

## Update on the IMP2023 Conference in Manchester

We are working on the website and will let you know once it is ready, but to keep you updated we are sharing our draft call for papers and some key dates. If you have any queries, please email us via [imp2023@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:imp2023@manchester.ac.uk)

Conference Theme: **Rethinking the International Dimensions of Interaction, Relationships and Networks**

Key Dates:

- Submission of abstracts (1 page): 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- Notification of acceptance: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023
- Full paper (8 pages maximum) submission: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- Confirmation of acceptance: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023
- Registration: early bird closes 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 late registration until 15<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Doctoral consortium: Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023
- Main conference: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023 @ 12 noon to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023 @14.00

Please contact us if you are interested in chairing a special track, acting as a reviewer or getting involved in any other way

Luis Araujo & Judy Zolkiewski

## Call for Papers IMP 2023

DRAFT

**THEME: Rethinking the International Dimensions of Interaction, Relationships and Networks**

It is nearly 40 years since the first IMP Conference took place, hosted by the former Manchester School of Management (UMIST) in early September 1984. It may surprise some that the title of the proceedings was *Research Developments in International Marketing*. A glance at the contents reveals that the international dimension of industrial marketing and purchasing was well represented at the inaugural conference. Jan Johanson and Lars-Gunnar Mattson presented an early version of a paper entitled "Internationalisation in Industrial Systems - A Network Approach", one of the foundations of the network approach that was to become a central theme in IMP conferences.

Although the international dimension was present from the start of this conference series, the number of papers explicitly addressing internationalisation or globalisation seemed to wane as time passed. Today, we see plenty of reasons to revisit and rethink the international dimension of IMP work. From the mid-1980s onwards, the business landscape became more and more internationalised as companies became ever more dependent on suppliers and sought to slice their activity chains to find the best location for each slice (Gadde, 2013). As the costs of transportation and communication fell with the establishment of global trade infrastructures, the international dimension became second nature and receded into the background. To paraphrase Thomas Friedman (2005), our world and our networks became flat.

The last decade, and in particular the last few years, have shown that we should take little for granted. Some have argued that we are now in a deglobalisation phase, where companies will have fewer opportunities to seek favourable locations to manufacture goods or locate higher value activities such as R&D (Witt, 2019). New geopolitical realities and a global trade slowdown question the ever-

expanding mode of globalisation we have grown accustomed to. Covid 19 exposed the fragilities of a system of global interdependencies built on low-cost, just-in-time and concentration of production activities in a few geographic nodes (Madhok, 2021).

Still, there are plenty of reasons to suspect that the interdependencies built up in the last 40 years are evolving in new directions rather than being dismantled. The nature of globalisation may be slowly changing rather than running into reverse. Technological developments in manufacturing (e.g., 3D printing, industry 4.0), logistics (e.g., blockchains) as well as trends regarding labour costs and rights would possibly have driven changes to the geography of supply networks in any case. Truly global challenges such as climate change clamour for more, not less international cooperation. Trade policies and patterns may be shifting due to geopolitics but also in response to the adoption of new labour, environmental and climate change standards. The most optimistic of commentators predict that the historical record shows that every major crisis is followed by a period of increasingly stronger connections and interdependences. The golden age of globalisation may yet arrive (James, 2021). We may be witnessing not the end of globalisation but the start of a reglobalisation process involving more nuanced trade-offs between global and local.

Notable implications of these changes for industrial marketing and purchasing have yet to be understood. The unremitting focus on vertical disintegration, efficiency, productivity, and just-in-time production that have characterised the business landscapes we have studied will be weighed against resilience, risk, and redundancy. Old formulas for buffer inventories may need to be dusted off and relearned as just-in-case becomes as or more prominent than just-in-time. The cost and time involved in reconfiguring and relocating supply networks will no doubt translate into price increases downstream.

In summary, the future of interaction, relationships and networks, the core of the IMP research tradition, will be potentially confronted with pressing questions over the coming years. In this conference, we are particularly interested in work that addresses how the exogenous changes we have described above, impact upon the structures of relationships and networks we have traditionally studied