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Title: "Oceanic accumulation: geographies of speculation, overproduction, and crisis in the global shipping economy"

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Abstract:

This paper analyzes the relationship between what I refer to as "oceanic accumulation" and "oceanic overproduction" and the human and environmental stakes this relationship has produced as evidenced in the practices of breaking ships on beaches in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Shipbreaking is most often referred to as a form of "toxic imperialism" but there has been a dearth of research that disentangles the processes of how contemporary shipbreaking practices became embedded in the global maritime economy, and furthermore, how the people and spaces of Bangladesh specifically became entrenched within these processes. This paper seeks to fill this gap by bringing into conversation: a sustained and empirical analysis of the shipping sector during the 1960s-1970s; the new strategies in which finance capital circulated through the shipping sector, and, how the market produced new spaces and practices as a way to maintain oceanic accumulation at an ever expanding scale with equally expanding stakes for laborers and the environments where devalued ships are sold. The argument that emerges is one that highlights the stakes of a shipping sector beholden to a finance sector, and how this relationship necessitated the production of spaces and practices that ultimately map the burden of overaccumulation and overproduction onto some of the most vulnerable bodies and places in the world, the shipbreaking laborers and the places they work and live in.