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Revisiting Late Globalization: A Commentary on Theorizing and Theoretical Deepening

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Introduction

In 2016, the article "Exploring Late Globalization: A Viewpoint" was published in MGDR (Turcan 2016). It concluded by pointing out that while there were views about the concept of 'late globalization' in multiple disciplines, the concept was evolving; and, therefore, theories about late globalization would also continue to evolve. This Dialogue essay, developed in close consultation with MGDR editors, is another step in such theoretical evolution.

This essay has three subsequent sections followed by a brief concluding section. First, a synopsis of the 2016 article is provided, with some updating. Then this Dialogue essay turns again, like its 2016 predecessor, to the challenge of theorizing. In the second section following this introduction, a general listing of the constitutive elements of theorizing in general – for all social sciences – is provided. In the third section, after the introduction, there is presented a first-cut exercise in showing how the constitutive elements of theorizing play out in the case of 'late globalization'. This section lays out the theory-building bricolage for late globalization. It is an illustrative model of the type of groundwork that needs to be done before serious theorizing, in full detail and depth, can begin. In the short concluding section, once again, the evolving nature of theorizing of late globalization is emphasized. The concluding section offers some general overall guidance to keep advancing the theorizing and theory building process.

Synopsis of the 2016 Article

Turcan's (2016) article introduced and discussed the phenomenon of late globalization and conceptualized the notion of 'late' at macro (e.g., nation, state, region, sector, industries, ecosystems), meso (sector, industries, ecosystems), and micro (market-seeking, manufacturing, distribution-supply chain development, talent recruiting) levels. It put forward a 'late globalization' framework that defined four aspects of 'lateness' of globalization across all above-mentioned levels: phasic (early/incipient, middle/growing, late/mature), chronological (timing, early/late actions/actors in globalizing), categorical (decisions to/not to engage with globalization) and processual (how an entity globalizes, including, speed or delay). This framework is the first step to theorize about late globalization that "is a relatively new phenomenon" and is 'waiting' to be yet tested and further enhanced.

While this initial theorizing about 'late globalization' by Turcan (2016) initiated a conceptual process, further theory building is needed to better understand the role, position, and relationship of late globalization vis-a-vis *globalization, de-globalization* (Tomlinson 2012; Witt 2019; Witt et al. 2021; Luo and Witt 2022) and *re-globalization* (Madhok 2021); *decoupling* (Li 2021; Witt et al. 2021; Buckley 2022); Cui et al. 2023; Vertinsky et al. 2023) and *re-coupling*; *off-shoring, near-shoring, re-shoring* (Ellram 2013; De Backer 2016; Buckley 2022; Mondres 2022) and *friend-shoring* (Javorcik et al. 2022); as well as broader sociological ideas of *traditional and liquid modernity* (Bauman 2013).

For example, Turcan (2016) provides an example of universities that engaged in 'advanced structural' internationalization as late globalizers and discussed the negative impact that 'being late' had on university as 'late globalizer'. This is due to "the degree of difference between university governance and autonomy settings at home and the operation in the host country. The greater the disparity the more it is likely that the standards and practices which would be applied in the home environment fail to apply in the host" (Turcan et al. 2020, p. 2). As a result, universities may curtail their globalization efforts, de-globalize by back-shoring, near-shoring and/or decoupling and friend-shoring. Such examples – where individual choices, institutions, routines, fears, power, politics, collective action, long-term thinking, free will, conformity, legitimation, to name a few, are in fluid, liquid state (Bauman 2007) – are in abundance, creating threats and opportunities for late-globalizers (Turcan 2016). Further theorizing is needed at this intersection as well.

