

# Supervisor Expression of Interest

## MSCA - Marie Sklodowska Curie Action - (PF)

### Postdoctoral Fellowship 2025

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**Link "Pagina docente":**

[https://onlineservices.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ricerche/RicercaPerDocentiPublic.do?EVN\\_DIDATTICA=evento&k\\_doc=268553&lang=EN&aa=2020&tab\\_ricerca=1](https://onlineservices.polimi.it/manifesti/manifesti/controller/ricerche/RicercaPerDocentiPublic.do?EVN_DIDATTICA=evento&k_doc=268553&lang=EN&aa=2020&tab_ricerca=1)

**Department Name:** Management, Economics, and Industrial Engineering

**Research topic:** International business

**MSCA-PF Research Area Panels:**

- ECO\_Economic Sciences
- ENG\_Information Science and Engineering
- ENV\_Environmental and Geosciences
- LIF\_Life Sciences
- MAT\_Mathematics
- PHY\_Physics
- SOC\_Social Sciences and Humanities
- CHE\_Chemistry

**Brief description of the Department and Research Group (including URL if applicable):**

The Department of Management, Economics, and Industrial Engineering (DIG) of Politecnico di Milano was established in 1990. Its mission is to contribute to the common good and individual well-being through a critical understanding of the opportunities and challenges posed by technology to business and society. The Department pursues its mission with an international reach by creating and sharing knowledge through high-quality education, the quest for scientific excellence, and active community engagement.

We aim at:

- Educating responsible individuals who will shape the future of relevant corporations and institutions to serve society.
- Promoting original, rigorous, and relevant research at the intersection of engineering, management, and economics, focusing on a deep understanding of technology and its ecosystem.
- Contributing to a sustainable and inclusive society by inspiring virtuous business practices and transformational policy measures.

With approximately 160 professors, DIG is one of the largest departments of Politecnico di Milano.

More information can be found at: <https://www.dig.polimi.it/it>

DIG HumanTech project has been selected and funded by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) for the period 2023-2027 within “Dipartimenti di Eccellenza” (Law 232/2016), the ministerial initiative aimed at rewarding the departments that stand out for the quality of their research and at financing specific development projects. In particular, the objective of HumanTech is to redefine the relationship between technology and human beings to enable a sustainable digital transition of industrial systems. The project aims to propose new models and processes for the development and adoption of technologies, capable of accelerating the transition towards sustainable, inclusive industrial systems that make individual and collective well-being a priority.

**TITLE of the project: Multinational Enterprises and Global Value chains in the era of geopolitical tensions, AI and robotics**

**Brief project description:**

Over the past three decades, global value chains (GVCs) have become the dominant architecture of international production and trade, enabling Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) to optimize efficiency and scale, to access new markets, and to source knowledge, assets and technologies, by locating different stages of production across borders. However, the stability and logic that underpinned this system are now being profoundly challenged. On the one hand, rising geopolitical tensions—exacerbated by trade disputes, technological decoupling, and national security concerns—are pushing governments and firms to reassess the risks embedded in globally dispersed supply networks. On the other hand, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics is transforming the economic rationale for offshoring and labor-intensive production models, potentially enabling new forms of automation-driven reshoring and regionalization.

These twin forces—geopolitical fragmentation and technological acceleration—are placing GVCs and the multinational enterprises that orchestrate them under unprecedented pressure. As a result, we may be witnessing a fundamental reconfiguration of international business strategies and global production systems.

This research project aims to explore how these dynamics are reshaping the internationalization choices of MNEs, with a particular focus on how firms respond to the combined effects of geopolitical tensions and the diffusion of AI and robotics. Specifically, we seek to address the following key questions:

- How are MNEs adjusting their location strategies, sourcing decisions, and investment priorities in light of rising geopolitical risk?
- In what ways is the adoption of AI and robotics influencing firms' decisions to offshore, nearshore, or reshore production activities?
- Are we observing the emergence of new, more regional or tech-driven configurations of GVCs?
- How do sectoral characteristics, firm capabilities, and institutional contexts mediate these responses?

To answer these questions, the project will adopt a multi-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative traditional and experimental methodologies. On the qualitative side, we will employ techniques such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and/or Q-Methodology, while on the quantitative and experimental side, we will use tools such as vignette studies, factorial surveys, and methods from experimental economics. This multi-method approach will allow to capture the complexity of firm- and managerial-level perceptions and responses to different geopolitical and technological scenarios, and to investigate causal mechanisms and strategic tensions and trade-offs, offering deeper insights into how multinational enterprises navigate uncertainty and transformation. This mixed-methods design will also provide a robust and nuanced understanding of the evolving structure of global value chains.

The project will contribute to the ongoing policy debates surrounding the future of globalization, industrial policy, and strategic autonomy. By understanding how firms are navigating this complex environment, we can contribute to the development of more nuanced and forward-looking theories of international business. In addition, by studying the strategic responses of multinational firms to the current wave of disruption, this project aims to shed light on the evolving logic of global value chains in the next years.

This is an excellent opportunity for a postdoctoral researcher interested in the intersection of global strategy, international political economy, and emerging technologies. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in international business and digital technologies, and be familiar with both qualitative research and experimental design. Finally, the project will offer access to a growing network of academic and policy collaborators, as well as fieldwork opportunities in Europe and beyond.