niet zoo op te voeren en wat te sparen voor den tijd dat er weer "ingrijpende" dingen als textiel, meubels en karpotten gekocht kunnen worden.'

² Ingrid van der Vliis, *In Holland staat een huis: honderd jaar huishoudelijk werk* (Schiedam 2007) 11.

³ Gerjan Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50* (Arnhem 2008) 89.

⁴ Maarten van Rossem, Ed Jonker and Luuc Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie: Nederland van 1945 tot nu* (Baarn 1993) 32.

context of consumption is an interesting transition from the scarcity and thrift of the war to the abundance and general prosperity of the 1960s and 1970s. For my research I looked at consumption, or the absence of consumption, by housewives after the Second World War. I have done this by looking at women's magazines published during this time. The questions I answer in this paper are: How did Dutch women's magazines address consumption in the immediate post Second World War years? And why did they address consumption in this manner?

When you want a better understanding of the daily lives of people in history, consumption is one of the main topics of research. Consumption, or the deliberate absence of consumption, is something that people had to make decisions about every day. They had to decide whether they wanted to buy essentials like food or clothing, or less essential items such as toys or decorations for the home. A family might decide to spend their money on a luxury item in order to gain status, or they might decide to save the money for hard times to come. By looking at consumption, or the absence of it, you can find out what was considered essential or luxury. What people chose to spend their money on shows the cultural values of the time. By looking at who was spending the money you can learn about gender roles and hierarchy within a household. By looking at the quality and longevity of products you can learn more about a society's idea of wealth. You can find out if people replace their products every so often with a newer version or if things were built to last. Consumption touched on all aspects of life. By looking at what people spent their money on, you can learn a lot about their lives and the society that they lived in. I will only look at consumption for the household. This means that I will not look at consumption for the housewife herself. The focus of this research is on consumption for the whole family. Consumption for the woman as an individual is not part of this paper. Therefore, fashion and cosmetics are not discussed. Even though fashion and cosmetics are a large part of consumption at the present time, they are outside the scope of this research.

There are multiple ways to research the consumption of a decade, but when researching housewives specifically, the women's magazines are a good source of information. These magazines were published weekly or once every two weeks and presented the women with an image of the perfect housewife. They contained tips and tricks on how to be a better mother and wife. The transition of the period when it comes to consumption is present in these magazines. They had articles about altering clothes to get more use out of them while at the same time also printing adverts prompting the women to buy new foods or household items. This contrast is shown in the quote at the beginning of the introduction. Taken from a women's magazine published in May 1946, it shows the deliberations of housewives just after the end of the Second World War. On the one hand women wanted to buy products that

were once again available but on the other hand they were expected to save money. Consumption within Dutch society was changing, and the women's magazines address this change.

When looking at the motivations behind the text in magazines, there is a difference between why the articles address consumption and why the advertisements address consumption. The articles are written by the people who work for the publisher of the magazine, while the advertisements are written by all the different companies who advertise in the magazine.

Articles in women's magazines

A lot of researches done into women's magazines have focussed on the connection between magazine and reader. Research into women's magazines can teach us a lot about a time period and what was expected of people, because women's magazines reflect society. The morals of the society at the time define which subjects were discussed and which ones went largely ignored. The ideas of society also defined how these subjects were discussed.⁵ This influence goes both ways. Several studies have shown the connection between reading a women's magazine and the readers sense of identity. Women's magazines reflect the standards that a society puts on women, and the female readers in their turn conform their identity to better live up to those standards. 'Women's magazines show their readers what they should consider female subjects and female pursuits and explain to their readers how they could become more feminine. "Being a woman" is given meaning by reading a women's magazine'.⁶ One of the studies that have shown the effect of reading women's magazines on the identity of the readers is the research by Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Gregory J. Hoplamazian.⁷ *Gendering the Self: Selective Magazine Reading and Reinforcement of Gender Conformity* shows the effect that women's magazines can have on a readers gender ideas and gender identity. 'Possibly even more interesting than the origins of gender-typed media exposure is the question whether this exposure in turn increases gender conformity, [...] Indeed, the analyses showed that longer exposure to female-typed magazines increased postexposure femininity levels'.⁸ After reading a women's magazine, women were more motivated to conform to the norms of femininity depicted in the magazine. Another researcher who has focussed on the connection between women's magazines and female

⁵ Iris Wassenaar, *Vrouwenbladen: spiegels van een mannenmaatschappij* (Amsterdam 1976).

⁶ Christel de Valk, *Het is echt gewoon voor meisjes: De relatie tussen het lezen van meisjes- en vrouwenbladen en sekse identiteit* (Master thesis Communicatiewetenschap, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1999) 8. Original quote: 'Vrouwenbladen laten de lezers zien wat vrouwelijke onderwerpen en bezigheden zijn, en hou vrouwelijkheid door de lezers bereid kan worden. "Vrouw zijn" krijgt betekenis door het tijdschrift te lezen.'

⁷ Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Gregory J. Hoplamazian, 'Gendering the Self: Selective Magazine Reading and Reinforcement of Gender Conformity' *Communication Research* 39:3 (2012) 358-384.

⁸ Knobloch-Westerwick and Hoplamazian, 'Gendering the Self', 379.

gender identity is Joke Hermes. She has written several books on the subject. In *Reading women's magazines* she explains how she interviewed both men and women on their reading habits and on what place the women's magazines had in their lives.⁹ One thing she noted was that many of the people she interviewed used the women's magazines to dream about their *ideal selves*. She notes: 'Depending upon ones background and upon context, one may fantasize oneself into someone who is up to date regarding new products, who knows a whole litany of small remedies, who knows where to go and what to read, where to stay, someone who can handle medical issues, who is clever with her hands'.¹⁰ The research done by Hermes shows that there are multiple reasons to read a women's magazine. On the one hand, the readers want to get tips and ideas that will improve their lives. On the other hand, they use their magazine to fantasize about the ideal woman, someone with the virtues and skills that they do not possess. By reading women's magazines the readers formed and adjusted their idea of who they wanted to be and what they wanted to have. It is therefore possible to look at women's magazines from a specific time period and get a good idea of what was considered the ideal housewife in that period. It is however not possible, to look at women's magazines to get an accurate idea of how the readers actually consumed. While the researches discussed above show that the women were influenced by what they read, it is impossible to know whether this influence made them make different decisions when it comes to consumption. The magazines can therefore show us what was considered ideal behaviour, not actual behaviour.

There are also several researches that have argued that the articles in women's magazines aim to teach their readers about the gender roles of the society for which they are written. According to these researches, a women's magazine does not just reflect society by portraying the ideal woman but aims to educate its readers. Women's magazines in different periods and countries all give advice on how to be successful as a woman. How this success can be reached depends on what the society in which the magazine is published defines as the 'ideal woman'. Jack Demarest and Jeanette Garner have looked at English women's magazines, namely the *Ladies home journal* and *Good Housekeeping* from 1954 until 1982.¹¹ In their article; *The representation of women's roles in women's magazines in the last 30 years* they show how the article themes change alongside the changing role of women in society. The number of articles about motherhood and housekeeping decrease while the number of articles about politics and having a career increase over time. This change over

⁹ Joke Hermes, *Reading women's magazines* (Cambridge 1995).

¹⁰ Hermes, *Reading women's magazines*, 39.

¹¹ Jack Demarest and Jeanette Garner, 'The representation of women's roles in women's magazines over the past 30 Years' *The Journal of Psychology* 126:4 (1992) 357-368.

time is also at the centre of Kyra Gemberling's research.¹² Her article *Feminine agendas* explains the connection between changes in the society of the United States, and changes in the women's magazines produced for that country. 'Women's magazines have made gradual yet impactful changes over the years to better reflect an ever-changing society. Specifically, women's magazines have served over time as a strong indicator of feminism in the United States. For example, women's magazines of the late 1700s often included embroidery patterns to make clothes, reflecting a focus on female domesticity in 18th century society. But the 1970s brought on a wave of female independence at home and in the workplace, and magazines began publishing articles on such topics as how to balance a full-time career while starting a family.'¹³ At a time in which women were expected to provide their families with clothing, the magazines had articles teaching their readers how to make the best clothes. At a time in which the ideal woman was both a mother and had a career, the magazines had articles teaching women how to do just that. By reading a women's magazine, women learn the skills that the writers of the magazine think they should possess. Holly Porteous has also shown the connection between changes in society and changes in the women's magazines.¹⁴ Her research is notable however because she has not looked at the United States or Great Britain like most but has chosen to concentrate on the far different history of Russia. Her research shows how the feminine archetypes depicted in the women's magazines changed in the post-Soviet society. Her article discusses the impact of other cultures on the ideas of gender and the 'ideal woman' as seen in women's magazines. The gender roles in post-Soviet women's magazines had to adjust in a time of increasing globalisation. Western ideas about gender clashed with the gender ideals of the Soviet era, and eventually the gender ideals of Russian society adjusted to a more Western set of ideals. As Russian society became more Western, so did the Russian women's magazines. Her research shows that it was not just English women's magazines that tried to educate their readers.

Whether a magazine is written to merely reflect a society or is written to directly educate its readers, it is generally agreed that the magazines are heavily influenced by the society they were written in. For this paper, that means that the women's magazines will be influenced by the economic and social characteristics of the post Second World War Netherlands. Economically, this means that the magazines will address the relative poverty in the

¹² Kyra Gemberling, 'Feminine agendas: The historical evolution of feminism as reflected in the content of American women's magazines', *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 5:2 (2014) 51-58.

¹³ Gemberling, 'Feminine agendas', 51.

¹⁴ Holly Porteous, 'From Barbie to the oligarch's wife: Reading fantasy femininity and globalisation in post-Soviet Russian women's magazines', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 20:2 (2017), 180-198.

Netherlands after the Second World War. This is mainly an issue in the 1940s, but the budgets of most families were still tight in the 1950s. As mentioned at the beginning of the introduction, being frugal and a careful spender were considered necessary traits for a housewife.¹⁵ Secondly, the post-war economy was in disrepair, there were shortages in almost everything and businesses had mostly been inactive during the war.¹⁶ Socially, in the 1940s and 1950s, women were expected to be married with children and to spend their days trying to be as perfect a housewife as they could possibly be.¹⁷ This included being frugal, keeping a clean house, and providing healthy meals. Consumption in women's magazines will therefore be linked with the ideals concerning housewives.

Apart from educating their readers, the women's magazines had another reason to adhere to societal norms. Publishers had to adapt their magazines in order to keep their subscribers. Each magazine has a target audience and if they no longer connect with what is written in the magazine, the sales go down. One book that shows the importance of target audiences is; *Van zeep tot soap: continuïteit en verandering in geïllustreerde vrouwentijdschriften* by Angelina P. G. Sens and Willemijn van Breda.¹⁸ In multiple articles researchers explain in chronological order how women's magazine were founded, how they changed through the decades, and why they sometimes had to give way for other women's magazines because they had become redundant or outdated. The articles show how magazines must adapt their story to fit their target audience if they want to sell. *Magazine! 150 jaar Nederlandse publiekstijdschriften* by Marieke T.G.E. van Delft and Nel van Dijk also looks at target audiences.¹⁹ It also shows how the women's magazines in the Netherlands had different religious groups as their target audience. Several very similar women's magazines were able to publish at the same time because they all focussed on a different part of Dutch society.

Next to educating their readers about gender roles, and selling their magazines, the writers of the articles had another reason to address consumption; to advice their readers and give them information needed to become a better housewife. Jon Verriet has looked at the articles on food and cooking in women's magazines in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁰ These magazines had dedicated columns every issue who would advise the readers on the best ways to cook for

¹⁵ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50*, 89.

¹⁶ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 26.

¹⁷ Els Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van de Hollandse huisvrouw* (Amsterdam 2009) 212.

¹⁸ Angelina P. G. Sens and Willemijn van Breda, *Van zeep tot soap: continuïteit en verandering in geïllustreerde vrouwentijdschriften* (Amsterdam 2004).

¹⁹ Marieke T.G.E. van Delft and Nel van Dijk, *Magazine! 150 jaar Nederlandse publiekstijdschriften* (Zwolle 2006).

²⁰ Jon Verriet, *Culturele 'mentaliteiten' en de kant-en-klaarmaaltijd, een cultuurhistorische analyse van het Nederlandse voedselpatroon (1950-1970)* (Master thesis Cultural History, University of Utrecht, Utrecht 2011).

the household. Specifically, the research by Verriet shows that women were advised on the importance of vitamins, and how to prepare foodstuffs without losing said vitamins.²¹ This is especially vital information in a time of food shortages.

