

**Energy Transition in the city: Lisbon 1854-2006**

**80<sup>th</sup> Minisymposium of the Centre for Environmental History  
8<sup>th</sup> Rachel Carson Center Lecture**

Presentation:

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Two thirds of humanity will be living in cities by 2050, a steep increase from 1950, when only one third of the world population was urban. This phenomenon has been associated with increased prosperity, mobility and social transformation, but also with strong environmental pressures due to the ever rising demand for urban energy services. To ensure that the environment is impacted in the least harmful way, a thorough understanding of how and why energy transitions happen at the urban level is necessary. Research in urban energy and material flows and their associated environmental problems is growing fast. All these studies agree that a standardized methodology that will allow cities to be compared across time and space needs to be established. Demands for quantification of the evolution of energy flows and emissions of urban areas is increasing as municipalities become more involved in climate and energy policies.

Historical research on these flows can provide important insights for urban planners and policy-makers about the long-run drivers of energy transitions, from which they can draw lessons for the future. This paper focuses on quantifying and analyzing the major energy transitions at the aggregate and the sectoral levels in Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal, over the period 1854 to 2006, by constructing a new long-run database of primary and final energy use. In comparison to other case studies, the methodological challenges of such an exercise are particularly high due to the role of the Lisbon port as a supplier of imported fossil fuels to other regions. The results of this study show that the Lisbon energy transition to fossil fuels was fast and drastically different from the transition that occurred in the rest of the country. The replacement of an industrial society with a service society in the 1980s was nevertheless accompanied by high growth rates of energy consumption.

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*SAVE THE DATE: 81<sup>st</sup> Minisymposium*

*22. 6.2017: Richard W. Unger „The Black Death and Social Metabolism: Late Medieval English Energy Consumption“*