



# Are Values and Facts Independent of One Another in Politics Research?

Qian Kong

The Faculty of Humanities, The University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

qiankong@naver.com

**Abstract.** In political studies, some philosophers tell us that there is an unbridgeable gap between “Yes” and “Should”, and there is also a clear line between “Fact” and “Value”, and some social theorists go even further. They argue that values are merely a “Cultural” or “Social construct”, the accidental result of history and rights, lacking any objective or rational basis. Whether values and facts exist independently in the study of politics will be addressed in this paper from the perspective of different scholars, and will be explained by focusing on the case of nuclear war.

**Keywords:** values, facts, social science, politics research, political philosophy

## 1 Introduction

The question of the relationship between facts and values was first raised by the English philosopher David Hume in the mid-18th century [1]. Most scholars agree that facts are objective, whether they are historical or real, it has nothing to do with the subject of knowledge [2-5]. Moreover, values reflect the relationship between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge, indicating tendency for objective things to satisfy human needs [6]. In political studies, some philosophers tell us that there is an unbridgeable gap between “Yes” and “Should”, and there is also a clear line between “Fact” and “Value”. They argue that values are merely a “Cultural” or “Social construct”, lacking any objective or rational basis [7]. So are facts and values separable? The separationists overstate their case. This view emphasizes that the ideology and beliefs of political scientists, which determine their loyalty to another “paradigm” in their defence of the political status quo, which is now known as a curse in the vocabulary of the philosophical New Left [8]. On the contrary, it turns out that, to some extent, they can be considered objective, providing objective proof of assessment and judgement [9]. Therefore, a certain paradoxical extent, this leads to an emphasis on the subjectivity of political science and the objectivity of political ethics.

Whether values and facts exist independently in the study of politics will be addressed in this paper from the perspective of different scholars, and will be explained by focusing on the case of nuclear war.

## 2 Explanations and Definitions

The social sciences belong to the realm of values. "Human action is guided by certain values and driven by certain motives, and for this reason it is necessary to understand and explain the hidden 'meaning' behind social phenomena by means of value judgements or value relations." Actors carry out their own actions guided by their own values [10]. The reason why social actions can be understood is that the subjective meanings that individuals give to their actions can be understood. Only when the meaning of the action is understood can it be properly interpreted [11].

Naturalism asserts that the understanding of society is an objective grasp of things, and that the researcher should observe social affairs "objectively" as an object, should exclude his own subjective prejudices, be value-neutral, and reveal the laws of social phenomena and social behaviour without value judgement [12]. Weber emphasised the need to distinguish between "real" and "ought", between factual and value judgements, otherwise it would lead to the equation of factual judgements with value judgements, or even the replacement or obliteration of facts by value judgements [13]. There are two arguments against this distinction. The first is that natural rules govern the processes of society. The second is that explicit development governs the course of society, which leads to the conclusion that either they are equivalent to unchanging actual existence under the first opinion, or else they are equivalent to inevitable generation [14]. However, Weber argues that Values can influence the way social science research, and values can be influenced by research findings. Facts can have an impact on values, affecting how people hold on to them [15].

Here we will first briefly introduce the definition of facts and values and then explain and distinguish them in further detail in the remaining paragraphs. A "fact" is defined as something that actually exists; what is known is what is true [16]. Values, unlike facts, have a distinctly subjective element. They vary from person to person and from situation to situation.

