

'How do concepts and theories influence the way we analyse politics and is this a problem?'

What this essay aims to do is determine if the way concepts and theories are analysed are problematic, also, if and how it leads to a better political understanding of frameworks. Firstly, and an explanation of how concepts and theories are used to give meaning and categorise the experiences and outcomes given. Secondly, an assessment of how the chosen approach of analysis influences the comprehension of concepts and theories. Penultimately, examples where analysis of theories and concepts has influenced and been problematic towards politics. Finally, a summary of how a meanings become misunderstood when the context in which they are created are not taken into account.

Throughout this essay, the term framework will be used to describe conceptual and theoretical thoughts acknowledged together unless otherwise stated. Due to the constraints of this essay it is paramount that understand that the question being addressed has been a continual discourse. The points made are succinctly condensed to show how challenging analysing concepts and theories is.

Concepts are ambiguous in nature, usually pertaining to terms where the meaning changes with the context in which they are used. The context gives meaning to the concept, making the concept itself not static. Foucault breaks down concepts as formed with some "order" or "succession" (1969, pp.56-63). Concepts are, as well as not being tangible products, are also subjective formations that have an objective ideology. The analysis is, therefore, necessary to manage the inescapable confusion and draw a sensorial understanding.

Theories also give meaning but are based on principles rather than experiences, working as guidances when looking at the functions towards an objective. Much like concepts, theories include precepts that are adjustable in accordance to the realms in which it is used. Concepts and theories therefore inadvertently become interlinked in the analysis as they are used to put together a network of actions that form a framework. Rosenau articulates that the understanding of frameworks “theoretically” as being “the hardest of intellectual tasks” (1980, p. 26).

Frameworks, therefore, can be understood as being built using the multitude of approaches. That has the potential of creating an understanding of the interplaying relationship between concept, context, theory and method; a task that solemnly is undertaken because of the intricacies involved which make it something that makes cooperation and action mandatory but equally full of inevitable contestations. Gallie (1956) explains this analogously akin to a concept being a picture that meaning changes to depending on the observer.

The analysis allows for the flaws of a framework to be highlighted and assessed to determine the causality of the flaw and whether it is rectifiable. The analysis includes understanding the extent and relevance of it as well the useful contribution it makes. Because of the complexity that goes into the construction of a framework, the analysis usually requires attention that is parallel or greater. Because of the disagreement between what analysis has the most effectiveness, conclusions are built on misconstruction. The problem has the potential of having a misconstruction

This problem can cause the issue of binary translations; either or distinctions. These are unambiguous but also possibly misconstrued distinctions, which again is a chance for contestation. In welcoming these contestations, it allows for a previous perception of a

framework to take on a different vision; expanding on the 'picture' described by Gallie and "can give us enlightenment of a much needed kind" (1956, pp.167-170), when viewed from another angle or distance. As a paradox, a misconception can cause hegemonic objectification. What is meant by this is the subjective distinction that works in favour of the perceiver's motivations. Waters (2012) captures these objectifications concerning how these motivations can have social implications that construct a framework that assimilates these binary distinctions into a preformed system of value sets that work to uphold the abstract representations of a concept/theory.

The different methods of analysis provide alternate conclusions that do not always coincide. What this can lead to is a messy and convoluted comprehension. Frameworks are then repeatedly analysed, in turn creating new concepts and theories. What this allows for are concepts being understood from multiple perspectives. The interpretation gives a contextual description that is unique depending on the analyser. They become formed by theorists with assumptions that are not always separated from their preconceived notions. As theories and concepts are cogs within the mechanisms of a theoretical framework, they inevitably are intertwined with each other, but connecting all approaches is complicated and conflicting while attempting to define and reach an objective.

The work of scholars can be used as an example of analysis causing confusion, but also giving clarity. Take for example the work Emile Durkheim. Durkheim's 'Divisions of Labour in Society' (1885) was formed from the understandings of different ideologies and methodical research. This involves understanding the economic function of modern society as well as the contradictory outcome of greater isolation and interdependence. According to an explanation given by Jones (1986, pp. 24-59) Durkheim analysed a cooperating society as not a synthetic construction, but an organic system that functions akin to the human body.

This biological representation is intuitively abstruse and opposite of “mechanical” societies, described as “repressive”. From this, an example is given of analysis having to be microscopic and macroscopic; looking reflexively at anatomical architecture and relaying that information onto a collective of individual bodies and institutions. The risk of running into contradictory conclusions is inescapable; the lens used for microscopic analysis offers up clarity on aspects implicit in the broad focus of the macroscopic, and vice versa.

Use the concept of the republic. A contemporary understanding of this concepts works on the assumption that the power is held the people and any representative is obliged to act with mindfulness of their representation. Wedeen explains how the same concept is identified differently depending on the “epistemological commitments” of the approach taken (2004, pp. 302-303). This concept is apparent in and used in conjunction with other concepts and ideas, such as democratic. The use of republic differs depending on the contexts the concept gets associated with. The overarching concept has not changed but the context within what gets included does.

Due to conceptual and theoretical frameworks being inexplicably intertwined contestation is inevitable. An analysis is necessary to draw clarity out of these abstract and universal innovations. Doing so gives a deterministic focus on an environment or situation of relevance. The reason for different approaches is to simplify a framework to understand the mechanisms involved in the framework’s functioning, and also to observe where conflicting conclusions converge. This simplification can also be problematic as it constrains the realms in which a framework can function, and inhibits the possibility of understanding of clear focus with a broader scope.

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