

Annual Global Studies Lecture

We invite colleagues and students to join the Department of Global Studies for our annual guest lecture and roundtable.

Time: 17 September, 14:30 CET

Venue: Nobel Auditorium, Building 1482-105, Aarhus University

Dr Viktor Pál: "Environmentalism from the East? Conservation, Waste and Communism in Cold War Eastern Europe"



Viktor Pál is a Grant-funded Researcher and Coordinator for the Helsinki Environmental Humanities Hub at the University of Helsinki. Pál's research project "Pour me a Cold One: A Cold War History of Beverage Containers" is supported by the Kone Foundation. In the past years he has been interested in various forms and representations of "environmentalism" especially in Cold War Eastern Europe. Some of these projects and publications focused on industrialization, landscape engineering, and most recently waste.

Link: <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/viktor-p%C3%A1l>

Circular economies have existed in the past. Before the twentieth century, many human societies repaired, reused, and recycled widely. The Americanization of lifestyles and the global adoption of throwaway culture have had dramatic environmental consequences and have been identified by the scientific community as some of the main driving factors behind anthropogenic climate change and the global environmental crisis. While the Soviet bloc committed terrible ecological crimes while pursuing extensive and rapid economic growth, Eastern European states also developed and employed complex repair, reuse and recycle systems.

This talk analyzes the professional, political and popular discussions of beverage containers and recycling in Cold War Eastern Europe and it connects these cases and discourses with the changing cultures of waste, discards, and recycling around the globe. By analyzing the significance, use, and discourses of bottles in communism this talk aims to explain how waste, discards, and recycling played out in Cold War Eastern Europe, where consumerism was denounced until the mid-1950s, and even after the Thaw socialist regimes maintained an ambivalent relationship with consumerism and waste



SCHOOL OF
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
AARHUS UNIVERSITY