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Abstract

The study explores Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity as a critical and interpretive model for reading contemporary reality, and as an alternative to the concept of postmodernism, through analyzing the radical transformations that have affected identities, relationships, institutions, and social and political systems in light of globalization and technology. The study relied on an induction of Bauman's works represented in the Liquidity series, highlighting his methodological approach that links social and philosophical analysis, and his elaboration on how liquid modernity produces a fragile reality dominated by uncertainty. This is achieved by dismantling all solid constants and replacing them with temporary relationships and fluid values. Through this model, the study demonstrated how liquidity transforms individuals into isolated entities, burdened with the responsibility of adapting to constant change, given the declining roles of the state, its policies, and society and its institutions. The study thus presents a comprehensive vision of the concept's role as a tool for understanding the complexities of the modern era and its impact on individual and collective structures. The paper also recommended integrating this concept into academic curricula and promoting research into mechanisms for achieving psychological and social stability in light of rapid transformations.

1. Introduction:

The concept of "fluidity" is one of the most prominent concepts introduced by Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman in his in-depth analyses of contemporary societies. Bauman is considered one of Europe's most in-fluential thinkers. He was born on November 19, 1925, in Poznań, Poland, and died on January 9, 2017, in Leeds. He is known for his prolific works, which largely focus on the broad changes in the nature of contemporary society and their impact on individuals and communities (www.britannica.com). Through his series of books known

as the Liquidity Series, Bauman deconstructed the features of the contemporary world, revealing a model in which prevailing relationships, identities, and institutions are characterized by flexibility and instability. This contrasts with "solid" modernity, which was characterized by stability and constancy. This contradiction in meanings actually indicates that individuals today live in a state of constant change and a loss of a sense of security. Therefore, we can say that the concept of "liquid modernity" is an attempt to understand the challenges facing individuals and societies in confronting the rapid transformations that characterize the modern era, especially those related to changes in personal, professional, and social identities, and the disintegration of family and social relationships, not to mention economic and political changes.

2. Research Problem:

The research problem revolves around how Bauman analyzed the social transformations taking place in contemporary societies. He demonstrated the failure of the social and political system that emerged under modernity, which relied on stable institutions and stable individual and collective identities. He emphasized the failure of this model to meet the needs of individuals in our current era, citing the state of instability that has affected all previously existing constants, such as identity, social relations, morality, work, institutions, and the state. Bauman links these transformations to the influence of globalization and technological progress, where the disappearance of spatial and temporal boundaries has undermined the foundations of stable social life. Consequently, individuals live in a state of constant response to the transformations surrounding them, creating a state of flexibility and loss of balance. This raises a fundamental question about how these transformations affect individuals and societies.

How can the mechanisms of these influences on individuals and societies be analyzed? And how can they be understood within the context of Bauman's concept of fluidity?

3. Research Plan:

The paper seeks to deconstruct Bauman's concept of liquid modernity, starting with a detailed explanation of the basic concepts within its context, leading to an understanding of liquid modernity, which constitutes the essence of his social analyses. Ethics in the era of liquid modernity will be reviewed, where fixed moral relationships are replaced by fluidity that forces individuals to make ethical decisions in a changing world. The study will also address the concept of liquid love, which highlights the transformation of human relationships from fixed bonds to transient ones, in addition to the concept of liquid life, which reflects the unstable nature of individual and collective existence in this accelerating era. It will also deconstruct the concept of liquid fear, which expresses the anxiety resulting from ongoing social transformations, while addressing the concept of liquid evil, which highlights the disintegration of moral and human values in contemporary society. We will also address the concepts of liquid surveillance and liquid times, which reflect changes in the nature of power and surveillance in the current era. The conclusion includes an integrated vision presented as a critical and interpretive model by Bauman as an alternative to the concept of post-modernism. Modernity, thus attempting to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social and political changes undergone by contemporary society, then the paper concludes with recommendations.

4. Significance of the Research:

The study derives its importance from several aspects, which we mention below:

- It seeks to provide added value through its attempts to enrich academic understanding of Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquidity, as one of the most prominent social and philosophical theories that address the effects of globalization and technology on societies.
- It provides a scientific and methodological framework for understanding postmodernity.
- It highlights the challenges of life in liquid modernity.
- This research provides a reference or starting point for future research in the fields of social sciences and humanities, enabling researchers to study how these transformations will continue and evolve in the future.

