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# HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOSTERS GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

## A Four-Country Study on Data Work

By prof. Antonio A. Casilli  
(*Institut Polytechnique de Paris*)

**20 November 2023**  
**House of Connections**  
**Grote Markt 21, Groningen**

Attendance in presence or online requires registration here:  
<https://forms.gle/91Umd4F3LQYAaPwB7>

### **Programme:**

15.30 – Introduction by the Jantina Tammes School & panoptiwork

15.35 – Keynote lecture by prof. Antonio A. Casilli

16.10 – Panel discussion with:

- Beryl ter Haar, Endowed Prof. European & Comparative Labour Law
- Tatiana Llaguno Nieves, Postdoc Researcher in Political Philosophy
- Seonok Lee, Lecturer Minorities & Multilingualism
- Wike Been, Assistant Professor in Sociology of Labour
- Femke Cnossen, Assistant Professor in Economic Geography
- George Azzopardi, Assistant Professor in Computer Science

Moderates: Michele Molè, PhD student in Labour law

17.10 – Q&A with the participants

17.30 – Reception

# HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOSTERS GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

## A Four-Country Study on Data Work

### Abstract

Tensions over AI's impact on human labor dominate public debate today. The opposite question is rarely asked, however: what does human labor do to AI? As a matter of fact, labor plays an important role in the production of machine learning solutions, but it is often overlooked. AI workers aren't just software developers and system engineers, they're also lesser-known and less well-paid data workers. Voice assistants, self-driving cars, and facial recognition tools are created through labor-intensive processes that involve crowdworkers, clickworkers, and microworkers performing tasks like image labeling, information sorting, voice sampling, and audio transcription.

The public opinion in North America and Europe is growing aware of the precarious work arrangements and the competition among workers that data labeling activities engender. But much of this work is outsourced to Global South countries with informal economies and less-regulated labor markets, perpetuating colonial-like relationships and global economic dependencies.

This presentation explores the working conditions and socio-demographic profiles of data workers across four low-, middle-, and high-income countries (Venezuela, Madagascar, Brazil, and France). The analysis is based on observations conducted by the DiPLab (Digital Platform Labor) research team from 2020 to 2023. By combining mixed-methods and primary data, we show how historical global inequalities still shape international digital labor and data supply chains.

**Antonio A. Casilli** is professor of sociology at the Institut Polytechnique de Paris and researcher at the Internet and Society Centre (CIS) of the CNRS, the French national center for scientific research. He has carried out fieldwork in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and has coordinated several international research projects. He is the co-founder of the DiPLab (Digital Platform Labor) research programme and facilitates INDL (International Network on Digital Labor). In addition to numerous scientific publications in French, English and Italian, he is the author of the award-winning book "En attendant les robots" ("Waiting for the Robots. An Inquiry into Click Work", University of Chicago Press, forthcoming). In 2020 he was editorial advisor for "Invisibles - Clickworkers", a documentary series for the French public television channel France Televisions, based on his research.

The event is generously funded by the YAG SER Fund (2022 and 2023) for interdisciplinary research by the University of Groningen and by the [Jantina Tammes School of Digital Society, Technology and AI](#)

The panel discussion is composed by researchers involved in [panoptiwork.eu](#)  
Organisers: Michele Molè, PhD student in Labour Law ([m.mole@rug.nl](mailto:m.mole@rug.nl)) and Miguel Rudolf-Cibien, Research Master student in Political Philosophy ([m.rudolf-cibien@rug.nl](mailto:m.rudolf-cibien@rug.nl)).