

CALL FOR PAPERS · EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER WORKSHOP

Architectures of Opacity: Entangled Layers of Government Secrecy, Security Practices, and Algorithmic Systems

Sciences Po Law School | AI-NODES Project

Date: 10–11 September 2026 **Location:** Sciences Po, Paris

Layers of secrecy, often exacerbated by the technical tools, are a common feature of current world events. For example, the U.S. attack on the Shajareh Tayyebah primary school in Minab, Iran, raises numerous questions about the potential role that AI-enabled tools may (or may not) have played, the governmental levels of classification, and the unanswered questions about the legally-relevant measures that were (or not) taken during the attacks. These layers of secrecy leave space for various actors to exploit the ambiguity and shape public narratives.

The tendency in investigating such events is often to ‘open the box’ and seek clarification. However, not only is that often not possible due to numerous practical obstacles, but the answer is further unsatisfactory even once the box is effectively ‘opened’. This is especially the case if the situation involves an AI system that, even if/when accessed, does not provide transparent or definitive answers due to its technical opacity and complexity.

WORKSHOP FOCUS

The focus on ‘architectures of opacity’ invites interdisciplinary scrutiny of how these layers, from state classification to AI black-boxing, resist epistemic closure while enabling strategic ambiguity exploited by security actors. Contemporary research topics frequently encounter elements of secrecy, which may include difficulties in accessing sites or files, speaking to individuals with certain experiences, or understanding tools or technologies.

As showcased above, different layers of secrecy can overlap, as in ‘double black boxes’ where the opacity of AI models is exacerbated through the veil of governmental classification. Opacity can be considered as an epistemic condition too, where our objects of research ultimately resist a full understanding or explanation. Finally, as the title suggests, opacity can be ‘architectural’ and play a structuring role in security assemblages as actors may count on the inscrutable character of the technology to elaborate their strategies.

The objective of the workshop is to explore together how secrecy can be transformed from an obstacle into a productive research object.

TOPICS

This workshop calls for papers from early-career researchers, especially post-doctoral researchers and PhD students (preferably in their 3rd/4th year) that explore or creatively address elements of secrecy across different areas in which AI systems are used. We

welcome researchers from across different disciplines and methodological approaches, including (international) law, international relations, critical AI studies, media studies, STS, among others.

Submitted papers may explore, but do not need to be limited to tackle the following questions:

- How do secrecy regimes in state and security contexts shape the conditions under which AI systems are built, deployed, and challenged?
- How are architectures of opacity made durable?
- Who benefits and who bears the costs of the architectures of opacity?
- What are the discursive practices that exploit, enable, or accompany architectures of opacity?
- How do different actors navigate the epistemic indeterminacy inherent to predictive technologies?
- Which procedural or institutional arrangements enable this secrecy in the private and public realms?
- Which interdisciplinary methods can assist the study of the architectures of opacity without demanding declassification or model interpretability?

PROGRAMME

The workshop is accompanied by a keynote presentation and a panel addressing the main topic on 10 September. These events are also open to the broader community of the Sciences Po Law School faculty and students.

The second day, 11 September, will be a closed, interactive session in which participants will present their accepted papers. Discussants will be selected to comment on the papers and spark cross-cutting discussions.

ORGANIZERS

The workshop is organized by the AI NODES project members:

Klaudia Klonowska — Postdoctoral Researcher, Sciences Po

Anamária Muñoz Rincón — Postdoctoral Researcher, Sciences Po

Nicolas Malevé — Postdoctoral Researcher, Sciences Po

SUBMISSIONS

Please submit your paper proposal to the organizing team by **July 10, 2026**:

anamaria.munoz@sciencespo.fr; klaudia.klonowska@sciencespo.fr;
nicolas.maleve@sciencespo.fr

This project receives government funding managed by the French National Research Agency under France 2030, reference ANR-23-IACL-0007.