



An Overview of the Origins and Development of Postmodernism in the Field of International Relations

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Introduction:

Postmodern international relations is a theoretical framework that has been a part of the field of international relations studies since the 1980s. Postmodernism is a reactionary movement that evolved in response to certain aspects of modernity. The origin can be traced back to the fields of Art, Literature, and Philosophy. Its introduction to the field of political philosophy is quite recent. It resulted in the exploitation of environmental difficulties. Furthermore, it has resulted in the standardization or uniformity. Postmodernism has recently arisen as a philosophy or a school of thinking. A postmodern perspective on international relations argues that existing international relations theories have failed to provide adequate explanations for the complexities of international relations. Consequently, attempts to clarify these theories often result in chaos and inaccuracies. The postmodernist theory of international relations emphasizes the concept of power-knowledge connection and rejects the notion of absolute truth, which is advocated by positivism.

Keywords: Modernism, Post-Modernism, International, Truth, Approach, Theory

Introduction:

Postmodern international relations is a branch of international relations studies that emerged in the 1980s. Postmodernist views encompass several perspectives, but a fundamental aspect is a lack of confidence in any narrative that purports to possess unmediated access to objective truth. Postmodern international relations theory offers a critical analysis of theories such as Marxism that provide a comprehensive and all-encompassing explanation of historical events. Notable postmodern intellectuals include Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

Problem Statement:

" An Overview of the Origins and Development of Postmodernism in the Field of International Relations"

Objectives of the study:

Firstly; To understand the factors that contributed to the development of Postmodernism.

The number Second; To gain knowledge about the genesis of the theories of modernism and postmodernism in the field of International Relations.

The number Third; To identify the primary concepts of Post-modernism.

The number Fourth; To provide a thorough analysis and comparison of Modernism and postmodernism.

The number Fifth; To ascertain the contributions of the postmodernism theory to the field of International Relations.

Research Questions:

The present study has formulated specific research questions, which are as follows:

Firstly; What is the primary catalyst for the development of Postmodernism?

Secondly; What is the basis for our understanding of the origins of modernism and postmodernism theories in the field of International Relations?

Thirdly; The major themes of Post-modernism encompass concepts such as skepticism towards grand narratives, the rejection of absolute truth, the blurring of boundaries between high and low culture, the celebration of diversity and difference, and the exploration of the relationship between language and reality.

Fourthly; What are the distinctions between Modernism and postmodernism?

The contributions of postmodernism theory to the field of International Relations are significant.

Methodology:-

Both statistical and non-statistical methodologies were employed for this study. In addition to qualitative and quantitative methods, other approaches were employed for this study. The primary data was obtained through a field survey, while the secondary data was collected from various sources such as articles, journals, books, and others.

Discussion:-

Factors Contributing to the Development of Postmodernism:

Karl Marx introduced the concept of division between the base and superstructure. He proposed that most of us are experiencing false awareness or perceiving the world in an inverted manner.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony delineates the boundary of prevailing wisdom. Marx and Gramsci proposed that within any given time, the dominant ideas within society are those of the ruling class. It demonstrates that the prevailing thought itself reveals who holds power.

Althusser: Althusser has endorsed the concept of interpellation. It can be likened to the notion of hegemony. Interpellation refers to the process by which the cultural values of the ruling class are spread throughout various ideological state institutions, such as the family, church, and school. It involves establishing a setting where one person does tasks according to the specific requirements of another person, while minimising any form of opposition.

Einstein: Einstein formulated the theory of relativity. According to this, truth is subjective. It is impossible for us to have objective knowledge of this reality. Even in the natural world, not every phenomena is viewed uniformly by all observers. The answer varies based on temporal and spatial factors. It is crucial to comprehend the origin and time of observation of the event. It suggests that individuals from Bangladesh and Britain will see a natural phenomena in distinct manners.

Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of paradigm in his book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolution'. However, it is important to note that scientific theories should be referred to as paradigms. A paradigm can be understood as a conceptual framework. The scientific community operates under conceptual frameworks, which they classify as theories or theses. He has delineated the successive stages in the evolution of paradigms.

