**Colloquium on the Biographies of Artifacts and Practices**

Dear colleagues,

we cordially invite you to join the Biographies of Artifacts and Practices (BOAP) Research Colloquium. Based on a collaboration of researchers from the University of Edinburgh, Aalto University, and the Technical University of Berlin, this bi-monthly colloquium provides an open platform for an international network of researchers interested in BOAP and related methodological and analytical approaches. Its main goal is to contribute to strengthening the robustness of research designs in STS and the sociology of technology and innovation. Each event features the presentation and discussion of one research project that traces the biographies of complex sociotechnical systems across multiple locales and extended timeframes, often linking multiple studies and scales of analysis.

The colloquium will take place online on **September 5th**, 4pm (CEST). It will feature a talk by   
**José David Gómez-Urrego** (Kaleidos - Centre for Interdisciplinary Ethnography). He will pre-  
sent insights from a biographical study on the construction of an ambitious sociotechnical pro-  
ject in Ecuador: Yachay the City of knowledge. This innovation-oriented planned city comprises   
a Technical University, a Science Park and a sustainable city built from scratch. José explores   
the temporal dynamics shaping the project and how expectations played multiple roles, both   
generative and destructive, in different moments across the project’s lifespan.

**About the talk:**

In this presentation José David Gómez explores the temporalities involved in the infrastructur-  
ing of “Yachay, the city of knowledge” - the most ambitious and controversial public infrastruc-  
tural project in Ecuador’s history. Yachay, which means wisdom-knowledge in Kichwa, em-  
bodies a variety of economic, cultural, and political narratives while assembling a variety of   
heterogeneous actors with particular historical trajectories, motivations and expectations.   
Yachay is being constructed since 2012 in the valley of Urcuquí, located in the province of   
Imbabura in the north-central Andean region of Ecuador; it aims to combine a planned sus-  
tainable city, a science park with a business orientation, and a research-oriented public uni-  
versity already in operation (YachayTech) in an area of 4500 hectares. Using theoretical tools   
from the sociology of expectations, Science and Technology Studies, and social studies of   
time, José analyses how a diversity of actors mobilized expectations during the inception, im-  
plementation, and reconfiguration of the project. Furthermore, José examines how expecta-  
tions interact with the infrastructural dynamics of breakdown, and repair/disrepair, thereby   
shaping Yachay across the project ́s life and a shifting political landscape.

The presentation draws on fieldwork conducted in Yachay for 14 months between 2016 and   
2018. Contemporary ethnography is augmented by historical sensibility and archival document   
analysis. The research follows Yachay through four different periods. First, during its intra-  
governmental scaling-up process from a technical university to a city of knowledge (2006-  
2011). Second, during the material implementation of some of its fundamental physical infra-  
structure (2011-2012). Third, throughout key changes in the operation of its two main institu-  
tions (Yachay Empresa Pública and YachayTech) (2012-2017). Fourth, through the radical reinterpretation of Yachay that followed the change of government from Rafael Correa to Lenin Moreno, embodied in the very different context that the latter mobilized (2017-2018).

The presentation contributes to the ongoing discussion around futurity and temporalities in STS through an empirical case from a largely overlooked region of the world. It seeks to extend the common use of expectations in two ways. By framing expectations as interfaces between pasts and futures rather than as simply future oriented, it draws attention to past trajectories in the analysis of futures. By exploring and problematizing the notion of contexts as forms of stabilized expectations, it explores the intersection of expectations and the dynamics of infrastructures.

**About the speaker:**

José David Gómez-Urrego obtained his Ph.D. in STS from the University of Edinburgh (2020).   
He currently serves as a Social Researcher at KALEIDOS, center for interdisciplinary ethnog-  
raphy. His line of research includes the empirical examination of long-term sociotechnical pro-  
jects, the study of the temporal dynamics of science and technology development, and the study of how relational infrastructures, including governance systems, are involved in the development and operation of new infrastructures. José has led interdisciplinary research pro-  
jects in Ecuador focused on interdisciplinary education, and he has been part of international   
research teams conducting enquiries at several locations worldwide. He is interested in bring-  
ing Latin America to the fore of STS as a generative setting for empirical research and theo-  
rizing.’

**Zoom link and contact:**

<https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/69935202202?pwd=ZkI2RW5zTmdKam1mbmpHQ0FXRldTZz09>   
Zoom PW: 099802

If you are interested in the activities of the research network, or would like to present at the colloquium, get in touch at [david.seibt@tu-berlin.de](mailto:david.seibt@tu-berlin.de) .

**Next dates in the BOAP Colloquium***(all colloquium sessions start at 4 pm, Berlin time)*

05.09.2022, **José David Gómez-Urrego** (University of Edinburgh): Following the life of Yachay, the city of Knowledge: the rise and fall of Ecuador´s largest and most controversial infrastructural project

07.11.2022, **Mats Frank** (University of Edinburgh): tba