

Women's electrification

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MARGE

CR. Gon Gender and Energy, 2005

Women's electrification

- ◆ Part A : Implication of women in the electrification process
- ◆ Part B: Impact of electrification on women's empowerment

A. Implication of women in the electrification process

1. A male history : electrification in Europe
2. Need for women: electrification in the USA
3. Nude electrification, clothed electrification (the development of the domestic market for appliances in Europe and the USA)
4. The holy alliance between women and industry
5. Three conditions for a successful electrification

B. Impact of electrification on women's empowerment

6. Simplifies, mechanizes, frees
7. Leisure control, media and gender
8. Out to work
9. Women's time
10. Private and public affairs
11. Women's electrification

Three conditions...

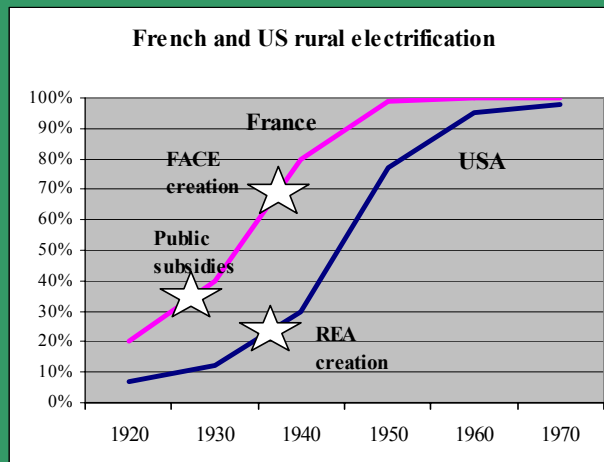
Trust people : Earlier in Europe, later in the USA, RE success mainly depends on local initiative.

Municipalities, NGO are RE key actors.

RE State-planning is a nonsense.



Rural electrification trends



Three conditions...

Target poor and
make them pay :

Expensive and
heavily subsidized
European
electrification

Cheaper American
electrification



Cut on costs, not on tariffs

- ◆ Natural monopolies lead to natural excess of costs
- ◆ REA showed that it was possible to significantly cut on costs compared to private electrification
- ◆ REA authorities imposed minimum (never maximum) tariffs to cooperatives.

Three conditions...

Respond women
needs :

European all-male
and "nude"
electrification

American gender-
oriented "clothed"
electrification



Diary of Elbert and Erma Cassel, Verden, Oklahoma electric cooperative members 1939-50

- ◆ July 27, 1939, Signed for cooperative membership
- ◆ June 1, 1940, Uncle Lark wire house
- ◆ August 8, 1940, Got electricity
- ◆ August 26, 1940, Bought a washer
- ◆ October 29, 1940, Bought a radio
- ◆ January 6, 1941, Wired milk farm
- ◆ July 25, 1941, Bought iron
- ◆ September 19, 1941, Bought refrigerator
- ◆ January 21, 1942, Wired Dutton church
- ◆ December 3, 1942, Bought mixer, radio
- ◆ December 31, 1948, Bought deep freezer
- ◆ August 30, 1950, Bought sewing machine

The American holy alliance between industry and women

Domestic science : a ready-made ideology for
electrical industry

Women need industry to popularize home
economics

Industry needs women to market its products

As well as cooperative sector to make RE cost-
effective and successful



Power gender economics

- ◆ Power development is a male challenge, but
- ◆ Load management leads to gender values
- ◆ RE cost-effectiveness is mostly in women's hands,
- ◆ Gender concern makes money



Thomas Edison
Helen Richards
Morris Cooke



Women and American cooperative movement

- ◆ Female high-rank executive and home economists as “electricity use specialists” in REA federal staff,
- ◆ Three women out of nine members in cooperative boards,
- ◆ Obligation of male-female “joint-membership” in cooperatives

Feminism and home technology

- ◆ Two very different approaches of women, in spite of an historically fair conviviality between the two groups
- ◆ Feminist say that women can do as well as or better than men in public affairs
- ◆ While home economists say that women have to gain productivity at home following the example of men outside
- ◆ Politically correct gender concern gives priority to public life and mostly tackles private life only after the 1960s (contraception, abortion, then AIDS)
- ◆ Could home economics still be politically correct ?

A positive impact of electrical home appliances and services

- ◆ Home technologies reduce burden, alleviate home tasks but do not reduce time dedicated to chores,
- ◆ Because, and this is decisive in itself, women use new productivity to invest in child and family care and to assume recurrent working costs of development,
- ◆ They have a newly acquired latitude to enter workforce or public affairs when other economic, social and gender parameters allow it.

A positive impact of electrical home appliances and services

- ◆ Even if we may dislike the fact that home modernization do not contest women's role in the house,
- ◆ There is no contradiction between feminism and home economics,
- ◆ Revisiting how to better women conditions through home technology is a necessity.



Toward women's electrification

- ◆ The role of gender specialist : not only performing the usual gender evaluation of male-led electrification processes,
- ◆ But working within teams to have an electrification that brings both electricity and electrical services to women.



A new generation of projects?

- ◆ Ecuador : SILAE project (EU, 2003-2006), based on local initiative and women participation (about 15 small utilities, 20000 households)
- ◆ France : Maroni River project, French Guyana and Suriname (ADEME, 2005-2006) electrification and services (about 4000 households)



Merci beaucoup

Thank you for your attention
and a special gift :



Michel Matly