For an earlier paper of mine, I have looked at how women's magazines handled food and cooking immediately after the Second World War.²² My research showed that in the post-war years, the women's magazines had another function. Sharing tips and information about food and cooking was not just a way for the writers to advise their readers, but also a way for the women of the Netherlands to help each other. Women would send in stories of how they handled the food shortages and the lack of proper appliances, and the women's magazines would publish the most useful stories every issue. Reading the women's magazines in the post-war years was a way to connect with other women, to create a sense of community.²³

Advertisements in women's magazines

Advertisers also adapted to the gender roles of the society in order to make money.

Advertisements would imply that a woman could become closer to the 'ideal woman' by buying their product. Researchers have also shown that by constantly claiming that women needed specific products to be successful as a housewife, advertisements helped shape ideals and expectations about housewives. Most research about advertisement and consumerism in the 1950s is focussed on consumption in the United States. Consumption in the United States was not the same as in the Netherlands, but the people of the Netherlands were heavily influenced by the American way of life, as will be further explained in the Context chapter. Courtney Catt has written an article explaining the importance of media when it comes to the ideals about women in 1950s America.²⁴ 'Their whole life consisted of training to find Mr. Right and reigning over their own domestic castle. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how this image of women started, and it ends up reduced to the classic situation of 'which came first- the chicken or the egg?' However, it will be argued that advertising and mass media perpetuated and further stereotyped the role of middle-class women in the United States [...] While advertising did shape culture, it also worked off the inherent social values of the time and could only sell products that realistically fit into desires the target audiences already held.'²⁵ By linking consumption with societal expectations the

²¹ Verriet, Culturele 'mentaliteiten' en de kant-en-klaarmaaltijd, 57.

²² Christel Poppe, 'Roeien met de riemen die we hebben' How to handle post-Second World War food shortages according to women's magazines (Master paper History, Leiden University, Leiden 2018).

²³ Poppe, 'Roeien met de riemen die we hebben', 12.

²⁴ Courtney Catt, Trapped in the kitchen: How advertising defined women's roles in 1950s America (Honors thesis, Baylor University, Waco 2014).

²⁵ Catt, Trapped in the Kitchen, 3.

advertisements increased the demand for their product. As such, the advertisements reflected society in a similar way that the articles reflected society.

Another way for advertisers to sell their product was to convince their audience that their new product would soon be an essential part of every household. Advertisers praised their product as 'new', 'modern' or 'innovative'. Vanessa Martins Lamb has looked at advertisements in 1950s America.²⁶ The 'American way of life', according to the government as well as the media, included traditional gender roles but also constantly buying new things for the household. 'In the United States of the 1950s the image of the "ideal" family was that of the successful husband, of the children running in the garden or watching the brand-new television set and, above all, of the wife cooking in her highly-equipped kitchen, doing the laundry in the most modern washing machine and cleaning the house with her extremely powerful vacuum cleaner while wearing high heels and pearls and with an intact hairstyle.'²⁷ A successful housewife, according to these types of advertisements, had the newest household appliances. Appliances like the refrigerator and the vacuum cleaner started to gain popularity in the Netherland in the 1950s.²⁸ As such, innovation will play a large role in advertisements from 1956.

This paper is about consumption as portrayed in Dutch women's magazines in the post Second World War years. There is not much written about consumption in the immediate post-war years, let alone about consumption found in the women's magazines. The works published about women's magazines in the 1940s and 1950s are mostly about American magazines. When it comes to the Netherlands, the post-war years are often researched as part of a larger research that span decades, if they are mentioned at all. The works published that are about the post Second World War years, like *Een tevreden natie*, tend to focus on the political and economic changes on a national scale, and do not use women's magazines as source material.²⁹ Many researches into Dutch women's magazines start in the 1950s, like the work by Jon Verriet. They avoid the 1940s and early 1950s, thus leaving a lack of information about this period. Which is a shame, because the post-war years are a very interesting period. In just a short while, the Netherlands changed completely when it comes to consumption. In 1946 the war had just ended and there were massive shortages in food, clothing, and other necessities. Both the importation of products and the production of goods in the Netherlands itself had to be built up again. Merely ten years later the shortages were mostly gone, innovations in household appliances were gaining popularity, and consumer

²⁶ Vanessa Martins Lamb, 'The 1950's and the 1960's and the American woman: the transition from the 'housewife' to the 'feminist', *History* (2011).

²⁷ Martins Lamb, 'The 1950's and the 1960', 18.

²⁸ Vlis, *In Holland staat een huis*, 104.

²⁹ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*.

culture was on the rise. In this paper I will look at how the women's magazines handled this period. The literature indicates that both articles and advertisements reflect society, and often try to educate and influence the readers of the advertisements. In this paper I will add to the historiography by finding out whether the articles and advertisements merely reflected society or tried to influence it, and whether this changed from 1946 to 1956.

Material and method

When analysing a magazine there are two kinds of research: image analysis and text analysis. Image analysis focusses on the photos and drawings that accompany the articles, as well as on the images used in advertisements. One good example of research about images is the one by Linda Clare Thievon. It shows that the way advertisements make use of gender roles in images to sell products changes based on the magazine in which the advertisements are placed.³⁰ She has gathered the results from multiple studies done about magazines, and concludes that the way women are portrayed changes through time and depending on the type of magazine that the advertisement is placed in. For instance, a women's magazine will have advertisements with middle-aged women who are actively engaging with the product, while a magazine meant for men is more likely to have advertisements with younger women with a decorative role.

A good example of text analysis is the research done by Martina Temmerman and Maaïke Van de Voorde.³¹ *Absent husbands and whispering voices* is an article about the ideals of masculinity as seen in women's magazines. Temmerman and Van de Voorde show that the women's magazines can be used for much more than would be immediately apparent, if you pay close attention to the language used. There are very few articles in the *Libelle* and *Het Rijk der Vrouw* that are specifically about men but by looking at how men were mentioned and in which context they were still able to get a good overview of the ideals of masculinity according to the women's magazines. The scope of this paper is too small to give an in-depth analysis of both the images and text used in the women's magazines, so I have chosen to focus on text analysis. The images that accompany the texts will be seen as an extension and used when necessary to further explain the text.

As stated above, my research questions are: How did Dutch women's magazines address consumption in the immediate post Second World War years? And why did they address consumption in this manner? I will combine a text analysis of the articles with a text analysis

³⁰ Linda Clare Thievon, Content analysis of women's images in magazine advertisements: a follow-up study (Bachelor of Arts thesis, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond 1992).

³¹ Martina Temmerman and Maaïke van de Voorde, 'Absent husbands and whispering voices: a critical analysis of the representation of men in two popular Flemish women's magazines', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 24:1 (2015), 3-17.

of the advertisements to see whether the two give the same portrayal of consumption for the household or whether the articles will have a different view on consumption than the advertisements. As stated before, I will only look at consumption for the household.

To answer the research questions, I will look at two women's magazines, the *Margriet* and the *Libelle*. I have chosen to use these two magazines because they were, and still are, the biggest women's magazines in terms of subscriptions. They had been forced to stop during the war, but they soon gained back their subscribers. In 1949 the *Margriet* had 200.000 subscriptions and the *Libelle* 500.000 subscriptions.³² In 1950 the *Margriet* had 578.000 subscribers, and the *Libelle* 600.000 subscribers.³³ Their numbers continued to grow through the next decades. And these numbers were only their subscribers. It is impossible to measure, but it was normal for subscribers to share their magazine with family, or to give them to friends once they were done reading. It can therefore be assumed that the number of people who read these magazines was much higher than the number of subscribers. To get a good idea of not only the consumption immediately after the war, but the first decade after the war, I will look at magazines from 1946 and 1956. That way I can see the immediate aftermath of the war, but also how and if the consumption of households changed after the war.

To get a good overview of the two years I will look at the first issue of each month from both the *Margriet* and the *Libelle*. Table 1 and 2 give an overview of the issues from 1946 that I have researched for this paper. One thing of note is that the first two issues from the *Libelle* are missing. This is because the *Libelle* started back up later after the war than the *Margriet*. The magazines were both forced to stop printing during the Second World War. This was partially because of paper shortages, and partially because the publishers did not want to work with the Nazis. The *Margriet* started publishing again in November 1945, but the *Libelle* did not begin publishing until March 1946. Because of this the *Libelle* has no issue for January and February of 1946. A second thing to note is that the *Margriet* started out with publishing a new issue every week, but this was not sustainable due to the continued paper shortages. This is why the number of pages drops to just eight pages in April. Instead of one issue every week with only eight pages, the *Margriet* decided to publish one issue every two weeks with sixteen pages. The *Libelle* started out in March with only one issue every two weeks, and this schedule remained throughout the year.

³² Marloes Hülsken, *Kiezen voor kinderen: vrouwentijdschriften en hun lezeressen over he katholieke huwelijksleven, 1950-1957* (Hilversum 2010) 51.

³³ Hülsken, *Kiezen voor kinderen*, 51.

Table 1: *Margriet* 1946, number of pages.

Date	Issue number	Number of pages
5-1-1946	1	12
2-2-1946	5	12
2-3-1946	9	12
6-4-1946	14	8
4-5-1946	18	8
1-6-1946	22	8
6-7-1946	27	16
3-8-1946	29	16
14-9-1946	32	16
12-10-1946	34	16
9-11-1946	36	16
7-12-1946	38	16

Table 2: *Libelle* 1946, number of pages.

Date	Issue number	Number of pages
1-1-1946		
1-2-1946		
8-3-1946	1	16
5-4-1946	3	16
3-5-1946	5	24
14-6-1946	8	24
12-7-1946	10	24
9-8-1946	12	24
6-9-1946	14	24
4-10-1946	16	24
1-11-1946	18	24
13-12-1946	21	24

The next two tables show the issues researched from 1956. The first thing that stands out, is that the number of pages in the issues from 1956 are much higher than the ones from 1946. All issues in 1946 were less than thirty pages long, while the issues in 1956 were between the sixty and 130 pages long. This means that in absolute numbers, there are more articles and advertisements about consumption in 1956, than there are in 1946. A second thing to note is that the women's magazines were published every week in 1956. When the publishers were unable to keep up production in July and August, they chose to lower the number of pages, instead of publishing fewer issues. Further information on the *Libelle* and *Margriet* can be found in the context chapter, where I discuss their target audience and the publishing firms that published these women's magazines.

Table 3: *Margriet* 1956, number of pages.

Date	Issue number	Number of pages
7-1-1956	1	64
4-2-1956	5	64
3-3-1956	9	80
7-4-1956	14	80
5-5-1956	18	96
2-6-1956	22	80
7-7-1956	27	64
4-8-1956	31	64
1-9-1956	35	72
6-10-1956	40	96
3-11-1956	44	104
1-12-1956	48	96

Table 4: *Libelle* 1956, number of pages.

Date	Issue number	Number of pages
7-1-1956	1	95
4-2-1956	5	95
3-3-1956	9	105
7-4-1956	14	112
5-5-1956	18	128
2-6-1956	22	112
7-7-1956	27	96
4-8-1956	31	96
1-9-1956	35	112
6-10-1956	40	128
3-11-1956	44	128
1-12-1956	48	128

During my research I have not looked at all the articles in each issue. Many pages could be discarded because they were not relevant to my research. Take the February 1956 issue of the *Margriet* for example. It consists of 95 pages, but most of those are not relevant. It has eight pages worth of fiction, three pages about royalty, ten pages about raising children, six pages about fashion and cosmetics, and nine pages consisting of patterns for making clothes. 38 pages of this issue are not relevant to my research. This issue also had 39 advertisements, of which eight were about fashion or cosmetics.

When it comes to the articles that are relevant, I have looked at several things. Firstly, the subject of the article. What is the article about, and what does this tell us about consumption? For instance, if the *Margriet* has a lot of articles about cooking with foodstuffs that are being rationed, then we know that the writers thought that this was a subject that many of its readers would be interested in. Secondly, I have looked at the way the reader is

addressed. Do the writers talk in an authoritative tone, or are they talking to fellow housewives? For instance, if the writer says that it is their New year's solution to be more frugal, but admit their struggles with doing so, they present themselves as a housewife, on the same level as their readers. On the other hand, if they write a quiz in which the readers are rated on how good they are as a housewife, the writer presents themselves as an expert, someone who can literally judge the readers, someone on a higher level. Lastly, what can the details of the article teach us about the writer's view on consumption? For instance, household appliances such as a refrigerator might be presented as a luxury item, or as a necessity.

Similarly, there are several ways to look at the text of an advertisement. The first step is the product itself. Are they advertising food, toys, household appliances? The second step is how the product is advertised. Why should the reader buy this product? Does the advertisement use the phrase 'modern', 'full of vitamins', 'wonders for your money' or do they use an authoritative figure; 'As a professional, I can guarantee the superior quality of this product'?