The first stage, known as the Pre-Paradigmatic stage, occurs when the current paradigm is capable of addressing the majority of questions or issues. A paradigm represents the widely recognised standards within the scientific community, as it is capable of effectively describing the majority of problems.

The crisis stage occurs when the current paradigm is unable to address a multitude of questions. Following then, the pursuit of a novel paradigm commences.

The third stage represents the advancement of a novel paradigm or framework that has gained widespread acceptance within the scientific community. Hence, the aforementioned concept demonstrates that every form of knowledge, including information in the natural sciences, is impermanent.

Karl Popper is known for his formulation of the notion of falsification. He proposes that the criterion for evaluating the scientific validity of a hypothesis should be falsification rather than verification. No amount of experiments and verifications is adequate. A theory can undergo numerous verifications, yet there is always a possibility that it may be proven erroneous in the future.

Nietzsche is widely recognised as the progenitor of post-modernism. He has embraced the belief that God is no longer alive. It signifies the absence of an absolute truth. The scholars are first perplexing us. Nietzsche has also endorsed the concept of 'will to power'. Every individual have an inherent drive for power. The driving force behind each activity is the will to power. The drive for power is more potent than the desire for a comfortable existence. Hence, knowledge is inherently subject to the influence of power.

The emergence of modernism and postmodernism theory in International relations:

The emergence of modernism and postmodernism theory in International relations can be traced back to the cultural trends and ideologies that prevailed from the 1890s until the onset of the Second World War. This period witnessed significant developments in various artistic disciplines such as painting, music, sculpture, architecture, design, and literature. Modernism has had a significant role in the social, political, sociological, scientific, sexual, and family transformations in Europe and other parts of the world that were under colonial and imperial control. The advancement of science and technology has both beneficial and negative effects on the socio-political and economic aspects of citizens' lives.

These scientific and technical breakthroughs were expected to improve social human situations, both socially and economically, and to generally simplify and enhance social life. However, the adverse repercussions on society worldwide have caused some to question the legitimacy of the current social structure. Modernism emerged as a cultural response to this transformative shift.

The belief that science and technology will improve human conditions diminished during the First World War due to their use in the creation and production of perilous weapons such as atomic bombs and biological and chemical weapons, facilitated by nuclear capabilities. Therefore, the outlook for the globe appears grim and filled with hopelessness. Europe, having seen the devastating consequences of war and the advancements in science and technology, is now questioning modernity.

Postmodernism emerges as a philosophical movement in the aftermath of the Second World War. It served as a means of expressing and understanding many foreign cultures throughout the Cold War era. The nature of it was pluralistic and it does not represent a new order.

According to postmodernism scholars, various approaches to international relations theory have failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for the study of international relations. As a result, these explanations often result in disorder and inaccuracies. The theory of international relations known as postmodernism specifically emphasises and develops the concept of the power-knowledge connection. It dismissed the perspectives of objective reality.

Key topics:

- First; An extensive reevaluation of contemporary presumptions on culture, identity, history, or language.
- The number Second; There is no absolute truth. Postmodernism posits that truth is subjective, constructed, and contingent upon its context.
- The number third; They deny the potential for universal, normative, and ethical evaluations.
- The number fourth; They argue that written writings lack an objective meaning or a notion of truth.
- The number fifth; Postmodernism considers religion and Marxism as meta-narratives that should be approached with scepticism, as they attempt to provide comprehensive explanations that may not be applicable to the diverse range of human experiences. It recognizes that it is impossible to create theories that can account for every aspect of life in a manner that is universally significant to all individuals.
- The number sixth; The philosophy of postmodernism posits that there is no objective reality in the world; rather, all aspects pertaining to human beings are inherently subjective. In relativism, the concept of knowing is contingent upon an individual's faith. The concept of absolute truth is currently considered to be nonexistent.

