UC RIVERSIDE

POLITICAL SCIENCE
SPEAKER SERIES

VALENTINA GONZALEZ-ROSTANI

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AUTOMATION AND FRAGMENTED PRODUCTION: EVIDENCE FROM MEXICO

How does automation in advanced economies reshape politics and violence in developing countries? We develop a political economy theory in which technology adoption in the Global North reduces demand for export-oriented labor in the Global South, depressing wages and employment and triggering social and political responses. We test this argument in Mexico, a major trade partner of the United States. Using commuting-zone data, we construct measures of exposure to foreign robot adoption and offshoring, while accounting for domestic automation and other local shocks. To address endogeneity, we instrument foreign exposure with robot diffusion in Europe. We show that regions more exposed to foreign automation experience higher levels of violent organized crime—including homicides and narcotics-related violence—and increased electoral support for left-populist candidates. These results demonstrate that automation shocks propagate through global value chains with profound consequences for violence and democratic politics in developing countries.

TIME
Monday, March 9, 2026
12:10PM-1:30PM

LOCATION
INTS 1113