



Ministerio de Energía
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Behavioural Insights in Residential Energy Efficiency – The French Experience

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Some lessons learned from sociology of energy

- 1- Awareness raising and knowledge are NOT enough to lead to behavioral changes!
- 2- Awareness raising offers an answer as to WHY we should change (and this may not interest everyone!) but it does not answer HOW one can change nor how much!
- 3- Habits are HARD to change and are comfortable to keep, even bad ones !
- 4- This means that the level of effort (cognitive and behavioural) asked for, MUST be minimal!
- 5- Price signal is only one of many factors playing a role and not always the most important!
- 6- Speak about REAL everyday behaviours, obligations and constraints and how to address them practically (taking kids to school and back home.
- 7- Efforts must come with a reward (financial, but also comfort, social networks, intrinsic values and so on...) ; a constraining policy must come with a facilitating policy !
- 8- Such obstacles to change must be taken into account in public policy building.

Households' relationships to Energy: not always related to energy I

Technophiles: interested in the tech aspects (smartgrids, connected homes...), but not to energy as such. Efforts ok but through energy tech efficiency and smartmanagement (S-M), NOT changes in practices. Retrofitting OK if affordable and simple. Will NOT reduce cooling nor heating perceived comfort temp. Will keep bath if preferred and will buy recent efficient clothes dryer but not give it up. No changes in cooking habits.

Thrifties: want to reduce energy bill. Ok to change practices but within comfort limits, prefer energy S-M and efficient appliances. Often poorer, retrofitting is difficult. May reduce heating perceived comfort temp but rarely under 21°. Will give up clothes dryer; may have shower instead of bath. Little change in cooking habits.

Households' relationships to Energy: not always related to energy II

Energiphiles: energy for energy's sake; only profile to understand kW/h, grid stability, peak shavings. Want to reduce consumption especially during Peak hours and will make some effort at practices but without impact on comfort. Retrofitting OK if affordable. If good quality housing, they will reduce to 20° heating temp and be careful of cooling. Might give up clothes dryer but will not change bath nor cooking habits.

Ecophiles: energy is a climate and pollution issue, want to reduce ecological footprint; most interested in changing practices in many aspects of their lives. Retrofitting is worth it to them. Will heat at 19 and often refuse cooling. Will give up clothes dryer and have showers instead of bath. Will be careful about cooking method.

Households' relationships to Energy: not always related to energy III

Indifferent: energy is not an issue nor a problem; are not interested in it nor even in its costs – or not enough to make any effort. Will only make slight adjustment in consumption habits and patterns. Will keep 'comfort behaviours'.

Powerless: feel they have no control over energy and do not think they can reduce. A real potential as they want to do so through some changes in practices, as well as S-M and better appliances without knowing how. Would give up clothes dryer and experiment with new cooking methods; reduce heating if building quality allows it.

Resistant: any message aimed at decreasing consumption is perceived as an attack on their cognitive and physical comfort as well as their private lives. Only obligations will have an impact.