This paper is separated into five chapters. I will first provide a context chapter. In this chapter I will explain more about the *Margriet* and the *Libelle*, as well as give an overview of the time period socially and economically. The next two chapters are about the women's magazines from 1946. The first chapter is about the articles, followed by the chapter that discusses the advertisement. Because the writers of the articles have different aims than the writers of the advertisements, it is prudent to give them their own chapters. The last two chapters are about magazines from 1956 and are similarly set up. First the chapter on articles from 1956, and then the chapter on advertisements from 1956.

2. Context

In this chapter I will first give an overview of the economic and social factors at play during the post Second World War period. Then I will explain more about the *Margriet* and *Libelle*.

Shortages

During the last months of Second World War, in the winter of 1944/1945, the transport system between the west of the Netherlands and the rest of the Netherlands was destroyed due to punishing actions from the Nazis and the presence of the Allies in the south of the Netherlands. Because of this, the food supply of a large part of the Netherlands dwindled down to catastrophic levels. This last winter before the end of the war became known as the Hunger Winter, that directly and indirectly claimed the lives of over twenty thousand people.³⁴ After the war, the shortages lingered for years. The war ended in 1945, but in 1947 17 percent of the people taking part in a survey still said that they had had too little to eat in the past year.³⁵ In the winter between 1946 and 1947 30 percent of the population did not have coal to warm their houses and another 60 percent was worried that they would not have enough for the entire winter.³⁶ At the end of 1948 a third of the population said that they still had not sufficient clothing for the winter.³⁷ Many foods and textiles remained rationed for years after the war.³⁸ The last foodstuff to become freely available again was coffee in 1952.³⁹ Apart from food and textiles there was also a shortage in electricity. If you wanted electricity as a household, you had to pay a drastically higher price than before the war because the government prioritised the rebuilding of the Dutch industries.⁴⁰ A last shortage was housing. More than twenty percent of the houses in the Netherlands were either destroyed or damaged by the war.⁴¹ Many married couples were unable to buy a house once they got married and were forced to live at one of the parents houses for the first years of their marriage.⁴² This was one of the reasons why couples married on average at age 26.⁴³ A man was expected to have a well-paying job before he got married, and women were expected to have a dowry, existing of clothing and household goods. This way, the married couple were financially prepared to live on their own.

³⁴ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 12.

³⁵ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 26.

³⁶ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 26.

³⁷ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 27.

³⁸ Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes*, 198.

³⁹ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 32.

⁴⁰ Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes*, 198.

⁴¹ Rossem, Jonker and Kooijmans, *Een tevreden natie*, 26.

⁴² Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50*, 89.

⁴³ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50*, 89.

Because of all these shortages, households had to be careful of what they spent their money on and saving up money for larger purchases was necessary. A common phrase of the time was: *‘Wie het kleine niet eert, is het grote niet weert’*. This translates to: If you do not make full use of the small things, you do not deserve the large things. In practise this meant that housewives were expected to make the most of even the smallest amount of money. Women kept track of the household budget by keeping detailed notes of the income, expenses like rent and gas, as well as every time someone bought something.⁴⁴ Women were also expected to refrain from buying new things as much as possible. Money could be saved by repairing objects instead of replacing, repurposing things, taking good care of what is owned and sharing temporary necessities (such as cribs) with family.⁴⁵ While it was the husbands job to make money, it was often the woman’s job to spend money in a responsible and careful manner.

Rising consumerism

On the other hand, the post Second World War period was also the time in which consumerism was at a rise. The war was over, and people wanted to buy all the things that were once again available. In this they were influenced by the United States. Because of their part in the war many Dutch people looked up to the United States and their culture, and consumption was a large part of the culture of the United States in the 1950s. ‘Consumerism became the new lifestyle and advertising and media constantly told Americans to buy the latest products. Even William J. Levitt, who developed the now famous Levittown, linked patriotism to consumerism: “no man who owns his house and lot can be a communist”.’⁴⁶ Apart from the influence from the United States, people were also stimulated to spend money by the development of a lot of household appliances. This is the period in which the vacuum cleaner gained its place in Dutch households to the point that everyone had one in the 1950s.⁴⁷ Similarly, while there were only about 500 televisions in Dutch households in 1951, in 1958 this number had grown to 400.000.⁴⁸

Role of women

One important social factor was that women were *handelingsonbekwaam* until the 14 of June 1956. This meant that women were not allowed to spend large amounts of money without the permission of their husband. The daily groceries were allowed, but if a woman wanted to buy a household appliance, she had to ask her husband. Interestingly, this also meant that women had to have the permission of their husband to take a subscription to a women’s

⁴⁴ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren ’50*, 89.

⁴⁵ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren ’50*, 84.

⁴⁶ Catt, *Trapped in the Kitchen*, 20.

⁴⁷ Vlis, *In Holland staat een huis*, 104.

⁴⁸ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren ’50*, 14.

magazine. Women were not allowed to subscribe to the *Margriet* or *Libelle* if their husband forbid it.⁴⁹ The *Margriet* dedicated an article to this law in September of 1956, once it was repealed. 'What, exactly, were we, married women, allowed to do? We were not allowed to litigate, to rent, to sell, to give away, or anything whatsoever. Apart from a relative freedom when buying the daily necessities, we were – yes really- equal to a minor or someone under guardianship! It was about time, for this to change.'⁵⁰

Another factor was that, like the United States, the Netherlands heavily encouraged women to become fulltime housewives. Female teachers and civil servants who got married were automatically fired until the law was abolished in 1957. Women working for companies and individuals could still be fired when they got married. It was not until 1976 that employers were forbidden to fire their married female employees.⁵¹ After the war, the government presented the nuclear family as the central unit of a rebuild society. Life during the war had been hard, and people longed for the lives they had lived before the war. People wanted to go back to that ideal of harmonious family life.⁵² And most women did become housewives, in 1947 98 percent of all married women were fulltime housewives.⁵³

Pillarization

In the 1940s and 1950s most of the Netherlands was still separated by the Pillarization. This meant that people were separated into different 'pillars' based on their religion or social status. There was for instance a catholic pillar, a protestant pillar and a liberal pillar. In practice this meant that a person born in a catholic family would go to a catholic school, read a catholic newspaper and join only catholic clubs. During the 1950s however the pillars started to lose their importance.⁵⁴ In 1951 the Netherlands entered a time of quick economic growth. The wealth it brought meant a trice increase of the national income and twice the increase of the average income. At the same time, the average workweek went from six days to five, and more people had access to and made use of higher education.⁵⁵ The consumer culture had arrived in the Netherlands, and Pillarization lost its meaning. Magazines have an interesting part in this development because they give their readers a chance to look outside

⁴⁹ Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes*, 201.

⁵⁰ *Margriet*, 1 September 1956 (number 35). Original quote: 'Wat mochten wij, getrouwde vrouwen, nu eigenlijk? Niet zelf procederen, niet verhuren, verkopen, weggeven, of wat dan ook. Afgezien van een betrekkelijke vrijheid bij aankopen voor de dagelijkse huishouding, werden wij – ja heus- gelijkgesteld aan een minderjarige of een onder curatele gestelde! 't Werd hoog tijd, dat daar verandering in kwam.'

⁵¹ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50*, 70.

⁵² Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes*, 198.

⁵³ Vlis, *In Holland staat een huis*, 11.

⁵⁴ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 9.

⁵⁵ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 9.

of their pillar and get in contact with other ways of living.⁵⁶ Both women's magazines were read by all pillars and presented themselves as neutral.

The *Margriet* and *Libelle*

The *Margriet* was first published by Mrs. A. van Eysden-Peeren in 1938.⁵⁷ The magazine did not start out as a magazine of its own, but as a leaflet accompanying the family magazine *De week in beeld*. The *Margriet* became a magazine of its own in 1942.⁵⁸ Although Van Eysden-Peering did all the work associated with being a chief editor, she was never called such. As a woman she was not allowed to be a chief editor, the function had to be staffed by a man. The editor in chief position at the *Libelle* was staffed by a man until 1987.⁵⁹

The *Libelle* was published by a catholic publisher, *De Spaarnestad*.⁶⁰ The *Libelle* was supposed to be neutral in order to reach the people who did not read the other women's magazine published by *De Spaarnestad*, which was called the *Beatrijs*.⁶¹ The *Margriet* was also published by a catholic publisher, *De Geïllustreerde Pers*. The writers of the *Margriet* however, were much more successful at writing a neutral magazine. While the *Libelle* did not have any articles specifically about religion it still shined through in the choice of words and phrases. The word God is used several times per issue, as well as phrases such as: 'Finally the lord of Creation is recognised in a women's magazine as an equal being, one whose opinion we listen to with interest'.⁶² The *Margriet* never used the word God, nor did it directly refer to religion. The *Margriet* did however make use of religious figures of speech. Given the fact that religion, Christianity in particular, has had a significant impact on the Dutch language, it is to be expected that some religious references make their way into a Dutch person's writing, regardless of their intention. Another thing that set the two women's magazines apart was that the *Margriet* was aimed at women from middle and lower incomes while the *Libelle* was aimed at women from well off families.⁶³ You can see these different target audiences reflected in the subjects the magazines discussed. The *Margriet* focussed on taking care of the family and house. The *Libelle* did the same for the most part but it also discussed the latest fashion in Paris, the shortage of maids, and having a nice flower garden in each issue. Both magazines were aimed at women of all ages, but also had a small group

⁵⁶ De Valk, *Het is echt gewoon voor meisjes*, 2.

⁵⁷ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 94.

⁵⁸ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 94.

⁵⁹ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 85.

⁶⁰ The *Margriet* meanwhile was published by *De Geïllustreerde Pers*, the publisher that also published the Donald Duck in the Netherlands. In 1964 *De Spaarnestad* and *De Geïllustreerde Pers* became one company under the name of *Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgeversbedrijven* (VNU).

⁶¹ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 84.

⁶² *Libelle*, 7 January 1956 (number 1). Original quote: 'Eindelijk wordt de heer der schepping in een vrouwenblad erkend als een volwaardig wezen, naar wiens oordeel we met interesse luisteren.'

⁶³ Van Delft and Van Dijk, *Magazine!*, 84.

of male readers. In 1964 *De Spaarnestad* and *De Geïllustreerde Pers* were joined in the publishing concern *Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgeversbedrijven* or *VNU*.⁶⁴ In 2001 the magazine part of the *VNU* was taken over by the Finnish concern *Sanoma WSOY*, which is the company that still publishes the *Libelle* and *Margriet* weekly.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Sens and Van Breda, *Van zeep tot Soap*, 51.

⁶⁵ Sens and Van Breda, *Van zeep tot Soap*, 51.

3. Articles in 1946

This chapter is about the ways in which the articles from 1946 addressed consumption by housewives. First, we will look at the expectations placed on housewives in 1946, according to the articles. Then we will look at the different ways in which the magazines addressed consumption. How did they address consumption and why did they address consumption in such a way? Firstly, consumption was addressed to foster a sense of community. Secondly, consumption was a way for the writers to give advice on being a good housewife in a time of shortages. Lastly, the writers linked consumption with being grateful to America.

Expectations

Life was hard for housewives in 1946. The Second World War had just ended, and they had to deal with the consequences that were felt in all aspects of life. Geertruida C.M. Knijn and Carolina M.L.H. Verheijen have researched the expectations placed on mothers in several decades. Their conclusion was that motherhood in the post-war period could best be described as 'sacrificial'.⁶⁶ 'Marrying and becoming a mother was expected. Housewives did their part in rebuilding the Netherlands by being sober and frugal, and with her hard work and cleanliness she kept the household going. The selflessness of the mother was praised as the highest proof of love, and her frugal and determined demeanour was praised.'⁶⁷ The *Margriet* and *Libelle* acknowledged that the expectations placed on their readers were high but encouraged their readers to keep on going. The first issue from *Libelle* after the war addressed the trauma from the war and the stress the women were under. 'In a time such as the current one, where we are stuck with the legacy that a brutal, merciless, and ruthless enemy has left us with after a long five-year reign of terror, most of us are more than ever in need of cheering up and moral support. Many are struggling under the weight of all the misfortune and disappointments, and are in need of an encouraging word, lest they become embittered or depressed.'⁶⁸

The *Margriet* also paid attention to the mental health of its readers, the October issue even had a several pages long article about dealing with feelings of depression caused by the war.⁶⁹ More attention, however, was given to the exhaustion caused by working hard every

⁶⁶ G.C.M. Knijn and C.M.L.H. Verheijen, *Moederschap in een vrouwenblad: Van opoffering naar zelf-ontplooiing* (Nijmegen 1982).

⁶⁷ Knijn and Verheijen, *Moederschap in een vrouwenblad*, 126.