Generic Constitutive Elements of Theories

In all fields of research endeavor where theories are involved – in terms of theorizing, theory building, theory testing, theory comparisons and evaluation – it is useful to have an inventory of the relevant building blocks. Appendix 1 (Turcan et al. 2024) lays out these building blocks: the generic constitutive elements for all theory-related work. The generic constitutive elements of theories refer to the fundamental issue of *what* and *how* to understand a theory and theory construction. The elements in Appendix 1 are foundations constituting any theories and discussions on how to create knowledge of something that appears in the world (Kant 1929: Weber 1948; Gadamer 1993 and 1986; Schütz 1990; Merleau-Ponty 1994; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Polkinghorne 1983; Clark and Fast 2019).

These elements are accepted prior to empirical research. They are at the same time concepts that need to be understood from their position and perspective in the tradition they are framed and used (Kuhn 1970;

Burrell and Morgan 1980; Clark and Fast 2019). This means that every element has to be seen in relation to its ontology and epistemology: that there is a foundation, a worldview, and a view on knowledge, and in this, a line of arguments, logic and with a language that is expressing all of this. The elements frame what is a general and overall, when discussing constitution of a theory. The specific theory or specific study must be judged whether it makes sense in terms of clear concepts, and a distinct line of arguments that are logical. Furthermore, the statements in that theory should have premises that are logical and connected to the statement in relation to the principal of formal logic (or analytical logic/pure logic) (Kant 1929). The elements are concepts and therefore the language and consciousness of this language will be important in describing, explaining, and generating understanding of what the knowledge of this is and how it should be seen and evaluated (Wittgenstein 1993).

Constitutive Elements of Theories and Late Globalization

Appendix 2 takes the generic elements of Appendix 1 and applies and illustrates them – to the extent it is possible, relevant, and meaningful to do so – in the research context of 'late globalization'. Building on this uncharted territory of late-globalization, we call for a research program to study the intersection between globalization, late-globalization, de-globalization, and re-globalization. The late globalization framework (Table 1 in Turcan 2016) and the constitutive elements of late globalization theory (Appendix 2) could serve as foundational blocks of such a research program. Drawing on exemplar research programs (e.g., Berger and Zelditch 1998; Van de Ven and Huber 1990; Van de Ven and Poole 1990; Wagner and Berger 2002), the research program for studying late-globalization will comprise "(i) working theoretical and methodological strategies; (ii) sets of interrelated theories embodying these strategies; and (iii) sets of theory-based empirical models applying these theories to concrete instances" (Berger and Zelditch 2002, p. 4). As with any embryonic research program, there will of course be more questions than answers, but the ensuing questions and discourse would undoubtedly become an interesting avenue for future research and practice visualization.

Concluding Remarks

Recent trends in Europe, the U.S., and globally have demonstrated that newness has a lot of innovate power, but in the presence of uncertainty, most of the time this innovative power is with a negative sign, with a negative social impact (Turcan 2020). *High degree of newness, related uncertainty, innovative power, and negative social impact* will continue permeating today's liquid modernity and respective states of globalization,

late-globalization, de-globalization, and re-globalization. They will be a rich source of opportunities as well as challenges for late globalizers, impacting the processes of globalization, de-globalization, and re-globalization. ChatGPT is one of the latest examples of late globalizers with high degree of newness and innovative power. It produces a high impact globally; however, due to its high degree of newness and related uncertainty, the direction of its impact – positive or negative – is yet to plainly emerge.

Late globalization is a complex, interdisciplinary phenomenon that is evolving and that requires further theory-building and empirical studies. Turcan's (2016, Table 1) late globalization framework and our framework of the constitutive elements of late globalization theory (Appendix 2) point to a general framework for theorizing in social sciences and an application of this to the case of late globalization. These two would lay the foundation of the research program on 'Late Globalization'. To advance the research on late globalization beyond state-of-the-art, a shift in a paradigm is needed. A shift – and here we side with Turcan et al. (2024) – that instead of pursuing gap-driven research that academia overwhelmingly employs, researchers should engage in phenomenon-driven research that "entails reviewing and synthesizing current knowledge across various disciplines and contexts and available (even if tangential) theories, to understand the phenomenon under investigation" (Turcan et al. 2024). This would allow researchers to explore and theorize in an inter-disciplinary way not only phenomena such as de-globalization, re-globalization, decoupling, re-coupling, off-shoring, near-shoring, re-shoring, friend-shoring and modernity, but also phenomena such as time and space, nearness, thinking and acting, and domain construction.