Key concepts

Postmodernism is a concept that revolves around the idea of opposing extremes. Defining the distinguishing elements of a post-modernist work is a challenging task. Individual thoughts are rarely given in isolation due to the frequent overlap of elements. Discussing post-modernism involves grappling with numerous complex questions about limits and definitions prevalent in post-colonial societies.

In postmodern narrative, the word refers to the liberation of the individual in a world that, according to their perspective, has lost significant value. It describes the intense, antagonistic, and apathetic environment of the Great War.

- **The concept of state and its authority**
- Postmodernists argue that the concept of state lacks a fixed and definite identity. They argue that the concept of the state emerges as a consequence of industrialization, representing the expansion of human civilization. They said that on a daily basis, the boundaries of states and the state's identity undergo changes. Therefore, it is impossible to definitively establish the exact identity of a state. The people's understanding of the state is founded on discourses, which means that the state is not perceived as a tangible thing. Furthermore, according to their perspective, knowledge equates to power. In order for a country to attain dominance, it is imperative that they possess comprehensive information pertaining to these matters.
- **Security and identity**
- According to postmodernists, the notion of universal truth is rejected. When a country attempts to compare itself to others, it triggers a sense of identity crisis, leading to the development of a hostile concept within that specific country. Consequently, this nation is experiencing a security issue.
- **Individuality and social group**
- Postmodernists primarily focus on novel concepts and perspectives. They suggested that the introduction of new thinking could potentially lead to a shift in established orthodox notions. They argue that the emergence of new ideas leads to the occurrence of several programmes that promote self-awareness or social awareness, such as social movements, class movements, gender movements, environmental movements, and Human Rights movements. They contend that globalisation will introduce new ideas into society and foster the development of a contemporary, unified community.
- **Disparity and Fairness**
- Postmodernism posits that the application of a universal standard may lead to suspicion or infliction of harm onto others. Consequently, they did not endorse the concept of a universal principle or universal truth because they demonstrated that Hitler's death was a consequence of the global principle. Another example is the fact that Stalin, under the guise of the Universal principle, subjected 8 million people to torture. They claim that in order to uphold equality and justice in the world, moral considerations must be taken into account. This entails considering what actions I or we should take towards others.

The literature of the period contains both anti-realistic and sure-realistic elements. Cultural diversity is certain to occur in a chaotic

environment. When contradictory elements compete to dominate each other, commercial pressures become significant, highlighting human weakness, fragmentation, and the presence of communal, racial, and gender disparities. Individuals have a sense of detachment and isolation from both themselves and society.

- **Hostility and aggression**

The postmodernist argued that conflict did not serve as a source of energy. Instead of arguing that conflict arises from mutual disagreement, they posit that conflict arises when a specific country attempts to impose its ideology as universally superior, while deeming others as inferior. For instance, the United States of America is the preeminent democratic nation globally. They believe that their principal is commendable, and hence they endeavour to establish it as a universal ideal by promoting democracy throughout Africa, Europe, and Middle Eastern nations. They believe that democracy is a superior form of government as compared to monarchy or anarchy. Thus, there is a prevalence of conflict worldwide. The occurrence of postmodernist violence can be attributed to the actions of the state. Violence is consistently employed by a Sovereign State to uphold its sovereignty. Consequently, acts of violence occur in the world.

- **Comparison between modernism and postmodernism**

First; Modernism espouses the belief in a universal and objective truth, whereas postmodernism contends that there is no such thing as a universal and objective truth.

The number second; In modernism, reality is considered to be discovered, whereas postmodernism posits that truth is made through individual perspectives. They do not believe in the existence of a universal truth.

The number third; Modernism holds that facts are generated from logical reasoning and empirical observations, while postmodernism maintains that facts are constructed based on assumptions.

The number fourth; Modernism primarily focuses on an objective, analytical, and theoretical stance. Conversely, postmodernism primarily focuses on the subjective viewpoint.