⁶⁸ *Libelle*, 8 March 1946 (number 1). Original quote: 'In een tijdsgewricht als het huidige, waar wij opgescheept zitten met de erfenis die een brute, medoogenlooze en niets ontziende vijand ons, na een schrikbewind van vijf lange jaren, heeft achtergelaten, hebben velen meer dan ooit opbeuring en moreele hartversterking noodig. Menigeen die gebukt gaat onder den last van tegenslagen en teleurstellingen, heeft behoefte aan een bemoedigend woord om niet verbitterd te raken of bij de pakken te gaan neerzitten.'

⁶⁹ *Margriet*, 12 October 1946 (number 34).

day with damaged tools while still being of low health due to the war. 'Us women seem to have a slogan these days, that we use in every situation: "I do not have time for anything." [...] Life has indeed become more difficult than it used to be. We still must stand in line for everything. We must be meticulous with our ration stamps. We must rush to the stores every time something becomes available. We have to chop wood and burn a fire in order to cook our meals, where in the past we would just turn on the gas or the electric stove.'⁷⁰

However, the women's magazines did not consider these harsh circumstances to be an excuse to slack off, or to lower the standards that women were expected to live up to. Now that the war was over, the Dutch population had to relearn to be good citizens and live morally upstanding lives. The need for this Moral re-armament (*Morele herbewapening* in Dutch) was a widespread movement in the Netherlands, and both the women's magazines agreed with their efforts. The *Margriet* had an article in their issue on May the fourth, one year after the war, in which the writers judged the readers for not being more virtuous. 'Have we done our best to ban the wrong habits and practises from our families, that arose from five agonising years of subjection and shortages? Have we rid ourselves of all the ugly feelings, that the war has bred in us, and have we risen to a higher standard? Have we fought against selfishness, injustice, greed, laxity and laziness? And have we instead nourished charity, integrity, sacrifice, diligence, and a lust for hard work?'⁷¹ Similarly, the *Libelle* expressed the belief, that many women were, possibly without realising it themselves, negatively affected by the war. The main vice, according to the *Libelle*, was a limitless selfishness. The magazine felt that many of these women would benefit from a friendly but frank conversation.⁷² Times were hard but complaining would not get anything done. Hard work and sacrifice were needed from the housewife to keep the household up to the same standards in a time of shortages and poverty.

⁷⁰ *Margriet*, 5 January 1946 (number 1). Original quote: 'Wij vrouwen schijnen de laatste tijd een slagzin te hebben, die we bij alles te pas brengen. 'Ik heb nergens tijd voor'. (...) Het leven legt inderdaad in heel wat ingewikkelder vormen beslag op ons dan vroeger. Je moet nog steeds voor alles in de rij staan. Je moet je bonnen bijhouden. Je moet er als de kippen bijzijn als er iets te halen is. Je moet houthakken en je moet een vuurtje stoken om je eten te kunnen koken, waar je vroeger slechts de gaskraan of de elektrische schakelaar had om te draaien.'

⁷¹ *Margriet*, 4 May 1946 (number 18). Original quote: 'Hebben wij ons best gedaan om uit ons gezin de mogelijk verkeerde gewoonten en praktijken te bannen, die door de allermoeilijkste omstandigheden van vijf jaar knechting en gebrek waren ontstaan? Hebben wij onszelf ontdaan van al de leelijke gevoelens, die door de oorlog bij ons naar boven waren gekomen, en hebben we ons op een hoger plan kunnen brengen? Hebben wij paal en perk gesteld aan egoïsme, oneerlijkheid, hebzucht, laksheid en luiheid en hebben wij in plaats daarvan naastenliefde, onkreukbaarheid, offervaardigheid, vlijt en arbeidslust aangekweekt?'

⁷² *Libelle*, 8 March 1946 (number 1).

Community

One way in which the women's magazines helped the housewives was by building a sense of community and encouraging their readers to help each other. The *Margriet* had a weekly column in which readers could send in tips and tricks to make life easier. Because of the shortages, housewives were unable to buy the things they needed. This column, called *Roeien met de riemen die we hebben*, gave women a way to share their tips on how to make do without a certain product, or how to stretch the use of a product. For instance, when there were fuel shortages, the column provided a tip on how to reuse the ashes to keep a fire burning longer.⁷³ In another issue the readers were given advise on how they could use a playpen as a clothes horse, and a flowerpot as a potty.⁷⁴ The *Margriet* also arranged a way for readers to help each other through charity. Women could place a request in the magazine for specific goods they desperately needed, and other women could sent those items to the office of the *Margriet* who would then send the items to the ones in need. One woman could not find baby clothes for her new-born, another woman needed winter clothing for her sick husband, and a third needed craft supplies for her club.⁷⁵ The collection was so successful that the office had to find extra space to temporarily store all the items that were sent in.⁷⁶

Advice

Another way in which the magazines helped the housewives with the shortages was by educating them on what was not available, why it was not available, and on how to make the most out of what was available. In March the *Margriet* placed an article about *Distex*, the government agency in charge of the rationing of textiles.⁷⁷ The magazine reported that textiles would remain being rationed for a long while. They explained that the plundering of businesses and storages by the Nazis, the destruction of cities and entire regions, as well as the near standstill of Dutch production in the last few years meant that the need for textiles had been brought up to previously unseen heights. The *Margriet* further informed its readers that stockings were the scarcest textiles.⁷⁸ Both the women's magazines provided patterns so their readers could make clothing for themselves and their families. They also provided ideas for repurposing old clothing, thus decreasing the need for new textiles. Wool hats could be turned into pants for babies and the wool of a jumper that the children had grown out of could be taken out and used again in a new knitting project.⁷⁹ Women were advised not to let anything go to waste. The April issue of the *Libelle* had a few recipes that made use of the

⁷³ *Margriet*, 2 February 1946 (number 5).

⁷⁴ *Margriet*, 6 April 1946 (number 14).

⁷⁵ *Margriet*, 12 October 1946 (number 34).

⁷⁶ *Margriet*, 9 November 1946 (number 36).

⁷⁷ *Margriet*, 2 March 1946 (number 9).

⁷⁸ *Margriet*, 2 March 1946 (number 9).

⁷⁹ *Libelle*, 5 April 1946 (number 3).

newly available dates, alongside an art project to turn the pits of dates into a necklace or bracelets.⁸⁰ The *Margriet* had a weekly column for larger woodworking projects such as making a kitchen-stool.⁸¹ The expectation was that the husband of the housewife would do the actual woodworking.

The housewives were also educated on the foods that were available. As soon as a foodstuff would return to the stores or would become freely available again, the women's magazines would give advice on the preparation and presentation of the food. When fish was more readily available than meat, the *Libelle* published several recipes using the most readily obtainable types of fish.⁸² And when onions came back to the Dutch stores in March the *Margriet* made sure to teach her audience that onions were not only used to spice up other foods, but could very well be used as a main ingredient themselves.⁸³ In contrast, the magazines also gave advice on losing weight. The *Margriet* explained how people could be overweight so soon after the war. 'I am becoming fat again. Not the paper Margriet, unfortunately (if only that was the case!), but me personally. And do you know why? Because of the war... yes, dearie. We have all gotten so used to eating enormous amounts of food whenever we could, we ate whole loaves of bread with potato filling and potato on the side, and now our stomachs have become somewhat used to such quantities of food. That is why, in a time when better quality food is available, our stomach still complains when we eat smaller portions.'⁸⁴

The women's magazines also advised their readers on the ongoing housing shortage. The June issue from the *Libelle* was a wedding special. It contained tips on wedding fashion, having a good relationship with the family in law, and how to buy your first house together.⁸⁵ According to the magazine, housing is the most pressing problem for newlyweds. Finding a good house can take years. Newlyweds are encouraged to consider 'prefabricated homes'. These are houses that are partially build in a factory, and then assembled on the building site. The *Libelle* reassures the newlyweds that these houses were of excellent quality and certainly an option worth considering. The issue also advised the newlyweds on how to furnish their home. The *Libelle* tells her readers not to spend all their money on the furniture

⁸⁰ *Libelle*, 5 April 1946 (number 3).

⁸¹ *Margriet*, 3 August 1946 (number 29).

⁸² *Libelle*, 8 March 1946 (number 1).

⁸³ *Margriet*, 2 March 1946 (number 9).

⁸⁴ *Margriet*, 1 June 1946 (number 22). Original quote: 'Ik word ook zo dik. Ja, de papieren Margriet niet, helaas (was dat maar liever zoo!), maar ikke zelf. En weet je hoe dat komt? Door de oorlog... jawel, dame. We zijn allemaal zoo gewend geweest zulke enorme kwantiteiten voedsel te verslinden, als wij er de kans voor kregen, we aten maar heele broden aardappels met aardappels door elkaar, en nu is onze maag eenigzins gewend aan zulke hoeveelheden. Zoo komt het dat hoewel het voedsel thans van zooveel betere kwaliteit is, onze maag knort als we eens kleinere porties nemen.'

⁸⁵ *Libelle*, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

and appliances currently available, because they were not built to last. The newlyweds are instead told to wait until good quality furniture and appliances would become available again.⁸⁶ The issue had a dedicated article for the attic. Because of the housing shortage, many people had to live in houses that were a small fit for their family. By making optimal use of the attic, according to the article, precious additional space could be created. The attic could be used as an extra bedroom, with bunkbeds that the children would surely love to sleep in. It could also be used as a playroom for the children, with extra storage space and a table for the children to do their homework on.⁸⁷ The usefulness of this article can be doubted, most people living in a too small house would probably already use all the space available, even the attic.

Next to weddings, there were other special occasions that housewives were given advice on. One of them was pregnancy and new-borns. There was a baby boom in the Netherlands in the years after the Second World War, with the most babies being born in 1946. In that year alone, 284.000 babies were born, which is a record that has yet to be defeated. In comparison; the number of babies born in the Netherlands in 2006 was only 185.000.⁸⁸ In the *Margriet*, a paediatrician educated expecting mothers on what to do during the pregnancy. Normally a pregnancy was a time in which rest and calm was advised, but in 1946 many women were too busy and could not afford to take it easy. 'It is good for the woman, who is about to become a mother, to not be too busy, to calmly sew the little clothes, and dream about the little one that will wear them. The crib, sometimes made by a proud father to be, is decorated by her with lace and ribbons, [...] Of this idyll is often not much left in these sober years. There is no wood to make a crib out off, there might be a second hand one, or one loaned from friends. There are no little clothes to sew, there is no wool to knit with, and moreover the housewife has, with little to no help, no time at all to dream and do nothing.'⁸⁹ In this situation, the women's magazines had to acknowledge that expectations and ideals placed on women were simply not reachable in the post-war years.

⁸⁶ Libelle, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

⁸⁷ Libelle, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

⁸⁸ Heij, *Het dagelijks leven in de jaren '50*, 30.

⁸⁹ Margriet, 5 January 1946 (number 1). Original quote: 'Het is goed voor de vrouw, die moeder gaat worden, om het niet te druk te hebben, om rustig aan de kleine kleertjes te kunnen naaien, en daarbij te kunnen dromen over het kindje dat er in passen zal. De wieg, soms door een trosche aanstaande vader getimmerd, wordt door haarzelf met kant en lint versierd, [...] Van deze idylle blijft in onze nuchtere tijd soms bitter weinig over. Er is geen hout om een wieg te maken, er is misschien nog een tweedehands te krijgen of bij vrienden een te leen. Er zijn geen kleertjes om aan te naaien, er is geen wol om van te breien, en bovendien heeft een huisvrouw met weinig tot geen hulp heelemaal geen tijd om te zitten dromen met de handen in haar schoot.'

America

As mentioned in the context chapter, Dutch people after the Second World War looked up to the United States. They were thankful for their part in the war, but also for their support after the war. Many Dutch people had received clothing and shoes from America, as well as cigarettes and candy.⁹⁰ The imitation of American consumer culture was not really an option yet in the 1940s because of the shortages. Nonetheless, the women's magazines wrote many articles about the country and their bountiful way of living. They wrote about the Dutch war brides who emigrated to the United States and emphasised how nice they would live.⁹¹ They also used the admiration for the United States as a way to promote things. In an article about the preparation and eating of organs, the writers tried to convince the readers that cow heart and cow kidney were edible, and a good source of meat. In an effort to convince them, they claimed that Americans loved to eat organs.⁹²

Conclusion

The women's magazines in 1946 mainly discussed consumption as something absent. Many products were either not available or being rationed and budgets were tight. The articles from 1946 aim to educate their audience. The women's magazines gave advice on making the most of what the housewives already possessed. By sharing the ideas of women on how to handle the shortages from around the country they created a sense of community. The women's magazines also educated the housewives on what was available and how those things could best be used for the family. Consumption was supposed to happen in a frugal, carefully considered manner.

⁹⁰ Libelle, 5 April 1946 (number 3).

⁹¹ Margriet, 6 April 1946 (number 14).

