

# Call for Chapter Proposals

## Handbook of Knowledge, Technologies and Innovation in the gray zones

Knowledge, technology, and innovation have long been associated with productive hubs - laboratories, industries, institutes, governments, companies, clusters, and universities. These sites have captivated scholars of knowledge and creativity, and much of STS has been devoted to their study. Yet innovation also flourishes in less conventional settings. This handbook turns to the production, use, and circulation of technologies and knowledge in spaces often deemed informal, or even illegal. Frequently relegated to the status of backyards or borderlands, such spaces are in fact fertile grounds for invention, where striking practices emerge from local needs and the demands of everyday life.

What we call gray zones do not map onto a fixed geography, although they may sometimes crystallize into more or less stable forms, as in the case of *chabolas* or borderlands. Nor are they a single shade of gray, but a shifting recombination. Gray is not cut off from the rest of society, nor is the so-called 'dark side'. It does not arise in simple opposition to the state. Rather than treating these zones as exceptions or pathologies, this volume repositions them as productive territories where constraints, antagonisms, and asymmetries shape the emergence of technologies. From guerrilla warfare to informal settlements, shantytowns, and clandestine economies, innovations are continually produced, adapted, and circulated through practices of survival, resistance, and necessity. These environments unsettle the binaries of legal/illegal and formal/informal, calling instead for new analytical tools and fresh ethical considerations within STS.

The chapters should include topics such as creativeness by necessity, antagonistic innovation, collective resourcefulness, adaptive learning, ephemeral infrastructures, and practices of technological repair. Authors will be encouraged to ensure accessibility for an interdisciplinary scholarly audience. Likewise, contributors will be invited to go beyond narrowly framed case

studies and instead use empirical illustrations drawn from diverse contexts such as informal settlements, criminal economies, or zones of armed conflict as a way to illuminate broader theoretical and methodological insights. By identifying and unpacking these cross-cutting themes, the volume aims to contribute to the consolidation of an emerging field of STS concerned with the production of knowledge, technologies and practices in so called illegal and informal contexts, advancing both its academic relevance and its capacity to inform debates in design, practices, and policies.

## Potential topics:

- Materialities in the Informal and the Illegal: Repairs, Reuses, and Hybrids
- Networks, Paths, and Platforms Sustaining Gray Economies
- Geographies and Circulation of Illegal and Informal Innovations
- Social Theory of the Asocial: Reclaiming the Innovative Potential of the Illicit and Illegal
- An Impossible Glossary: Local Semantics of the Illegal and the Informal
- Rethinking Informality and Illegality in the Global South
- Clandestine Creativity: Necessity and Survival
- Dispersion and Alignment in the Informal Production of Knowledge, Technologies, and Practices in the Gray Zones
- User-Driven Innovation in Illegal or Unrecognized Contexts
- How to follow illegal actors?
- Problems and promises of digital STS methods for studying gray zones online
- How to study infrastructures and the materiality of gray zones
- What is a gray object?
- What does an illegal STSer look like?
- Law, Knowledge, Technology, Practices and the State: Encounters in the Gray Zones
- Repairing and Repurposing in the Gray Zones: Maintenance Beyond Regulation
- Knowledge, Technologies, and Practices at the Borders of Regulatory Spaces
- Parasitic Practices: How Gray Zones Engage with Standards
- The Gray Zones Within the State: Illegality, Informality, and Institutions
- Spilling Over: When Knowledge Turns Illicit
- Innovations from Below Technologies and Innovation in Drug Trafficking
- Improvised Devices in Insurgent Wars
- Clandestine Health and Medical Infrastructures

- Informal Knowledges and Corporate Co-optation
- Marginal Habitats and the User as Designer
- Criminal Digital Propaganda
- Border Technologies and Clandestine Migration
- Creative Copying as Industrial Innovation
- Frugal Innovation out of Necessity
- Gray Resistance in Platform Labor
- Informal Digital Culture and Audiovisual Piracy

### Key dates:

- Deadline for chapter proposals April 2026;
- Chapter proposals accepted and first draft of chapters commissioned May 2026;
- First draft of all chapters received September 2026;
- First reviews of all chapters received and sent back to authors January 2027;
- Second drafts received April 2027;
- Editorial review round completed, chapters sent back to authors June 2027;
- Final chapters received; introductory and concluding chapters written July 2027;
- Full final draft delivered to publisher September 2027;
- Expected publication date by late 2027 or early 2028.

## Editorial Team

Dr Óscar Moreno-Martínez, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Bogotá, Colombia) [morenoo@javeriana.edu.co](mailto:morenoo@javeriana.edu.co)

PhD in Sociology from the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom), Lecturer at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia. Editor-in-Chief of *Signo y Pensamiento* at the same university, and Associate Editor of *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society* (Society for Social Studies of Science). Recent publications include “[Technologies and Knowledge in Gray Zones](#)” (*Latin American Breakthroughs in STS Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan); “[Blended Legacies: Vietnamese and Other Foreign Influences on the FARC-EP](#)” (*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Taylor & Francis); and the edition of the special cluster “[The Gray Zones of Innovation: The Illegal and the Informal in Latin America](#)” (*Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*).

Dr Javier Guerrero-Castro, Instituto Tecnológico Metropolitano de Medellín (Medellín, Colombia) [javierrguerrero@itm.edu.co](mailto:javierrguerrero@itm.edu.co)

PhD in Science and Technology Studies from the University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom), with a Master’s degree in Science and Technology Studies from the same institution. Lecturer at Instituto Tecnológico Metropolitano (Medellín, Colombia). Member of the board of the Latin American Association of Science and Technology Studies. Recent publications include “[Technologies and Knowledge in Gray Zones](#)” (*Latin American Breakthroughs in STS Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan); [Narcosubmarines Outlaw Innovation and Maritime Interdiction in the War on Drugs](#) (Palgrave Macmillan), [Ephemeral Infrastructures of Drug Smuggling Mobilities](#) (*Contemporary Drug Problems*) and the edition of the special cluster “[The Gray Zones of Innovation: The Illegal and the Informal in Latin America](#)” (*Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*).