5. Research Objectives:

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Analyze the eight concepts proposed by Zygmunt Bauman in the "Liquidity" series to understand societal changes in the modern era.
- Study the impact of liquid modernity on individuals and societies.
- Explore the impact of globalization and technology in enhancing the state of liquidity, and how these factors contribute to distorting or reshaping a new social and human reality. 4. Significance of the Research:
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7. Deconstructing Bauman's concept of liquid modernity:

To deconstruct Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity," it is necessary to build on the seven concepts introduced by Bauman in his series of works known as Liquidity, which together form the basic foundation for constructing Bauman's concept of liquid modernity. These concepts are (ethics in the age of liquid modernity, liquid love, liquid life, liquid fear, liquid evil, liquid times, and liquid surveillance):

7.1 Ethics in the age of liquid modernity:

Bauman believes that the limits of freedom are only those drawn by the individual himself, and he alone decides between what is reasonable and what is unreasonable among moral interventions. He also sets limits on what he deems appropriate based on his willingness to sacrifice his personal interests in order to bear moral responsibility towards others (Bauman, Z., 2016, p. 56). In other words, we can say that ethics, according to Bauman, takes on an unstable concept in fluid modernity, constantly changing as a result of accelerating social, economic, and cultural changes. After ethics were built on fixed standards and collective principles, based on justice and equality, individuals moved to a world full of multiple and contradictory choices, in which all previous constants were eroded, and ethics became no more than a personal matter, with each individual becoming responsible for determining his own values, according to his circumstances and momentary needs, outside of any references. Consequently, we are undoubtedly facing a collapse

of social values, which in the past linked individuals to society. The sources of formulating right and wrong are absent, and it is difficult to define individuals' behavior according to fixed moral standards, which creates a fluid and flexible moral environment, in which personal interests overlap with the absence of social responsibility.

7.2 Liquid Love:

The repercussions of liquid modernity encompass all aspects of an individual's life and all the details of their experience, including their emotions. In this regard, Bauman argues that love in an age of liquidity is no longer the love people knew, noting that romantic love is no longer based on the maxim, "We vowed that only death would separate us." The kinship structures that reinforce this maxim and provide it with strength and vitality have collapsed in an age of liquidity, along with the old meanings and their components. This has led individuals to replace the same concepts and link them to a wide spectrum of human experiences, ultimately diluting the concept of classical love to include even momentary relationships (Bauman Z., Liquid Love, 2016, p. 39). Bowman emphasizes that love in our era is becoming a more fragile and fleeting relationship, as society is undergoing rapid transformations, such that romantic relationships are losing their ability to endure. People are now striving for perfection and complete satisfaction in their relationships, leading to a collapse in emotional stability. Individuals prefer to maintain their personal freedom rather than commit to long-term relationships. The great openness to the world and the digital space has only produced more superficial and less profound relationships. Love in this era has become a fleeting and rapid phenomenon, far removed from the stability and depth it enjoyed in "solid" times.

7.3 Liquid Life:

Human life has come to embody the nature of liquidity, according to Bauman's vision. Our future on earth has become extremely fragile, based on a pervasive threat from our jobs and workplaces, our relationships with our partners, the social networks that connect us to others, and even our social standing and associated sense of self-worth. The very idea of progress has been transformed from a promising dream of achieving lasting happiness for all into a bitter reality dominated by extremism and determinism, and a constant source of anxiety and inevitable threat. Even the concepts of comfort and reassurance have vanished, replaced by a constant state of tension and hardship. Bauman likened this situation to a game of musical chairs, where a moment of inattention costs the participant and their exclusion. He added that progress in the age of liquidity is noth-

ing but the constant fear of being left behind, and a future shrouded in uncertainty and the unknown (Bauman Z., Liquid Life, 2016, p. 99). What characterizes human life in general in liquid modernity is the lack of stability and cohesion that characterized it in previous eras. Social and moral identities and human relationships are unstable, constantly changing, and affected by rapid transformations in society and the economy. Their only constant feature is uncertainty, resulting from the pressure individuals feel as a result of pushing themselves to adapt and adjust to the fluctuations around them, such as the fluctuations in the labor market, technological developments, and the spread of consumer culture. There are no fixed values or social institutions capable of providing stability. Bauman links this to the loss of continuity in life goals and projects, in contrast to the past, where individuals had long-term life projects. Liquid modernity has left individuals in a state of transition between short and temporary experiences, and a feeling of helplessness in the face of situations imposed by social and economic challenges. Liquid life does not require many skills. The only required skill is the ability to let go, the ability to quickly adapt to loss, and the willingness to replace.