The application of the atomic bomb in World War II hastened the end of the war and played an active role and made a unique contribution in the eventual great victory over Japanese fascism [17]. By the 1970s, from the motivation for the use of the atomic bomb, there are three main views represented, and the different views also represent different values. First, a view based on a military perspective argued that the use of the atomic bomb against Japan greatly hastened the end of the war and thus reduced the number of American casualties. This view, which continues to be shared by many to this day, reflects both the US government's basic explanation of the reasons for its atomic bombings in the early post-war period and the views of many scholars at the time [18]. Secondly, another view is that the use of atomic bombs by the United States was more of a political and diplomatic consideration. It was because of the expansion of the effects of nuclear weapons to deter the Soviet Union [19]. There is also a view that somewhat reconciles the first two views, that the use of the atomic bomb was primarily motivated by military necessity, followed by political and diplomatic planning [20]. Official Soviet military scholars, on the other hand, saw no strategic or tactical need for the use of the bomb. Polish scholars have commented that the US did not do so for military purposes, but for political and diplomatic ones [21]. This shows that

scholars from different countries hold different attitudes towards the matter, as they have different values, leading to different perspectives on things, both positive and disapproved. Regardless of the differences in their values, each individual's different views can be told and clarified. But however different their values may be, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan by the United States was an actual event, a reality that happened. This is what we have defined as "facts" and "values".

### **3 The Evolution of the Relationship Between Fact and Value**

Through the perspectives of different scholars, we look at how the relationship between facts and values has evolved, and in turn at whether values and facts exist independently of each other in the study of politics. In the field of philosophy, the relationship between facts and values introduces the question of the relationship between "is" and "ought". Hume proposed a distinction between factual knowledge and value knowledge based on a distinction between facts and values. He argues that factual knowledge can be proved empirically, whereas value knowledge cannot be proved empirically [22]. At the same time, value could not be deduced from facts, thus denying the correlation and consistency between facts and values. The German philosopher Kant's distinction between the world of facts and the world of values, and the corresponding division of human knowledge into factual knowledge and value knowledge, also denies the relevance and consistency between facts and values [23].

The distinction between fact and value, as presented by Hume, leads us to the conclusion that we can completely separate 'value' from 'fact' in the case of the bombing of Japan by the United States. Because the bombing of Japan was a fact of war. It does not matter what our values say about it, even if our values tell us that it was wrong for so many people to die in the event. Except for Hume, this strict cut that Weber attempts to make between value choices and empirical science has been highly influential in the social sciences. While this demarcation has in many cases helped to reduce the confusion between scientific discussion and evaluative judgement, Weber's view of this is questionable. For his attribution of value judgements to individual behavioural choices does not in any way imply that individual behavioural choices are free from the influence of empirical science, or even that human behavioural choices can only have practical effects if they conform to the laws of nature and social psychology. That is to say, his attribution of value judgements to individual choices does not thereby logically lead to the conclusion that value judgements are irrelevant to factual judgements.

Similarly, Russell argues that "science really cannot solve the various problems of value" because "they cannot be solved by reason at all; they do not belong to the realm of truth and falsity". Simon argues that the scientific system is concerned only with statements of fact and has no place for moral assertions, because "where a moral statement appears, one can always break it down into factual and moral parts, only the former being relevant to science" [24].

But some scholars (e.g. Dewey, Maslow, etc.) have also challenged Hume's view that there is a clear distinction between fact and value. For Maslow, the age-old mutu-

ally exclusive opposition of “is” and “ought” is a false opposition, and the two are perfectly coherent and unified, i.e. through some kind of simultaneous seeing of is and ought. In short, Maslow argues that ought is created by the fact that ought is an intrinsically inherent aspect of the fact. "The more something becomes 'is', the more it also becomes 'ought'". In other words, the “is” of a fact and the “ought” of a value are inherently fused together. Thus equating “is” and “ought”, facts and values This equates “is” and “ought”, fact and value, and denies the distinction between the two [25].

From the evolution of the above-mentioned views, I believe that the Western scholars' insistence that there is a "gap" between facts and values, between "is" and "ought". The view of the relationship between facts and values should be taken in the sense that the distinction between values and facts is important, but cannot be justified in absolute terms. Thus, it can be said that facts and values, 'is' and 'ought' are both distinct and related, a relationship of opposition and unity.