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Appendix 1: Generic Constitutive Elements of Theories

Element	Definition, Explanation	Examples
Analogy	A figure of speech comparing two things that are different but share some common features	"The team worked like a machine", "new strategy because of the collapsing platform"
Attribute	A quality or feature as a characteristic of a phenomenon or object	Age, gender, race, urban, medieval, benign
Concept	A thought or an idea that has been refined into a succinct, communicable verbal form; often via group research efforts	Education level, income level, risk, comfort food, democracy, taste, style, aesthetics
Conjecture	An unproven scientific theorem or conclusion formed on not complete information	Late-globalization is inside-out phenomenon Globalization is outside-in phenomenon
Construct	A formulation at a higher level of abstraction than a concept, usually entails multiple variables, and typically triggers research on many fronts	Justice, beauty, happiness, health; brand loyalty, organizational legitimacy, leadership, employee morale
Event	A happening in time and space	A planned or not planned event: a meeting, social gathering
Hypothesis	A proposed explanation of observed facts and phenomena, often with a cause-effect structure	Students who eat breakfast will perform better on a test than students who do not eat breakfast; Consuming sugary drinks causes obesity
Idea	An initial, often rough, raw mental thought; often intuitively generated; usually individual	Idea for a new space-mining venture, Idea of Time Travel, Idea of a Democratic Society

Element	Definition, Explanation	Examples
Indicators	To measure current conditions	Prices, inflation, and unemployment (economic situation/context)
Latent Patterns	Unintended and unrecognized observed consequences requiring adaptation/adjustment of a given system	Hawthorne experiments: the production curves and the light in the room – the latent pattern of being in focus as an employee
Manifest Patterns	Intended and recognized observed consequences that lead to or require adaptation or adjustment of a given System	The primary purpose of a school is to provide education, the primary purpose of reading a book is to gain knowledge
Metaphors	A figure of speech describing an object or act : not literally true but gives an idea of what it is	Examples: "work like a horse", "the world is a stage", "She was a shining star"
Metatheory	Reflection and investigation of existing theories and thoughts – ontology and epistemology	Investigating science itself: describing statements, premises, lines of arguments, and logic
Observation	Sensory experiences that, when catalogued systematically, could become scientific data	Position and brightness of a constellation in the night sky; Notes made about how shoppers scan items on a store shelf
Phenomenon	An event, object, something that appears in the world and that can be perceived, reflected and thought about. It can be on different levels and complexities and transcends space and time	Conflicts, racism, equality, power, group identity, management, learning, teaching, research, fake news, observed objects, happenings, correlations

Element	Definition, Explanation	Examples
Principle	An idea statement about a phenomenon that can be backed up by observation and data; widely tested, generally accepted as true	Water as a gas is invisible but in vast spaces like the atmosphere, it appears blue.
Properties	A quality, trait, or effect of something	Owned land, goods in a context (dry/wet goods in food bazar), conservative/liberal church
Proposition	A statement or assertion expressing a judgment	Opinions or thoughts on a plan of action or/related to a problem that needs to be solved
Stylized Facts	Observations made in so many contexts that they are widely understood to be empirical truths	Education creates value in societies and organizations
Types	Category of people or things having common characteristics	An introvert or extrovert person, formation of groups in relation to culture, interests, beliefs
Unit	Part of a system, a standard quantity, a social unity, level of analysis	Centimeter, Liter; Unit of analysis: Individual, Group, School
Variable	A symbol that expresses a value	A significant part of a scale measuring something, describing how things are changed in relation to the change of the value

Source: Turcan et al. (2024)