7.4 Liquid Fear:

Bauman elaborates on fear in liquid modernity, describing it as one of its products. He clearly draws the line between natural fear and liquid fear. The former is a natural, and often necessary, state. It drives a person to adopt a certain behavior in a given circumstance in order to escape the state of danger or its consequences. They flee, confront, or take whatever they deem appropriate for their survival. The latter, however, no longer has specific features. It is widespread, unknown, and constantly fluctuating. It governs us without a reasonable cause, completely in keeping with the state of uncertainty in which we live and our lack of awareness of the nature of danger and what should be done to repel or avoid it (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, p. 24). The new fear is intangible and embodied in the variable that characterizes life in the era of liquid modernity. It is not necessarily linked to specific risks. The only constant about it is that it is permanent and indefinable, a result of rapid changes in the social, political, and economic world, causing a feeling of constant anxiety and insecurity, as individuals face unseen or unforeseen threats. It is impossible to define the concept in any way except by saying that it is a continuous state of fear. It seems that Bauman chose the concept of liquid fear to refer to this new type of fear, imbuing it with all the meanings mentioned above.

7.5 Liquid Evil:

Bauman relied on introducing the concepts upon which he constructed the concept of liquidity with their opposites. He presented the concept in the context of modernity and explained how it was transformed in liquid modernity. Regarding the concept of liquid evil, he says that freedom is limited to consumption and prestige, meaning that control, surveillance, and unbalanced power masquerade as freedom of choice and are based on the manufacture of fear and the transgression of privacy boundaries. Together, these practices constitute a complex mix of cultural and social conditions that he called "no alternative." Evil in solid modernity calls for triumphing over the soul and conquering the world by imposing new rules, while liquid evil devised a strategy of seduction and disengagement. The slogan raised by the heroes of liquid modernity is: "I know what to do, but I refuse to participate and leave the seduced victim to face her fate, then I disappear." This is the new game, where drowning in the ocean is considered freedom (Bauman, Liquid Evil, 2018, pp. 28-30). We can say that in solid modernity, the bad reality was considered something that could be fought, changed, or confronted. The attempt to modify bad situations or change them for the better was continuous. However, in liquid modernity, the situation is different. Evil appears to be an inevitable fate. Evil exists, but there is no alternative. Individuals and societies do not have the options or solutions to confront this evil. 7.4 Liquid Fear: Bauman elaborates on fear in liquid modernity, describing it as one of its products. He clearly draws the line between natural fear and liquid fear. The former is a natural, and often necessary, state. It drives a person to adopt a certain behavior in a given circumstance in order to escape the state of danger or its consequences. They flee, confront, or take whatever they deem appropriate for their survival. The latter, however, no longer has specific features. It is widespread, unknown, and constantly fluctuating. It governs us without a reasonable cause, completely in keeping with the state of uncertainty in which we live and our lack of awareness of the nature of danger and what should be done to repel or avoid it (Bauman, Liquid Fear, 2017, p. 24). The new fear is intangible and embodied in the variable that characterizes life in the era of liquid modernity. It is not necessarily linked to specific risks. The only constant about it is that it is permanent and indefinable, a result of rapid changes in the social, political, and economic world, causing a feeling of constant anxiety and insecurity, as individuals face unseen or unforeseen threats. It is impossible to define the concept in any way except by saying that it is a continuous state of fear. It seems that Bauman chose the concept of liquid fear to refer to this new type of fear, imbuing it with all the meanings mentioned above.

