

## **That's Interesting! Rethinking IB research for the next 50 years**

The 50<sup>th</sup> EIBA Annual Conference in 2024 will bring the IB community together not only to celebrate the past 50 years, but also to collectively envision future-facing, bold IB research with societal impact. In 1971, Murray S. Davis asked what makes theories interesting in his thought-provoking article entitled "That's interesting!" In answering this question, Davis emphasized that interesting theories cross boundaries, deny old "truths" and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions in the field. More than fifty years later EIBA's Annual Conference theme responds to Davis' concerns by posing the question *how can we as a scholarly community rethink existing knowledge in IB and push the boundaries of our field to make it more interesting and impactful for the future?*

Rising polarization of the society and global grand challenges are unlikely to disappear; rather they are expected to intensify with significant ramifications for international firms. Geopolitical turbulence is also becoming 'the new normal'. As the UN Secretary General António Guterres urged at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 "Now more than ever, it is time to forge the pathways to cooperation in our fragmented world". Understanding the causes and implications of rising societal issues for cross-border operations calls for increasing transdisciplinarity (Hajro et al., forthcoming). In such research, different actors (e.g., scientists, designers, artists, practitioners, policy-makers) collaborate and transcend disciplinary boundaries and sectors to develop integrated knowledge for science and society.

Conference participants are invited to consider the many implications that rethinking IB research for the next 50 years has for the phenomena that we study, the research questions that we pose, the theoretical approaches that we draw on as well as the paradigms and methodologies that we use. We welcome both traditional and emerging topics in IB that push the boundaries of current thinking. Some potential themes include, but are by no means limited to:

- cross-sector partnerships (e.g., business-academia, business-NGO-government);
- grand challenges (e.g., global circular value chains, MNCs and planetary boundaries and regenerative organizing, economy, climate change, migration studies);
- diversity, equity and inclusion;
- effects of disruptive technologies (e.g., AI & big data) on business models;
- creativity in IB (e.g., aesthetics, imagination and innovative research methods);
- city-level research in IB (e.g., sustainable cities, creative cities);
- atypical research contexts in IB (art, museums & digital creative industries, space industry, BCorps, social enterprises)
- methodological innovations, research ethics and paradigmatic debates

EIBA 2024 is organized in collaboration with LUT University, University of Oulu and University of Turku. It will be hosted on Aalto University campus which is located in the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Otaniemi, Espoo. Aalto is a forward-looking university where business meets technology, arts, design and architecture. This setting invites conference participants to think creatively about new research questions for IB research at the interface between disciplines, practitioners, and society.

**We look forward to welcoming EIBA members to Espoo in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Finland to rethink IB research for the next 50 years!**

## References

Davis, M.S. 1971. That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1(2): 309-344.

Hajro, A., Žilinskaitė, M., Gibson, C., Baldassari, P., Mayrhofer, W., Brewster, C., & Brannen, M. Y. 2022. Movement of people across borders: Transdisciplinary research to meet the challenges in migration, business, and society. *Academy of Management Discoveries*. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2022.0058>.