⁹² Margriet, 12 October 1946 (number 34).

4. Advertisements in 1946

'We are still only partially able to fulfil the demand for Calcium Chefaro (calcium-gluconate tablets that taste like peppermint or chocolate). If your pharmacist or grocer has a little box of it, retain it for them, who have the highest need for additional chalk, such as young children and expecting mothers.'⁹³

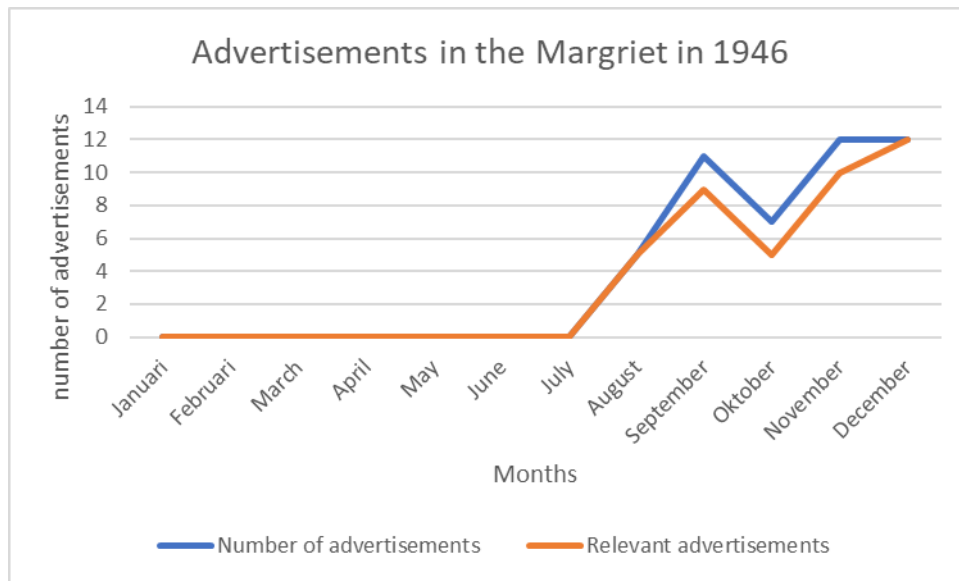
This chapter is about the ways in which the advertisements from 1946 addressed consumption by housewives. The aim of advertisers is, of course, to sell their products. The advertisements from 1946 show several ways in which the advertisers tried to do that. This chapter will discuss the different ways in which advertisers tried to make their products appealing to housewives and will explain why the advertisers chose to use these strategies. Firstly, we will look at the place of advertisements in the women's magazines. How much space in a women's magazine was taken up by advertisements? Secondly, we look at how the advertisers handled the consequences of the war. After that, we look at the selling strategies. Many advertisers made use of the expectations placed on housewives to sell their products. One strategy was to appeal to the housewife's need to be frugal. Another appealed to the expectation that women took care of the health of the family. A third strategy was to appeal to the longing many people felt to return to life before the war. In contrast, a fourth strategy was to appeal to the need to imitate the American consumer culture. Lastly, the advertisers made use of several authority figures.

Place of advertisements

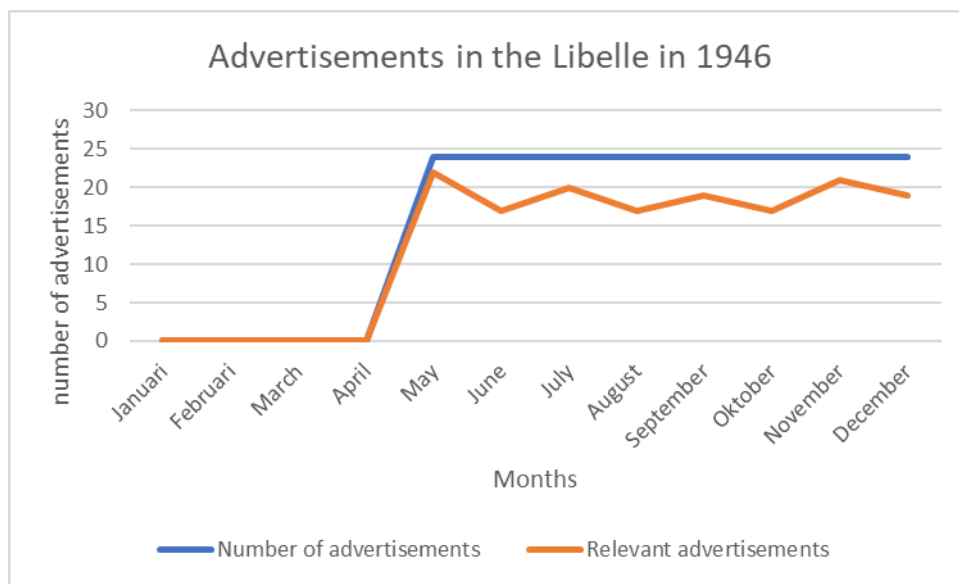
The first issues of the women's magazines did not have any advertisements. As you can see in graph 2, the *Libelle* did not have any advertisements in the first two months but had a set number of advertisements in the remaining months. The *Margriet* on the other hand, as depicted in graph 1, did not have any advertisements until August, and the number of advertisements was not consistent. A possible explanation is that the companies themselves had not yet had the resources necessary for advertisements. The number of advertisements per issue was quite low, especially compared with the number of advertisements in 1956, an explanation for these low numbers is that the women's magazines had such a low number of pages due to the paper shortages, that they were not able to use much space for advertisements. This also might explain why all the advertisements were so small, up to six advertisements on half a page was not unusual.

⁹³ Margriet, 3 August 1946 (number 29). Original quote: 'Calcium Chefaro: aan de groote vraag naar Calcium chefaro (calcium-gluconaat tabletten met pepermunt of chocoladesmaak) kunnen wij nog slechts beperkt voldoen. Als uw apotheker of drogist een doosje heeft, reserveer het dan voor hen, die het hardst extra kalk nodig hebben, b.v. jonge kinderen en a.s. moeders.'

Graph 1: Advertisements in the Margriet in 1946.



Graph 2: Advertisements in the Libelle in 1946.



Consequences of the war

The quote above is a good example of the type of advertisements you will find in Dutch women’s magazines in 1946. While the brand wants people to buy their product, they also admit that they cannot yet keep up with the demand. The companies in the Netherlands were partially suffering from the same kind of issues as the housewives, they were often in a bad financial place because of the war, and it was hard to buy the things necessary to keep the

company stocked and producing.⁹⁴ Many products had been unavailable in the Netherlands during the war, so the brands placed special advertisements announcing their return. Brands like Delta soap claimed to be just as good as before the war, and Radion cleaning solution had the slogan; 'We should not complain, since we are finally able to do the laundry again, but I will not be fully satisfied, until Radion returns!'⁹⁵

Several brands also mentioned, that while they were once again producing, the supply was still low. Hero Perl was in their own words 'still not up to full speed' but they claimed to get better every day.⁹⁶ The production of the Krick-Krack honey cookies would stop from time to time, due to a shortage of honey. 'We have a day off! We don't like that at all, because it means our honey is once again out of stock. And when there is no honey, we are unable to bake honey Krick-Kracks. But we promise you: Everyone will keep saying "Krick-Kracks, you can taste the honey!"'⁹⁷ The low supply of many products, combined with a high demand, was enough incentive for some

grocers to sell counterfeit products to their customers. This was a problem in particular for Liga. This brand placed several advertisements in both the *Margriet* and *Libelle* telling their customers to be careful of fake Liga products. 'Attention mothers, don't let anyone sell you fake Liga! Demand the real Liga nutrition in the red packages that cost 35 cents on the rice-stamp.'⁹⁸ A different Liga advertisement found in the *Margriet* cautioned the readers that only the real Liga could guarantee a healthy and robust child.⁹⁹

Frugal

One strategy for selling products in a time of poverty was to convince the housewives that the product being advertised was cheap and therefore a responsible way to spend the household budget. Firstly, many advertisements informed their customers on which ration stamp they needed to use to be able to buy their product. Many products were still being



Figure 1: *Libelle*, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

⁹⁴ *Libelle*, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

⁹⁵ *Libelle*, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

⁹⁶ *Libelle*, 12 July 1946 (number 10).

⁹⁷ *Libelle*, 4 October 1946 (number 16). Original quote: 'We hebben vrij vandaag! Dat vinden wij heelemaal niet leuk! Want onze honing is weer op. En als er geen honing is, kunnen we geen honing Krick-Kracks bakken. Maar we beloven U: Iedereen zal blijven zeggen: Krick-Kracks, je proeft de honing!'

⁹⁸ *Libelle*, 9 August 1946 (number 12). Original quote: 'Opgelet moeders, laat uw geen namaak in de handen stoppen! Eisch de echte liga voeding in de roode pakken van 35 cent op de rijstbon.'

⁹⁹ *Margriet*, 14 September 1946 (number 32).

rationed, so having enough money was not enough to buy most things. Housewives were constantly looking for the best way to spend their ration stamps. As many ration stamps could be used for multiple brands, it was important for advertisers to emphasise what a good deal their product would be. Paré wedding sugars for instance informed the reader that they could get a hundred gram on one ration stamp.¹⁰⁰ Thus implying that buying sugars from a different brand would result in a smaller amount of product. Liga, which were grain products for infants, informed the reader that Liga could be bought with a rice-stamp.¹⁰¹ Thus providing housewives with an alternative way of spending this ration stamp. Advertisers were also quick to point out when their product became freely available again.¹⁰²



Figure 2: Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

Other companies made use of the shortages to present their products as a good deal. Their advertisements claimed that their product would help maintain the items that people already had, so they would not have to buy replacements. Multiple issues of the *Margriet* had an advertisement by Lintje's textile-paint.¹⁰³ According to the advertisement, you would not need to buy a new dress if you used Lintje's textile paint. You simply needed to use the paint on an

¹⁰⁰ Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹⁰¹ Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹⁰² Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹⁰³ Margriet, 9 November 1946 (number 36).

old dress, and everyone would think that you were wearing a newly bought one. Sunlight soap also played in on the textile shortages. 'Are you short on textile points? Of course you are! That is why you should be careful not to let your textiles wear out. Wash with Sunlight Soap!¹⁰⁴ Another company that used the shortages as a selling opportunity was Hollandia. This company pointed out that many people had a need for children's underwear. They offered to turn old underwear from father or mother into new underwear for the children.¹⁰⁵

Most of the advertisements in 1946 were for necessities such as food and soap. There were however a few exceptions. A few advertisements which seem to clash with the need of the time to be frugal, and to save money for necessities. One exception were a few advertisements for home renovations, such as the Bruynzeel advertisement for new parquet flooring.¹⁰⁶ It could be argued however, that house repairs were not a luxury in 1946, when many houses were still damaged from the war. Another exception were several different advertisements for courses. The *Margriet* had one for learning how to make clothing, and the *Libelle* had one for becoming a better parent, as well as one for learning how to draw fashion.¹⁰⁷ The one in the *Margriet* can be explained as an investment the housewife would make in herself. By learning to make clothing she would have to buy less, thus saving money in the long run. Other luxury products advertised in the *Libelle* were sports equipment from Lancôme and a photographer service by Geveart that offered to make the perfect photos for every occasion. Since the target audience of the *Libelle* was affluent, it is not surprising that they had more advertisements for luxury items than the *Margriet*, which was aimed at the average Dutch woman. One non-essential company that the *Margriet* did advertise for, was magazines and books by their own publisher. There are several advertisements in the *Margriet* for the *Margriet* Winter-book.

Health

Another strategy that made use of the gender roles of 1946 was the appeal to health. Women were considered responsible for the health of their husband and children.¹⁰⁸ This meant that the women's magazines were the perfect place for 'healthy' foodstuffs. The health-related advertisements in the magazines from 1946 can be divided into two categories; supplements, and food and drinks. The first category was prominently present in the women's magazine. On average, there were two or three advertisements for

¹⁰⁴ *Libelle*, 6 September 1946 (number 14). Original quote: 'Komt u textielpunten tekort? Allicht! Laat daarom het goed tenminste niet slijten. Was met Sunlight zeep!'

¹⁰⁵ *Libelle*, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹⁰⁶ *Margriet*, 14 September 1946 (number 32).