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Liquid Times:

Bauman chose the concept of "liquid times" as a comprehensive expression of the prevailing climate in today's societies, referring to the state of instability that characterizes all aspects of contemporary life. He identified five fundamental shifts that have shaped the current era and shaped a new state of human life. These shifts, in turn, have produced new forms of interaction for individuals with their external world, necessarily reflected in their view of themselves and the world around them, thereby governing their behavior and livelihood (Bauman, Liquid Times, 2017, pp. 25-28). These can be summarized as follows:

• The decline of the role of social institutions, which are based on providing individual choices based on ensuring the continuity of accepted patterns of behavior. These institutions are no longer able to maintain their classical role, nor to reshape themselves as a fixed reference upon which individuals base their behavior. • Power has become separated from politics after the modern state's authority shifted toward the global sphere, abandoning its former state-

related origins. Politics, too, is no longer able to control trends, actions, and their objectives in the global sphere. This has created a state of uncertainty that prompts individuals to abandon their interest in all state institutions.

• The decline of the state's social role has led to a decline in individuals' ability to confront crises. Social foundations have been undermined, and social action has lost its meaning. After this stage, it is no longer possible to describe society as a unified bond that unites the people of the state. This has also led to the disintegration of human bonds that were previously highly valued and influential.

• Long-term thinking and planning have collapsed, and it is no longer feasible to build future strategies based on past experiences, because achieving success in an age of fluidity depends on the ability to let go.

• Individuals alone bear the responsibility for solving complex problems arising from constantly changing circumstances. Freedom of choice places them directly before the consequences of their choices, amid the absence of a roadmap that defines the path to success.

7.7 Liquid Surveillance:

According to Bowman, today's concerns are not related to fear of their ability to protect their privacy, but rather to fear of the lack of means to reveal it! Based on the premise that privacy zones in our era are nothing but confinement sites, where those who cling to their private space are condemned to torment, must suffer the consequences of their actions alone, and are forced to live a life characterized by the absence of caregivers. The goal, then, is to overcome the immunity that privacy represents in order to disclose it to everyone and transform it into shared property... Secrets gain their importance through their success in attracting talk show producers, television presenters, and newspapers... The situation is not much different on social media, where we find that each user is happy to divulge their privacy by creating a complete profile about them, including accurate data such as personal photos, date of birth, interests, and a biography... sometimes even reaching the point of revealing intimate details. Statistics around us confirm this. In Britain alone, 61% of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 have a profile on a social networking site online. (Bauman, Liquid Surveillance, 2017, pp. 49-50).

Thus, surveillance, as a term, always refers to the monitoring of an individual with the intent of tracking their behavior or activity. It can be used to gather information and data and monitor changes, and it occurs in various contexts, such as security surveillance imposed by security agencies to ensure respect for and adherence to the rule of law; social surveillance, which aims to monitor a social phenomenon,

behavior, or change; health surveillance, which aims to detect and address diseases, and other forms of surveillance. The difference Bauman identifies is that surveillance no longer comes from the other party, because individuals themselves have voluntarily relinquished their privacy and moved toward breaking down and transcending its boundaries. Indeed, what was previously called privacy has even become a collective property available at all times. He cites the personal data published by subscribers on social media platforms and talk shows that broadcast individuals' confessions of their scandals to viewers.

Results:

• **Liquid Modernity as an Alternative Analytical and Interpretive Model for Postmodernism:**

• From the above, the significance of Bauman's use of the concept of liquidity becomes clear. It was a literal expression in metaphorical form, reflecting the details of human reality and the contemporary phase of this era. He clearly indicated this when he cited the Encyclopedia Britannica in his foundation of the concept, which states that liquidity is a characteristic of liquid and gaseous materials, and that liquid and gaseous materials are distinguished from solids by their inability to cohesion between their components and to change their shape as long as they are subjected to stress. Cohesion within a solid material, however, is a permanent state, whether it is subjected to bending or twisting. It is not subject to flow and can return to its original shape... (Bauman, Liquid Modernity, 2016, pp. 41-42). If we accept that the critical paradigm focuses primarily on analyzing social phenomena, working to uncover the forces of inequality and discrimination between classes and social groups, as opposed to the interpretive paradigm, which seeks to understand the meanings and experiences created by individuals in their daily interactions with the social world, in order to explain individual and social behavior, we can say that Bauman combined the two paradigms, presenting at the same time a critical and interpretive model as an alternative to the concept of postmodernism, which remains vague and ambiguous, lacking fixed connotations or meanings that contribute to its interpretation or definition, except in that it is a description of a historical phase formed on the ruins of modernity. Bauman shed light on the profound transformations that contemporary societies have witnessed and are witnessing, and that these have created an environment of social disintegration, individualization, and loss of stability, leading to a state of constant anxiety and the displacement of individuals towards increasing isolation, with the absence of traditional social values in favor of an endless consumer culture. In addition to the disintegration of social solidarity,

