

# BECOMING GLOBAL HEALTH: HOW PRECARIOUS DATA PERFORMS FINANCE



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This presentation is about the financialization of global health. New finance has figured out a way to make money on “extreme mortality events.” I will present results from a research project that has taken up data performativity and its actuarial abstractions, specifically on those abstractions that relate to the financial instrument colloquially named “Ebola Bond”. In 2017, we are witnessing huge shifts from global health funding provided by nation-states to global health investor financing. As the purpose of global health data moves from accountability to invest-ability, global health interventions are increasingly assessed by how well they perform in capital markets. Epidemiological health and vital statistics data are being used in new ways, beyond accountability. The presentation is based on two recent research projects – the first following the numbers, the second following the money. My research is showing that data performativity can be understood as the data that performs the future that global health becomes. By this I mean that data set in motion the future conditions of global health, regardless of how ‘real’ the data are. This paper uses the example of a World Bank-made financial instrument (Ebola Bond) for its theoretical concerns.

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APRIL 10, 2017  
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BUILDING 50, 51A**