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## ***Ethics and Values***

### ***Lecture 2***

Two (disparate) topics:

- i)* The empirical basis of normative theory.
- ii)* The attribution of responsibility in child-abuse inquiries.

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### **i) Facts legitimately affecting values?** *[a topic in its own right, and a way of introducing some mainstream 20thC social and political theory]*

Social science as upsetter of orthodoxies; perverse effects (Boudon); unintended consequences (Popper)

Whence we might expect it to affect evaluative discourse: for example:

- democracy? (Arrow, Aristotle)
- Rawls proceeding without social science?
- egalitarian ideals?
- Walzer's radical particularism?

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### **ii) Attribution of responsibility**

What is the responsibility of social work when a child on the at-risk register is killed?

Outcome responsibility a common evaluation.

Arguments in its favour?

- Social utility (Smith, Honoré)
- Moral sentiment (Nagel)
- Epistemological necessity (Williams)

How can it be argued against?

Practical implications for conduct of social work

- Connections to empirical evaluation of social work
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