the disappearance of collective identities, and their replacement by isolated individuals, each seeking to fulfill their personal desires, amidst a climate of constant turmoil and uncertainty, in a world where only change is constant, the features of liquid modernity can be summarized in the following points:

• Liquid modernity is characterized by a state of constant anxiety and uncertainty, with the disintegration of traditional identities and the shattering of social constants. It is no longer possible to rely on the fixed social structures that governed relationships between individuals, which means the collapse of institutions such as the family, education, etc. Social relationships are rapidly fading and changing, making it difficult for individuals to build stable bonds.

• In liquid societies, individuals are encouraged to break free from the traditional social constraints imposed by family, society, and classical value frameworks. Each individual is obsessed with satisfying their personal desires, free from all control, a manifestation of extreme individualism. • Liquid modernity is characterized by the normalization of behaviors that conflict with society's value system, forcing others to adapt and accept these behaviors. Therefore, liquid societies experience a state of social disintegration, widening distances between individuals, and traditional bonds losing their strength. A state of social "alienation" emerges, as individuals live in a society that lacks a sense of true belonging, given that interpersonal bonds are fragile and fragile.

• In liquid modernity, endless consumer options emerge, accompanied by an unquenchable desire for gratification. As a result, individuals live in a constant cycle of pursuing ever-renewed desires. This leads to an overzealous pursuit of buying and acquiring, and they fall into the trap of consumer addiction, finding them confronted by the market, the state, and society—these forces that determine their fate.

9. Conclusion:

Through all of the above, we can say that Bauman, through his introduction of the concept of liquid modernity, presented a critical model and an alternative interpretation of the concept of postmodernity, transcending traditional concepts of postmodernity and offering a new vision that reflects the profound changes that have occurred in contemporary societies. Within the framework of this model, Bauman believes that modernity is no longer capable of providing stability or even fixed definitions of the world. Rather, it has itself become fluid, i.e., in constant motion, such that individuals and institutions are unable to attain constants or certainties. This fluidity is manifested in various aspects of life, such as relationships, structures, and social

phenomena, where everything devolves into temporary and unstable states. Bauman does not view this fluidity solely as a negative phenomenon; he also considers it our contemporary reality, which poses new challenges to individuals and societies. The world today, as he sees it, is full of contradictions and gaps that leave individuals in a state of constant uncertainty, forcing them to constantly seek to reshape their identities and relationships in the face of these ongoing changes. Therefore, Bauman's concept of "liquid modernity" can be considered a true alternative to the concept of postmodernity.

10. Recommendations:

The study produced a set of recommendations that will contribute to enhancing a deeper understanding of this phenomenon and expanding its applications in various academic and societal fields. We summarize them as follows:

• The academic community should incorporate the concept of "liquid modernity" into academic curricula, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, with the aim of enabling researchers and students to possess the necessary analytical tools to better understand contemporary social and economic changes.

• Pay close attention to Bauman's work to better anticipate the future, by recognizing ongoing changes and developing a roadmap to guide the adaptation required to maintain social and psychological stability in the face of the challenges and pressures imposed by "liquid modernity."

• Researchers in the social sciences and humanities should focus on how shifts in social patterns affect individuals and society, while intensifying efforts to uncover ways to strengthen social solidarity.

• Work to enhance awareness of cultural and collective identity as a means of balancing change and adhering to cultural roots that contribute to maintaining cohesion and stability.

• More research efforts should be directed to the impact of these social media outlets on enhancing or undermining social awareness.

• Decision-makers should keep pace with the state of liquid modernity by re-adapting various educational and social policies.

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