Appendix 2: Late Globalization – Illustrative Constitutive Elements of Theories

Element	Definition, Explanation	Illustrative Examples in the Context of Late Globalization
Analogy	A figure of speech comparing two things that are different but share some common features	Late globalizers, nations or firms, are ships in a stormy sea, facing the challenges in the sea of global economic and politics.
Attribute	A quality or feature as a characteristic of a phenomenon or object	Often, traditional, old, domestic-focused firms are late globalizers.
Concept	A thought or an idea that has been refined into a succinct, communicable verbal form; often via group research efforts	Late globalization concepts are embedded in and linked to other (re-, de-, post-) globalization concepts
Conjecture	An unproven scientific theorem or conclusion formed on not complete information	"Late global companies are conjectured to act in the same discourse, as early starters, but will be challenged by demands of acting sustainable"
Construct	A formulation at a higher level of abstraction than a concept, usually entails multiple variables, and typically triggers research on many fronts	Liquid Modernity is an encompassing construct explaining, among other things, late globalizing processes
Event	A happening in time and space	Evolution, episodes, epochs, scapes of globalization
Hypothesis	A proposed explanation of observed facts and phenomena, often with a cause-effect structure	Circular economy will lead to total de-globalization.

Element	Definition, Explanation	Illustrative Examples in the Context of Late Globalization
Idea	An initial, often rough, raw mental thought; often intuitively generated; usually individual	New space-mining ventures, Accelerated cultural traffic across national boundaries, Time travel, (Post?)Democratic Society
Indicators	To measure current conditions	GDP, Gross Domestic Product: Comparing GDP growth rates of early/late globalizing nations
Latent Patterns	Unintended and unrecognized observed consequences requiring adaptation/adjustment of a given system	Concentration of capital does not follow production of goods, but relates to investments in intangibles values.
Manifest Patterns	Intended and recognized observed consequences that lead to or require adaptation or adjustment of a given System	Political disruptions of a balanced world order are affecting ideas of freedom, justice, and democracy.
Metaphors	A figure of speech describing an object or act: not literally true but gives an idea of what it is	The world is a global village. The world is a stage. The world as a global orchestra, where each country playing an instrument.
Metatheory	Reflection and investigation of existing theories and thoughts – ontology and epistemology	Reflections of being human in a world of climate problems. Understanding of 'hope' in relation to living in a global world and how to act. Reflections on "We First" in a global world.

Element	Definition, Explanation	Illustrative Examples in the Context of Late Globalization
Observation	Sensory experiences that, when catalogued systematically, could become scientific data	Countries with less developed financial systems, and with agro-based rather than industry based economy are less susceptible to the global shocks.
Phenomenon	An event, object, something that appears in the world and that can be perceived, reflected and thought about. It can be on different levels and complexities and transcends space and time	Late-globalization, re-globalization, de-globalization. Activity location: far-shoring, near-shoring, friend-shoring
Principle	An idea statement about a phenomenon that can be backed up by observation and data; widely tested, generally accepted as true	China's rapid economic growth since the 1970s and integration into the global economy – the principle of international trade as growth and integration.
Properties	A quality, trait, or effect of something	Uses/Impacts of AI on firm, industry, nation competitiveness. Power as a discourse defining the problems and the solution.
Proposition	A statement or assertion expressing a judgment	"Late Global companies are effective in production and capitalization of knowledge, as they have learned from early starters."
Stylized Facts	Observations made in so many contexts that they are widely understood to be empirical truths	Concentration of capital and power. Increased production of goods and services. Speed of Technological innovations. Rising problems with climate, biodiversity, nature, pollution, fertilization, inequality.

Element	Definition, Explanation	Illustrative Examples in the Context of Late Globalization
Types	Category of people or things having common characteristics	Ethnoscapes, Technoscapes, Finanscapes, Mediascapes, Ideoscapes
Unit	Part of a system, a standard quantity, a social unity, level of analysis	Globalization at which level? Firm, institution, industry, sector, nation
Variable	A symbol that expresses a value	Globe-phasic, nation-phasic, sector-phasic, industry-phasic, firm-phasic, group-phasic,