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**Constructing Energy Futures:
Confronting Time during the 1946 “Fuel and the Future” Conference**

In October 1946, as Britain experienced severe fuel-shortages following the Second World War, the Ministry of Fuel and Power and the Fuel Efficiency Committee arranged a conference entitled “Fuel and the Future” to consider both short and long-term prospects for fuel. The conference brought together industrial experts, fuel specialists, policy-makers, economists, hygienists, architects, city planners, trade unionists and housewife organizations to discuss the fraught relationship between current fuel problems and long-term prospects of supply and demand. Each group brought their own expectations to the table, projecting their own aspirations for the post-war world, using benchmark standards provided in two recent domestic fuel-reports: *The Heating and Ventilation of Dwellings*, HMSO (1945) (also known as the Egerton Report) and the *Domestic Fuel Policy*, HMSO (1946) (also known as the Simon Report). During the conference short and long-term concerns came together, as delegates discussed how projected energy futures could be incorporated into post-war planning models. As past, present and future concerns were discussed in conjunction, the question remained: how could one account for energy across multiple temporalities?

Taking the “Fuel and the Future” conference as a case study, this paper analyzes the penetration of energy futures into diverse social spaces, and investigates how such visions related to temporal models of short-and long-term planning and forecasting. Throughout the twentieth century expert and non-expert discussions of energy have incorporated predictions of supply, aggregate demand and use-patterns. These imaginary spaces have been filled with infrastructure, appliances and consumers. Looking at how a series of these imagined futures came into conflict during this important post-war conference, this paper considers how energy environments can be addressed through the framework of time. Drawing upon Theodore R. Schatzki’s model of the ‘activity timespace’ the paper will contemplate how energy environments embody an

eclectic range of temporal frameworks that structure consumption patterns. By doing so, it will challenge energy narratives that read modernity as a linear process of increasing demand driven by rapid acceleration, suggesting instead that it was built from a patchwork of shared, conflicting, and idiosyncratic timespaces.