

Trinity
Business
School

Transforming
Business for
Good

The Grand Challenge for IB Scholarship

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Our Grand Challenge

Given a world of grand challenges and cascading crises, do we have the right approach to inquiry?

Van Tulder and Van Mil (2022):

- ‘What type of science and thinking is needed to deal with present complexity?’ (p. 51)
- ‘It is increasingly recognized that understanding societal complexity lies at the very core of sustainable development.’ (p. 57)

What type of science and thinking do we have in IB?

Our theorizing and modelling is predicated on a **linear view of reality**. In this artificial, over-simplified world

- Social actors are fixed, stable, homogeneous entities
- Entities are causally independent of each other
- Entities' histories are independent
- Sequence of events does not influence their outcomes
- Causal attributes have only one causal pattern at a time, etc etc

Abbott (1988)

But we have the means to model complexity

Relaxing (some) linear assumptions – e.g., use of MLM

Challenging linear assumptions, changing the paradigm – e.g., systems thinking

We have the tools available...but are we prepared to take up the challenge of using them?