¹⁰⁷ *Margriet*, 14 September 1946 (number 32); *Libelle*, 4 October 1946 (number 16); *Libelle*, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹⁰⁸ Verriet, Culturele 'mentaliteiten' en de kant-en-klaarmaaltijd, 50.

supplements per issue. Which was up to a fourth of the total number of advertisements in a women's magazine. The high number of supplements can be explained by the low health of most people after the war. Especially during the last year of the war, many people had been unable to eat enough food or healthy enough food. These supplements promised to improve the health of the family by supplying additional vitamins or minerals. Take for instance the need for more calcium. The brand Opbouw offered peppermints that were supplemented with extra calcium and vitamin D.¹⁰⁹ The need for calcium was so high, that calcium tablets had to be reserved for those most in need, as shown in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Sanatogen was another brand of supplements. Sanatogen claimed to help with tiredness and depression. It was advertised as 'nerve strengthening' and could be taken by both the sick as well as those who were generally weak due to the war.¹¹⁰ This category also covers prenatal care. In the *Libelle*, six out of the seven issues that had advertisements, had an advertisement for Nourical D. This was a supplement for expecting mothers, promising to nourish the infant before it was born. 'Calcium, phosphor, and vitamin D, Nourical D made me strong before I existed.'¹¹¹



Figure 3: *Libelle*, 1 November 1946 (number 18).

The second category of health-related advertisements is foods and drinks. These were foods and drinks that were advertised as healthy and important for the growth of the children. There were a lot of brands that claimed to be healthy, or at least healthier than the competitors. Vita claimed that their vegetables and fruits were healthier because they were quick-frozen. Vita had harvested them in the summer, quick-frozen them, and preserved them in ice. This meant, according to them, that all the vitamins found in the summer vegetables and fruits were also preserved.¹¹² The Hero brand also claimed to preserve the vitamins in their products. Their tomato juice was full of 'vitamins straight from nature' and a 'source of health'.¹¹³ Kellogg's cornflakes also claimed to keep the children healthy and happy. "Kellogg's cornflakes; A true breakfast hero, nutritious and easily digestible. And while your

¹⁰⁹ *Libelle*, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹¹⁰ *Libelle*, 1 November 1946 (number 18).

¹¹¹ *Libelle*, 9 August 1946 (number 12). Original quote: 'Kalk, phosphor en vitamine D, Nourical D maakte mij al sterk voor ik er was.'

¹¹² *Margriet*, 12 October 1946 (number 34).

¹¹³ *Libelle*, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

family enjoys, they take in a lust for life, energy, and health with every spoonful. Kellogg's cornflakes are rich in calories!¹¹⁴

Tradition

The context chapter briefly mentioned the need of many to go back to the way of living from before the war. Many people in the Netherlands remembered how much easier and happier life had been before the Second World War, and they hoped that returning to that way of living would make them happy again. After being under the control of the Nazi's for several years, many wanted to go back to a traditional Dutch society and way of living. The advertisers played in on this desire by claiming that their products were traditional and had been a staple of Dutch living for a long time. Paré wedding sugars claimed that anyone who would serve their product on a wedding would be part of a national tradition, as can be seen in figure 2.¹¹⁵ Van Rijn mustard claimed to have been around since the time of Abraham, and Goemans pudding pointed out that they had been producing pudding since 1907.¹¹⁶

America

At the same time that many people longed for the time before the war, the United States were very popular in the Netherlands. People looked up to the country and advertisers made use of that. Several advertisers tried to introduce products into the Dutch market that were already popular in the United States. For instance, breakfast cereals. By presenting their product as typically American, a Dutch brand called Farmer tried to convince the readers that their products were the best.¹¹⁷ Figure 4 shows how they used a picture of a boy in stereotypical American clothing. Another kind of product that was already popular in the United States was convenience foods. Advertisements for these products will be discussed in depth in the chapter for advertisements from 1956, but they were already on the rise in 1946. Brand like Gixu soups promised that their products were easy and quick to prepare, without the need to add anything. Whether emphasising these



Figure 4: Libelle, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

¹¹⁴ Margriet, 9 November 1946 (number 18). Original quote: 'Kellogg's cornflakes; een ware uitkomst voor het ontbijt, voedzaam en licht verteerbaar, En terwijl Uw gezin smult, schenkt iedere lepel levenslust, energie en gezondheid, Kellogg's cornflakes zijn rijk aan calorieën!'

¹¹⁵ Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹¹⁶ Margriet, 14 September 1946 (number 32).

¹¹⁷ Libelle, 14 June 1946 (number 8).

timesaving properties was a good strategy will be discussed in the chapter about 1956.

Authority

A last strategy employed in the women's magazines in 1946 was to make use of authority figures. Advertisers would have their products be presented by people in a job that was respected by society, thus implying that the product was of good quality. Why else would these people use them? These respectable people would, for instance, be the (male) captain of a ship, like with Keg's thee.¹¹⁸ Or they would be a female Royal Marine telling the reader that Prodent toothpaste was superior.¹¹⁹ The fact that several companies made use of people working on a ship might be explained by the fact that their uniforms were very recognisable, and working on a ship added a sense of adventure to the respectability.

Conclusion

The advertisements from 1946 are similar to the articles from 1946 in that they both addressed consumption through the lens of societal expectations placed on women. The advertisements made use of the expectation that women would be married with children, and responsible for both the budget and health of the family. The articles encouraged women to keep up the standards from before the war even in a time of hardship, and this chapter shows that the advertisements also referred to the past to sell their products. While the articles were mainly thankful to the United States, the advertisements focus on the need to imitate the American culture as a way to sell their products. A last similarity is that both the articles and the advertisements make use of authority to get what they want. The articles present themselves as wiser than the average housewife when they tell their readers how they should behave after the war. The advertisements make use of figures of authority to convince people of the quality of their product. A big difference between the two is that while the articles tried to educate the readers, the advertisements merely reflected the social and economic situation of 1946. The advertisers wanted to sell their products, but they did not try to influence the readers into



Figure 5: Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹¹⁸ Libelle, 3 May 1946 (number 5).

¹¹⁹ Margriet, 9 November 1946 (number 36).

spending more money. Instead, they made use of the social expectations already present to appeal to their audience.

5. Articles in 1956

In nearly every household, it is the woman who controls the finances. She is given the responsibility for the weekly- or monthly budget and has to ensure that she does not reach the bottom of her purse until the next paycheck has been claimed. Not all women possess an equal level of talent when it comes to this matter. How about you? Are you economic, or do you always need more money than your husband brings in? Are all the income and expenses in your household precisely noted, or are you stunned time and again when the budget turns out to be accurate? Do you consider housekeeping a calling, or do you consider it a task, that could easily be done by anyone? Throw yourself into this quiz and convince yourself of the fact that you are a successful housewife... or not!¹²⁰

In chapter three we saw that the articles in 1946 mainly addressed consumption as in related to the shortages that were still very present after the war. This chapter is about the articles written ten years later. How did the articles from the *Libelle* and *Margriet* address consumption now that most of the shortages were over, and things were no longer being rationed? Did they change the way in which they handled consumption, and if so, why? First, we look at the expectations placed on women in 1956. As the quote above shows, careful consumption was a big part of being considered a successful housewife. Then, we look at the advice given by the articles on how to be frugal. Is the advice still the same after ten years? After that we look at specific kinds of consumption in 1956. First the buying of a house, then some innovations in household appliances, as well as another new kind of consumption: vacation. The chapter ends with an analysis of how the women's magazines used consumption to reward their readers.

Perfect housewife

The 1950s were a stressful time for housewives. Society had very high standards for keeping a house. Being a housewife was very much a fulltime job, women had an endless list of things to clean and cook and take care of. Historian Els Kloek has described these high expectations, which she calls *burgerlijk waardepatroon* (civil value pattern). 'The demands on the housewife, material as well as emotional, reached a level of which humanity had never

¹²⁰ *Margriet*, 6 October 1956 (number 40). Original quote: 'In nagenoeg ieder huishouden is het de vrouw die de financiële touwtjes in handen houdt. Zij krijgt de week- of maandbeurs onder haar beheer en moet maar zorgen dat die gevuld blijft tot het volgende goudschip binnenloopt. Niet alle vrouwen hebben evenveel talenten op dit gebied. Hoe staat het met U? Bent U economisch, of heft U altijd meer geld nodig dan Uw man thuisbrengt? Zijn in Uw huishouding de inkomsten en uitgaven nauwkeurig te boek gesteld, of staat U eigenlijk iedere keer weer stomverbaasd als het budget blijkt te kloppen? Beschouwt U huishouden als een roeping, of vindt U het eigenlijk een werkje, dat iedereen wel kan doen? Duikt U eens in deze test en overtuig er U van of U een geslaagde huisvrouw bent... of niet!'

even dreamt of. Never before had the rooms been this clean, the clothes equally well washed, the meals prepared with such care, the house this cosily furnished, the fashion as carefully followed and the attention to the wellbeing of the children been as high as in the second half of the twentieth century. To put it more succinctly; the bar had never been this high.¹²¹ Next to all these demands, women were also still expected to be frugal, as the quote at the beginning of the chapter shows. Housewives were expected to chase perfection, and the writers of the women's magazines were no different. The articles encouraged women to constantly improve themselves. To always look at their weaker points and find the drive within themselves to do even better, to be even better. For the purpose of this paper we only look at a few of the areas in which women were expected to excel, but it is important to realise that the demand to be frugal was just one of the many things that kept women busy from dawn till dusk.

Frugal

The quote above is taken from a quiz in the *Margriet*, it rates the reader based on how frugal they are, and then judges whether they are a good housewife, a work in progress, or a failure.¹²² The reader would be judged based on seven questions. The first three questions were about going to the stores. Did the housewife make use of every possible discount she could find in the newspapers and magazines, and did she keep in mind that every saved cent counted? If not, then she had some work to do. As pointed out in the context chapter, a good housewife paid attention to even the smallest amounts of money. Question three was about how often she had to go to the stores. Could the housewife prepare a new and tasty meal each day of the week, while only visiting the butcher twice and the grocer and fishmonger once? The first supermarket had only just opened in 1955 so most women had to buy their product through a combination of several weekly stores, and daily deliveries at home, such as milk and bread. As the next chapter will show, ordering clothing and home goods through the phone and having them delivered at the front door was also on the rise, but this was only for bigger purchases. Combine this with the fact that many people did not yet have a refrigerator and it will come as no surprise that buying the weekly necessities took up a lot of time and effort. Buying food in bulk for a lower price was not an option. Question four and five were about bigger purchases. According to the quiz, it was only responsible to buy a vacuum or a radio if the housewife had been saving up for it. No making use of the money meant for weekly necessities, and certainly no impulse purchases! Bigger expenses were to be carefully considered and by saving up for the purchase the cost could be spread over a long period of time. A similar level of organisation had to go into the purchasing of clothing. A

¹²¹ Kloek, *Vrouw des huizes*, 212.

¹²² *Margriet*, 6 October 1956 (number 40).

successful housewife made sure to have enough clothing, that buying new clothing did not happen often. It is interesting that the *Margriet* devoted an entire question to clothing specifically. Given the fact that each issue of the *Margriet* and *Libelle* contained several patterns for sewing or knitting your own clothing, it seems that the women's magazines considered clothing something to make yourself as much as possible. The last two questions were about the importance of saving. A successful housewife spent as little as possible on the running of the house so she could regularly put the remaining money in the bank.

Advice

The writers of the women's magazines advised women on how to be frugal. They also did this in 1946, but there was quite a difference in how they did it. Frugal in 1946 meant; do not buy anything but the necessities, you do not need to buy new things if you take good care of what you already have. The writers from 1956 were much more in favour of consumption, as long as it happened in a responsible manner. One way of consuming in a responsible manner was to make things yourself. That way you still had a new thing but only for the price of the building parts, which was lower than what you would spend in the store. In the months leading up to December, the *Libelle* had a series of articles that explained how the reader could make toys for the children and encouraged their readers to assist their husband in making these. The parents might make, for example, a little cabinet that could be used as a pretend store, a bookcase or a vanity table for little girls.¹²³ The *Margriet* also had a series of articles, but they focussed on basic furniture, such as an ottoman or a simple table for the kitchen.¹²⁴ While the reuse and repurposing of things was given less attention than in 1946, there were still a few articles advising women how they could get the most out of their products, and the *Libelle* had a column in which women could send in tips and tricks. One woman complained that people threw away too much food. 'Every day I am annoyed to see so much old bread on the waste-cart, have people forgotten the war already?'¹²⁵ She pointed out that old bread could easily be used in several dishes, such as pudding.

A new way in which the women's magazines advised their readers about consumption, was by reviewing products. An article in the *Margriet*, for example, reviewed a cleaning cloth. This 'wonder cloth', according to the magazine, was a real solution for the cleaning housewife. The writer said that she had been using the cloth for several months now, and she was very satisfied with its use. The article also mentioned the price (f 3,95) and claimed that it was well worth the money. These type of product reviews were a weekly reoccurrence and presented

¹²³ *Libelle*, 3 November 1956 (number 44).

¹²⁴ *Margriet*, 7 April 1956 (number 14) and 5 May 1956 (number 18).

