

Data Trafficking on the High Seas: Ports as Mediated Sites of Digital Governance

Aynne Kokas

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Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University

In person only / No registration necessary

Globally, China has developed key oversight over ports and supply chains. Logink, the Chinese-owned dominant global supply chain logistics provider, has become the dominant global logistics platform. COSCO, China's state-owned shipping and port management firm, has become a leader in ownership of key ports globally. The United States Congress has found China's ZPMC cranes to share undisclosed media and communications. The development of AI systems in port and supply chain management shapes the potential for Chinese government oversight over global shipping, which accounts for over 90% of international trade. For my new project, *Ports of Power*, I argue that China's oversight of AI-driven shipping and supply chain infrastructure is crucial to understand in an era of "contested logistics" where dual-use commercial technologies shape global trade and access to key commodities for media, communication, and beyond.

Aynne Kokas is the C.K. Yen Professor at the Miller Center and a Professor of Media Studies at the University of Virginia. Kokas' research examines Sino-U.S. media and technology relations. Her book *Trafficking Data: How China is Winning the Battle for Digital Sovereignty* (Oxford University Press, October 2022) argues that exploitative Silicon Valley data governance practices help China build infrastructures for global control. Her award-winning first book *Hollywood Made in China* (University of California Press, 2017) argues that Chinese investment and regulations have transformed the U.S. commercial media industry, most prominently in the case of media conglomerates' leverage of global commercial brands.

Kokas is also a non-resident scholar at Rice University's Baker Institute of Public Policy, a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a fellow in the National Committee on United States-China Relations' Public Intellectuals Program. Her writing and commentary have appeared globally in more than 50 countries and 15 languages and in media outlets in the United States including CNBC, NPR's *Marketplace*, *The Washington Post*, and *Wired*.

This talk is organized by Hannah Holtzman (Assistant Professor, FLA, Sophia University).

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