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Commercial strategies to promote domestic gas and electricity consumption, and the role of women (Lisbon, 1891-1970s)

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Abstract

By the 1870s the gas industry had no competitors for lighting, turning it into a near monopoly. However, by the 1880s the possibility of using electricity for street lighting changed the equation and the threat for gas industry was huge. This new promising competitor caused some people to forecast the end of the gas industry. In this context, in 1891 by the fusion of two gas companies, the *Companhia Reunidas de Gás e Electricidade* (CRGE) was created to produce and sell gas and electricity to Lisbon and its outskirts. In this paper we analyse the marketing strategies of this company as a particular case in which the introduction of electricity was made in complementarity (and not competition) with the gas industry. The company marketing strategies of these new energies reinforced genre stereotypes of housewives and husbands and their roles in the home. They also developed and consolidated the idea that a modern house should be equipped with gas and electricity appliances. We will show that the promotion of these new appliances was made through press advertisements, warehouses, stands and cooking courses, among others.

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