#### 4 The Distinction Between Facts and Values

Most scholars agree that facts are objective, and have nothing to do with the subject of knowledge; value, on the other hand, reflects the relationship between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge, and is a tendency for objective things to satisfy human needs [26]. From the perspective of epistemology, people's reflection of objective reality takes the object as the object of reflection and clarifies the question of "what is", which does not depend on the subject of knowledge; from the perspective of value theory, it takes the relationship between the subject and the object as the object of reflection and clarifies the question of "what should be The question of "what should be". In fact, the facts referred to here are facts in a narrow sense, in the epistemological sense [27]. Beyond that, there are facts in a broad sense.

Although we can conclude from our analysis that there is a distinction between facts and values, this distinction is always relative. Since the above-mentioned facts actually refer to things, processes, relations and properties that exist objectively apart from values, facts in this case are facts in a narrow sense, since the relations contained in facts here are relations other than values. And according to the original meaning of facts, facts should include values, because values and value relations are also an objective existence, facts are everything that exists objectively, including values and value relations. Therefore, the objective existence of value and value relations is also a fact, i.e. a “value fact” [28].

Facts are divided into value facts and non-value facts. Value facts and non-value facts (in the narrower sense) are both facts, but they have their own characteristics, after all. What have been called facts as opposed to value since Hume and Kant are in fact non-value facts [29].

Therefore, those who try to deny non-value facts (facts in the narrow sense) by means of value facts and deny the significance of the opposition of fact and value as a false opposition are incomplete. For the opposition between fact and value is actually an opposition of facts in the narrow sense, i.e. non-value facts versus value facts [30]. And "the opposition between non-value facts and value facts exists objectively, and

these two kinds of facts have their own characteristics, and recognizing and grasping the characteristics of these two kinds of facts is the starting point for the study of value theory, and the history of value philosophy begins precisely with the distinction between facts and values, the significance of which cannot be underestimated" [31]. The "value fact" has led many people to believe that value is also objective and a fact. In this sense, it makes sense to point out that value is also a fact, which helps to make the relationship between value and fact precise and to clarify the relationship between value and fact.

Based on the above the distinction between facts and values, we can draw two points about the connection between facts and values. On the one hand, "is" can be derived from "should" under certain conditions, because the subject knows a certain fact ("is"), which must be linked to the subject's interests, forming a certain "ought" can then be deduced from the value judgement of the subject. It is therefore inappropriate to argue that value judgements do not need to be based on factual statements, but are determined by the subject. For "value is the effect of the object on the subject, the sphere of the relation between the subject and the object". This effect is the objective action and influence of the object on the subject, the mutual product of the subject and the object, which is objective, not determined by the subject, nor by the object, but by the action and influence of the object on the subject in the interaction of the subject and the object [32].

On the other hand, thanks to the distinction between two kinds of facts, i.e. value facts and non-value facts, we can understand that facts and values are not absolutely separate or separable, but that value is an objective fact, a "value fact" that results from the universal interaction between things [33]. The value orientation of the subject must not only be based on the subject's interests and needs, but also on objective things and laws, on facts. Value orientations that are not based on facts are subjective and blind, and inevitably lead to mistakes. Therefore, when determining their value orientations, subjects must understand both their own interests and needs and the objective facts, and try to avoid value decisions that are not based on facts [34].

So as a result of all the above analysis we can see that values influence our choices. In the social sciences, values also influence the choice of research projects. This is because the social sciences believe that a person's values have an impact partly because what people value is what they do for themselves.

## 5 Conclusion

In short, value is a relational rather than a physical category, and it is important to distinguish between facts in the physical sense and facts of value, but the two are not unconnected, and this connection can be understood through the mutual transformation of "is" and "ought". In other words, "the transition from facts to values also takes place every day and every hour in the practice of our lives, and as practice intervenes dynamically in the real process, what is possible is transformed into reality and is brought into line with purpose and need, and ideals, values, norms and so on are closely linked to the real thing". In a word, facts and values are both opposed and united.

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