¹²⁵ *Libelle*, 2 June 1956 (number 22). Original quote: 'Elke dag erger ik mij eraan, dat er bij de schillenman zoveel oud brood op zijn wagen ligt. Zijn de mensen de oorlog dan alweer vergeten?'

themselves as the genuine opinion of the writer. Whether these articles were sponsored or not was not mentioned. While the women from 1946 were already very happy if their cleaning tools were in good shape, the housewife of 1956 was faced with the idea that she had to have certain brands of cleaning tools.

Buying a house

There was still a housing shortage in 1956. This was especially a problem for newlyweds. People sometimes had to wait years before they could buy their first home. Both the magazines addressed the issue by offering alternatives to buying a house. The *Margriet* had an article about living in a bus or caravan.¹²⁶ The article mentioned how several young couples had been trying to buy a house for years, only to get disappointed every time the house was sold to someone else. They finally decided that they had waited long enough and bought a caravan instead. The article presented this decision as a valid option for young families without children. The *Libelle* offered another alternative; to live in someone else's attic.¹²⁷ The article explained how a family could turn their attic into an apartment with a little work for a low cost. Once again it is doubtful how many people had enough space that they could rent out their attic, but it might have been a good solution for newlyweds who still lived with their parents.

Innovations

The context chapter already pointed out that there were many innovations in the 1950s. Things like the refrigerator, vacuum and washing machine were on the market, and were slowly becoming more popular. The women's magazines encouraged their readers to buy such appliances if they could afford to, because they saved time. The magazines also informed their readers about smaller innovations and explained how they worked. For instance, when egg-cartons became common in the Netherlands, the writers from both magazines felt the need to explain their use. They explained that the cartons came in different sizes and that they could be taken home. The *Margriet* added that they could be used as an egg holder in the kitchen, or as a place to keep your hardboiled eggs when going on a picknick.¹²⁸ Another smaller innovation that required explanation was synthetic laundry detergent. An article in the *Libelle* explained how this product could clean without using soap and explained the differences between the kinds that were available. The magazines however also had advice for those who were not able to buy the new products. They gave for instance tips on how to cook without an oven, and explained how you could bury a metal barrel in the ground and cover it with a wooden lid to create a cold place to store your

¹²⁶ *Margriet*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

¹²⁷ *Libelle*, 1 December 1956 (number 48).

¹²⁸ *Margriet*, 7 July 1956 (number 27).

perishables.¹²⁹ Another innovation in consumption that the magazines addressed was leisure time. Having a five-day workweek was slowly becoming the norm, and family outings became affordable for everyone. While only a few people could afford a long vacation far away, vacationing for a few days in the Netherlands or just over the border was now within reach of most families. The writers of the *Margriet* informed its readers that a week traveling abroad was doable and affordable if the housewife would do a lot of research and planning beforehand.¹³⁰ The *Libelle*, whose readers were on average a bit more affluent, gave advice on the best kind of gear for going on skiing, teaching its readers that going skiing required an expensive new wardrobe, as ski shoes could not be substituted by walking shoes.¹³¹ For those just looking for a day of entertainment, the magazines also reviewed possible outings such as movies in the cinema, museums and expositions. The *Libelle* for instance devoted an entire article to *Madurodam* and the *Efteling*.¹³²

Consumption as reward

The last way in which the magazines addressed consumption was by using it as a reward. Both magazines offered their readers money and/or rewards to get more subscribers, promising a reward for every new subscriber that a reader would bring in. These rewards were part of a collection and readers were encouraged to bring in multiple subscribers so that they could earn the entire collection. The *Margriet* had a campaign they advertised for in each issue which offered the readers the chance to receive a new tea set. A reader who brought in a new subscriber could choose from several pieces, including a teaspoon, a little bowl, a sugar scoop, and a pastry scoop. All were silver plated and could be combined.¹³³ The *Libelle* ran two different campaigns throughout the year. First they rewarded bringing in subscribers with silver plated spoons, and people who brought in more than five new subscribers could earn, among others, a silver plated powder box.¹³⁴ Later they started a new campaign in which readers could earn decorated handkerchiefs.¹³⁵ Another way in which readers could earn rewards was by taking part in a puzzle. These puzzles were often a way for the magazine to support a charity. The readers could only compete if they added a certain amount of money to their letter with the answer. Take for instance the rebus in the *Margriet* for the Princess Irene fund.¹³⁶ For every f 0.50 someone would send in, they could

¹²⁹ *Libelle*, 4 August 1956 (number 31).

¹³⁰ *Margriet*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

¹³¹ *Libelle*, 7 January 1956 (number 1).

¹³² *Libelle*, 7 July 1956 (number 27).

¹³³ *Margriet*, 7 January 1956 (number 1).

¹³⁴ *Libelle*, 7 January 1956 (number 1).

¹³⁵ *Libelle*, 4 February 1956 (number 5).

¹³⁶ *Margriet*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

earn a prize. The number one winner would receive a Renault or its equivalent in money if the winner was not interested in a car. Other possible prizes included a vacuum and a radio.

Conclusion

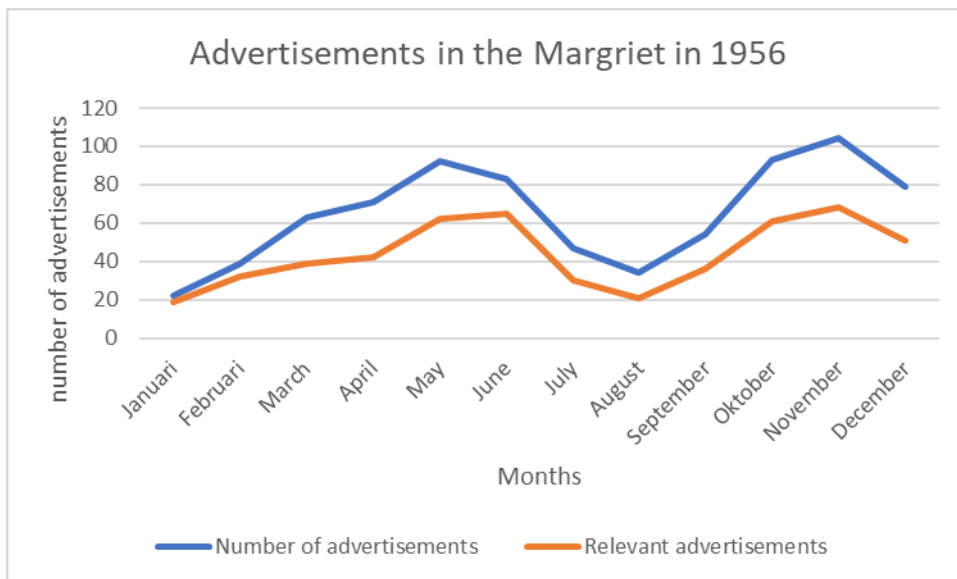
There was much more space for consumption in 1956 than in 1946. The women's magazines however still expected their readers to be very responsible and frugal in the handling of money. While the economy has changed and the shortages have all but disappeared, the magazines still educate their readers to be frugal and careful when consuming. Consumption was no longer something to avoid as much as possible, but the magazines certainly did not approve of thoughtless spending. Advice about consumption was now about buying the best products and learning to use new products. The writers of the magazines portrayed themselves as experts in householding who expected their readers to make healthy and tasty meals, clean the house with new products, and have new experiences like vacation, while still paying attention to the expenses and savings.

6. Advertisements in 1956

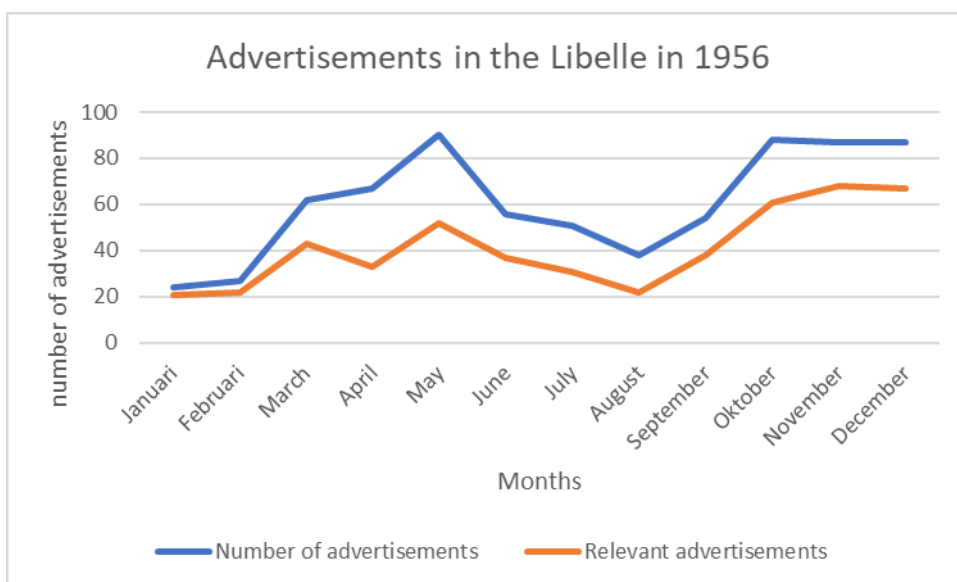
This chapter is about the ways in which the advertisements from 1956 addressed consumption by housewives. This chapter will discuss the different ways in which advertisers tried to make their products appealing to housewives and will explain why the advertisers chose to use these strategies in order to sell their products. Firstly, we will look at the place of advertisements in the women's magazines. How much space in a women's magazine was taken up by advertisements? After that we start with how the advertisers used the high expectations placed on housewives to sell their products. This use of societal expectations is then divided into the different aspects of being a perfect housewife; being frugal and looking after the health of the family. Then we look at how the advertisers emphasised innovation. We finish the chapter with explaining why, according to Verriet, the advertisements for convenience foods were, while being a common feature in the *Libelle* and *Margriet*, not successful.

Place of advertisements in the magazines

As the graphs 3 and 4 show, the number of advertisements in the women's magazines in 1956 was not consistent. This is mainly because the number of pages per issue was very inconsistent. The tables 3 and 4 show that the number of pages was different per issue nearly every month. The number of relevant advertisers compared to the total number of advertisements did stay fairly consistent however. Both the magazines had a lot of advertisements about clothing for women, make up, and parfum for women. Not only the number of advertisements grew compared to 1946, the size of the advertisements also grew. Nearly all advertisements from 1946 were placed with six on half a page, with a few exceptions that took up half or a whole page. In 1956, most advertisements took up half a page, with the biggest advertisements taking up two and a half pages.



Graph 3: Advertisements in the Margriet in 1956.



Graph 4: Advertisements in the Libelle in 1956.

Perfect housewife

Just like in 1946, the advertisers made use of the expectations placed on women to sell their products. The most blatant examples of this are when the advertisements explicitly ask the reader whether they want the world to think that they are inadequate. Thus playing in on the insecurities of women who try so hard to be the 'perfect housewife'. The advertisements, of course, claim that their product will impress the whole neighbourhood and make the housewife look good in front of family and guests. Using the product advertised, they claim,

will give the housewife a good reputation. One example of this is an advertisement in the *Libelle* for curtains, depicted in figure 6. It informs the reader that every guest will look at the house when they visit, and the curtains will not escape this assessment, as they hang in the 'most visible place of the house.'¹³⁷ Which means, according to the article, that ugly curtains will be judged twice as hard. The same tactic was used to sell foodstuffs like Unox sausages. The advertisement claimed that a housewife who served her family Unox sausage would get two compliments, one for her and one for Unox.

Frugal

Not all advertisements were as blatant as the ones above. Most advertisers simply appealed to the various traits that a housewife was supposed to possess. Since advertisers were aiming for people to spend their money, they mostly appealed to the housewife's need to be frugal. One way of doing that was by promising that the product was durable. The longer a product could be used, the more money could be reasonably spent on it. As such, many advertisements made claims such as 'durable', 'indestructible', and 'will still be around when your children grow up'. Many advertisements therefore offered to send their product free of charge for a few days so that the housewife could personally check the quality and therefore longevity of a product. Another way to make a product seem less expensive was by offering the option of paying in several terms. Sheets might be paid for at once and cost f 12.95 or in three monthly terms of a little more than f 4. The expenses would be the same, but the second option was a lot easier to incorporate into the monthly budget. The advertisement in figure 7 shows both the option of trying a product out and buying a product in several terms.



... en kijken maar!

Natuurlijk kijkt de visite naar uw gordijntjes. Ze hangen op de „zichtbaarste“ plekken van uw woning. Lelijk of mooi ziet men dubbel duidelijk. Weifel dus niet: zorg voor mooie gordijnen, Vegecon gordijnen.

