

Secrecy and the (re)making of the global (dis)order

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Secrecy, and the perception of secrecy, has transformed the world in ways that have been radically overlooked and even consciously erased. From the Cold War to today, a period characterised by a significant expansion of government and corporate secrecy, the emergence of new global actors and new information technological developments, and now an era of mounting crisis and distrust in traditional knowledge and information centres, secrecy as political culture, sets of practices, and relational and organising force is far more pervasive and important for understanding (global) politics than currently examined. Understanding today's global politics means understanding disinformation, gaslighting, and white ignorance as much as security classification, intelligence operations, and transparency.

This panel therefore brings together papers that trace the multiplicity of ways in which secrecy, and associated ways of 'unknowing', have shaped the world around us, from everyday to planetary scales. Secrecies as we contend operate, for instance, beyond the narrow or 'thin' view of secrecy as 'tool' of statecraft. Instead, secrecyes are entangled with 'revelation', transparency and openness. They shape identities, social relations, cultures, economies, political institutions, and security landscapes, all of which are essential for understanding global politics and its histories. Finally, as these papers contend secrecy is a governing feature of different political orders and reproduces structures of power and (dis)orders of inequity along racial, gendered, sexual, and class lines.

To better understand our past, our current moment of 'polycrisis', and to better equip ourselves and our discipline for the future we therefore offer a number of ways to engage in a more nuanced and complex understanding of secrecy and its essential roles in reproducing global politics.

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