The Contribution of postmodernism theory on the field of International Relations

Firstly; One of the key contributions of postmodernism theory in international relations is its establishment of a power-knowledge relationship and the recognition of the absence of absolute truth. Postmodernism establishes the power-knowledge dynamic and critiques the idea of a dominating rationalist and positivist assumption that knowledge is irrelevant to exerting power. Additionally, it challenges the existence of absolute truth. According to a positivist perspective, knowledge and power are not inherently connected, and truth is considered to be real and objective.

Secondly; Furthermore, Postmodernism acknowledges the existence of several approaches to analysing "Text". It asserts that the world itself can be perceived as a "Text", and any references to it are subject to interpretation. They hypothesised that the world is inherently diverse, therefore rendering the existence of a definitive explanation for the "Text" unlikely. The term "explanation" should be used in its plural form. Postmodernism employs several strategies, such as "deconstruction" and "double reading," to elucidate the concept of the "Text." Deconstruction, which is utilised in conjunction with postmodernism, refers to the analysis of how theories and conversations are constructed through both artificial and natural oppositions, without relying on objective means. Postmodernism is an interpretation of decorum that rejects the concept of absolute honesty and instead acknowledges multiple truths. It challenges the idea of fixed principles and recognises that preferences play a significant role. Postmodernism also questions the notion of a singular logical framework and acknowledges the existence of various reasons. It rejects the idea of a dominant civilization and instead favours a more inclusive approach. Additionally, postmodernism does not rely on a single basis but rather seeks justification from multiple sources. It also rejects the notion of privileged advancement and embraces a diverse range of cultures, beliefs, periods, and styles.

Thirdly; double reading is a methodology or method employed in postmodernism to analyse a "Text" many times and with greater depth. Ashley (1996:45) asserted that postmodernism employs this particular method or approach to examine global politics, such as the "anarchy problems" that have been prevalent in international relations theory since the 1980s.

Fourthly; Furthermore, postmodernist theorists rejected the notion that objective knowledge exists in all social phenomena. In addition, they held contrasting views with classical liberals and neo-realist intellectuals such as Kant and Waltz, who advocated for enlightenment principles and scientific approaches to understand the functioning of the universe. Their cognitive processes have the potential to advance the collective understanding of humanity, yet postmodernists have expressed disagreement and refuted their ideas as erroneous in terms of insight.

Criticism of Post modernism Theory in International Relation:

First point; Critics of postmodernism are sceptical of narrative and do not offer solutions to problems.

Secondly; They argue that there is no universally applicable concept, as whatever solution they propose is subject to potential criticism. It is in a state of confusion.

Thirdly; According to detractors, one of the main criticisms of postmodernism is its inability to distinguish between what is considered excellent and terrible. This is because postmodernists argue that there is no universally accepted standard for determining what is universally good or awful.

Fourth; Critics argue that postmodernists failed to uncover the inherent violence present in capitalist societies.

Fifthly; Noam Chomsky (1996:23) critiques postmodernism for its lack of contribution to analytical or empirical knowledge. Postmodern intellectuals exhibit distinct behaviour compared to individuals in other disciplines. They prioritise theoretical concepts and show little interest in empirical verification.

Female.

Sixthly; Daniel (1992:12) further criticises postmodernism for its assertion that there is no "absolute truth," instead emphasising interpretations or narratives. He argues that this perspective disregards evidence and settles for "conversations" where no one can be proven wrong and nothing can be confirmed.

Seventhly; Fred Halliday (1994:45) strongly criticised postmodernism for its excessive preoccupation with abstract "theory" that lacks coherence, substance, and relevance to the actual world of international relations. He argues that there is a significant gap between theoretical concepts and practical application, with theorists often indulging in theory just for its own sake.

Study limitation:

A restricted number of books and journals were utilized for this study. The study has certain limitations.

In conclusion:

In conclusion, postmodernism emerged as a contrasting counterpart to modernism. Due to their lack of faith in the ultimate truth or Universal truths. It has been stated that conflict and bloodshed in the world arise from the pursuit of ultimate truth or Universal principle. In order to mitigate global conflict and violence, it is imperative that we dismiss the notion of objective analysis and universal truth.

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