Vegecon's vier vitale vitrage-voordelen:

- de sterkste garens
- de fijnste weefsels
- de mooiste dessins
- de soepelste val

VEGECON
gordijnen

Figure 6: *Libelle*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

¹³⁷ *Libelle*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

HET IS TEXTIELCENTRALE die de - flanelen - lakens uitdeelt!!



Rheumatiekwerende flanelen lakens

- Pracht kwaliteit WIT lakenflanel
- Dicht geweven, zacht geruwd, vervaardigd uit de beste grondstoffen vormt dit laken een sterk geheel!
- Heel Nederland kent en waardeert deze kwaliteit reeds jaren en tienduizenden enthousiaste huismoeders willen geen andere
- Rheumatiekwerend, dus voor ons klimaat onmisbaar. Het is nu geen luxe maar te slapen in flanelen lakens, als U bedenkt, dat wij deze gerenommeerde kwaliteit leveren voor een prijs voordeliger dan waar ook!
- Uitsluitend per paar verkrijgbaar (1 bovenlaken met cordonrand op brede zoom en 1 laken glad)

TEXTIELCENTRALE GARANDEERT: EENS GEPROBEERD: STEEDS BEGEERD!!

COUPON, brief of briefkaart te zenden aan:

TEXTIELCENTRALE HULST N.V.
GROTE ZWANENSTRAAT 5-9. HULST

Zend mij FRANCO en VRIJBLIJVEND OP ZICHT, volgens onderstaande voorwaarden:

..... PAAR FLANELLEN LAKENS, maat 150 x 230 cm
..... PAAR FLANELLEN LAKENS, maat 170 x 230 cm
Indien ik ze behoud betaal ik U binnen 5 dagen na ontvangst:
Per paar lakens 150 x 230 cm f 11.50, per paar lakens 170 x 230 cm f 12.95 ineens, of in 3 opeenvolgende maandelijkse termijnen. (1e Termijn binnen 5 dagen na ontvangst.) Zo niet, dan gaat de zending binnen 5 dagen ongefrankeerd aan U terug.

Naam: Handtekening:
Straat:
Woonplaats: Prov.: L 9

150 x 230 cm f 11.50 per paarcontant
170 x 230 cm f 12.95 per paarcontant
U kunt ook betalen in 3 maandelijkse termijnen zonder renteberekening

Textielcentrale offreert ... U profiteert!!
Nu voordeliger dan ooit tevoren en waar ook. Lever zelf het bewijs. — VERGELIJK prijs en kwaliteit en U verdient gulden!

Alleen als de flanelen lakens U 100% bevallen betaalt U ons, zo niet stuur ze dan OP ONZE KOSTEN terug.
Vraagt GRATIS geïllustreerde wintercatalogus!

Figure 7: Libelle, 7 January 1956 (number 1).

Health

Just like in 1946, the advertisers counted on the expectation that women would take care of the health of the family. The magazines from 1956 therefore contain a lot of advertisement for 'healthy' foods and drinks as well as supplements. One supplement that was advertised nearly every month were Pink pills. These pills contained iron and were presented as the cure for fatigue and feeling of being high-strung or depressed. The advertisements promised the reader more resilience. The product was sometimes advertised for women who felt weak, sometimes as something to give to your husband to deal with a stressful job. The advertisements for healthy products often also made use of

the authoritative strategy, because they used 'scientific' data to prove that their product was successful, thus making the reader more likely to believe the claims made. The Pink pills, for

De NIEUWE Bolletje is er!

Bolletje eierbeschuiten worden nu verpakt volgens een geheel NIEUWE ZWITSERSE VINDING
Een unicum voor Nederland.

Bolletje extra met de 5 voordelen:

- altijd gave beschuiten
- blijven langer vers
- méér eieren
- méér vitaminen
- de meest brosse beschuit die verkrijgbaar is!



Bolletje
EIERBESCHUIT
EXTRA

Figure 8: Libelle, 4 February 1956 (number 5).

instance, were advertised as enhancing the number of red blood cells in the body.¹³⁸ Advertisements for foods and drinks often contained claims about how they had improved the product so that it was even healthier. Figure 8 shows how the brand Bolletje claimed that their product contained even more vitamins, more good ingredients, how it would remain fresh even longer than before. These health claims were not always truthful. No reader nowadays would believe Coca Cola if they advertised themselves as a 'pure, healthy refreshment'.¹³⁹

Innovation

The chapter about articles from 1956 already mentioned that there were many innovations that influenced the way in which housewives could consume. This not only affected the articles in the women's magazines, but also the advertisements, as companies presented their products as innovative and improved in order to convince the readers that their product was better than that of the competitor. This claim of being innovative can be found in all kinds of products in 1956. They can be found in advertisements for small products like ink, big appliances like refrigerators, clothes, and food. These advertisements can be divided into two categories; advertisements for new kinds of products that people were buying for the first time, like refrigerators, and advertisements for products that were already commonly used but were now improved and presented as 'innovative' or 'modern', such as sewing machines. Advertisements for refrigerators emphasised how useful and necessary for the household they were by noting how much food could be stored in them and how long this food would stay fresh. Buying a refrigerator, according to the advertisements, would mean less trips to the stores and no more spoiled food. The sewing machine was also presented as innovative, while at the same time also being presented as traditional. Figure 9 shows an advertisement that claimed that by buying a Singer sewing machine, the housewife would become part of generations of women that had



Figure 9: *Libelle* 2 June 1956 (number 22).

¹³⁸ *Libelle*, 4 February 1956 (number 5).

¹³⁹ *Margriet*, 5 May 1956 (number 18).

used a Singer machine before her. In contrast, the advertisers also pointed out that their new sewing machine was very different from the sewing machines that had been sold before. 'A Singer machine is naturally the ideal of every woman, because a Singer sewing machine is the most modern, and contains each and every new invention'.¹⁴⁰ Unlike a refrigerator, the advertisers acknowledged that there was nothing new about owning a sewing machine, but by emphasising that the machine had been improved, the Singer sewing machine could still be presented as being innovative.

It was not just appliances that were presented as innovative. Both the *Margriet* and *Libelle* had an advertisement for Gimborn ink in November and August respectively. In this advertisement, everything from the bottle, to the cap, to the ink itself was presented as an improved version as compared to the ink the company had sold in the past. The bottle was 'bold and handy', and unable to fall over. The cap was 'a whole new kind of system, preventing spills and smeared fingers'. The ink itself, so the advertisement claimed, would stay liquid on the pen, and only dry on paper.¹⁴¹ The advertisement for Bolletje biscuits, as seen in figure 8, can also be seen as an improved version. The advertisers not only appeal to the housewife's need to keep her children healthy, but also present their product as better than it had been before.

Convenience foods



Figure 10: *Libelle*, 4 August 1956 (number 31).

Advertisements for convenience foods were already present in 1946, but they were commonplace in 1956. Nearly every advertisement for food claimed to save the housewife time from her busy schedule. A good example is the company Unox. This company advertised their products as 'easy' and an outcome on busy days in which there was no time to cook an elaborate meal. 'Smac makes it easy. Do you have a busy day? Unexpected

¹⁴⁰ *Libelle*, 2 June 1956 (number 22).

¹⁴¹ *Margriet*, 3 November 1956 (number 44).

guests? Are you suddenly out of time? If you are in possession of a handy can of Smac, you can serve tasty meat at every moment.'¹⁴² Given the high demands placed on housewives, it would seem that saving time would be a good selling pitch, but a study by Jon Verriet shows that this was not the case. According to his research, the amount of time that a woman put into her meal showed how good of a housewife she was, how much she was willing to sacrifice to keep her family healthy and happy.¹⁴³ Women took pride in their elaborate- and self-made meals, and making use of convenience foods was seen as taking the easy way out.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that there was quite an overlap in the ways in which products were advertised in 1946 and 1956. In both years, advertisers appealed to the need of the housewife to be frugal and take care of the health of the family in order to sell their products. A new strategy was the emphasis on innovation and improvement. Advertisers emphasised how much better they were than their competitors. Just like the housewife had to live up to higher standards than ever, so were the products advertised as better than ever. While the advertisers from 1946 accepted that the readers were frugal, the advertisers from 1956 tried to convince the readers that they needed all sorts of new products to be a good housewife. According to the advertisements, a perfect housewife needed not only the new appliances that were now available in the Netherlands, but also the best brand of the products she already possessed.

¹⁴² Libelle, 4 August 1956 (number 31). Original quote: 'Smac maakt het U gemakkelijk. Een drukke dag? Onverwachts eters? Plotseling geen tijd? Als U zo'n handig blikje Smac in huis hebt, brengt U op elk gewenst moment verrukkelijk vlees op tafel.'

¹⁴³ Verriet, Culturele 'mentaliteiten' en de kant-en-klaarmaaltijd, 27.

7. Conclusion

The main question of this paper is: how did Dutch women's magazines address consumption in the immediate post Second World War years? And why did they address consumption in this manner? To answer this question, the research was split into four parts. Firstly, this paper looked at two years, 1946 and 1956. This allows us to see how the way the magazines handled consumption has changed in the post-war period, and in what ways it stayed the same. Those two years were then also split, into articles and advertisements. Thus allowing us to see the differences and/or similarities between how the writers of the magazines handled consumption, and how the companies advertising in the magazines handled consumption.

The articles from both 1946 and 1956 advised women on how to handle the expectations placed on them by society. The articles from both 1946 and 1956 did not only reflect the time they were written in, the writers actively tried to educate the readers of the magazines. In 1946 the women were expected to keep their family healthy and their house clean in a time of shortages and ruin. The magazines advised the women on the preparation of healthy meals with limited means and shared the tips and tricks of women from all over the country, thus enabling Dutch women to help each other in these hard times. Housewives were advised not to buy anything but the essentials, and to make do with what they already possessed. The magazines taught the housewives how to consume as little as possible by repurposing and repairing. The fifties were a time in which the demands placed on women were at an all-time high. Society expected women to dedicate their every waking moment to be the perfect housewife. The women's magazines from 1956 advised women on how to be more efficient, and on how to consume in a responsible manner. Budgets were still tight, but consumer culture was on the rise. The articles advised the women on the best products available, and on how to take part in new ways of consumption, such as technical innovations like the refrigerator, and new experiences like going on vacation. While the articles from 1946 advised women to abstain from consuming, the articles from 1956 advised women on how to make the most out of their budget.

While the advertisements from 1946 were, not surprisingly, more in favour of consumption instead of saving and repurposing, they too addressed the shortages and the low budgets after the Second World War. The advertisements show that the companies were slowly getting back on their feet after the war, it took time before they could start producing again, and the shortages meant that the demand for their product was often higher than their supply. The advertisements from 1946 also emphasised how much of their product could be bought with one ration stamp, as most products were being rationed. In contrast to the

articles of the time, the advertisements did not try to influence the behaviour of the readers. The shortages and damages made being frugal as a consumer a necessity, so the advertisers instead tried to work with the frugal nature of the readers instead of trying to influence them. In 1956 most shortages were resolved, but budgets were still tight so advertisers emphasised the durability of their product and assured the women that the payment for their product could be stretched in such a way, that it could easily fit in their weekly budget. Both the advertisements from 1946 and 1956 laid an emphasis on the healthy properties of their products. Many people had a poor health after the War so the magazines from 1946 contain a lot of supplements and special food for children to make them strong and fat. The advertisements from 1956 focus on vitamins and how their products were made in such a way that all the natural vitamins and minerals were preserved. The advertisements from 1956 also tried to benefit from the high expectations placed on women by offering the convenience food that would save a lot of time. Unlike the 1940s, the advertisers in 1956 did try to influence the readers, by convincing them that they needed both new products such as innovative appliances and better versions of what they already had. The literature on women's magazines shows that the magazines sometimes merely reflected the expectations of the society they were published in, while in other times or places the magazines actively tried to influence or educate the readers. This paper shows that the articles in the women's magazines in the post Second World War period addressed consumption as a way to educate their audience. The advertisements in the women's magazines first only reflected the expectations of Dutch society in 1946, but in 1956 they as well tried to influence the way in which people consumed.

This paper shines a light on women's magazines in the post Second World War period, a time that has so far not received much attention. It shows how housewives were advised to live in a time of shortages and low budgets. By looking at the *Margriet* and *Libelle*, it provides a new point of view on how magazines handled consumption in a time in which Dutch society shifted from shortages to a rising consumerism. Similarly, it shows how advertisers handled selling their product when supplies were low, and their customers were expected to be frugal. For future research it would be interesting to extend the research to more magazines. The *Libelle* and *Margriet* were not the only magazines published in the post-war period and magazines that focussed on a male audience might show additional conclusions. Another way to extend the research is by including all the years between 1946 and 1956. This would allow an analysis of a more gradual change in the way that the women's magazines handled consumption, instead of showing only two points in history.

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