

## Assumptions of Objective Reality in Logical Positivism

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**Abstract:** Logical positivism, as a 20th-century philosophical movement, posits that legitimate scientific knowledge can only be acquired through empirical verification and logical reasoning, while claims that cannot be tested or verified are considered meaningless. A central assumption in logical positivism is the concept of objective reality, which asserts that the external world exists independently of human subjectivity and can be understood through observation and scientific laws that are verifiable. This article explores the foundational assumptions regarding objective reality within logical positivism, focusing on the contributions of key figures such as Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and A.J. Ayer. These philosophers argued that the physical world operates according to universal laws that can be verified through structured scientific methods. However, logical positivism has faced criticism, particularly concerning the principle of verificationism and its inability to accommodate the complexities of scientific theories that are not always directly verifiable. Critics such as Karl Popper and Willard Van Orman Quine have raised important questions about the relationship between theory, observation, and objective reality in science. Overall, while logical positivism has laid a significant foundation for modern scientific thought, it also faces profound challenges related to the limitations of verification theory and scientific objectivity.

**Keywords:** Logical Positivism, Objective Reality, Verificationism

### A. Introduction

The development of modern science is inseparable from the philosophical foundations that shape how reality, knowledge, and truth are understood. Since the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, marked by the works of figures such as Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, and René Descartes, there has been a growing demand for a rigorous epistemological framework capable of explaining how scientific knowledge can be obtained in a reliable and objective manner. This demand intensified in the early twentieth century, when rapid advances in the natural sciences exposed the limitations of speculative philosophy and called for greater conceptual clarity and methodological precision. Within this intellectual context, logical positivism emerged as one of the most influential and ambitious movements in the philosophy of science, seeking to provide a solid philosophical foundation for scientific knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Logical positivism, also known as logical empiricism, is a philosophical movement that developed primarily during the 1920s and 1930s. It aimed to combine the empiricist tradition, which emphasizes sensory experience as the primary source of knowledge, with the tools of

<sup>1</sup> Kristine L. Florczak, "Capturing Truth for the Moment," *Nursing Science Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2016): 269–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318416661101>.



formal logic developed in analytic philosophy. The central aspiration of logical positivism was to eliminate metaphysical speculation from philosophy and to establish a conception of knowledge grounded exclusively in empirical observation and logical analysis. According to this view, science represents the highest form of rational inquiry, and philosophy's proper role is not to compete with science by offering metaphysical theories, but rather to clarify the logical structure, language, and methods of scientific knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The intellectual center of logical positivism was the Vienna Circle, a group of philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians who met regularly in Vienna during the interwar period. Prominent members of this group included Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Herbert Feigl, and Hans Hahn.<sup>3</sup> Despite their diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the members of the Vienna Circle shared a common commitment to scientific rationality, empiricism, and anti-metaphysical philosophy. They rejected traditional metaphysical questions concerning the ultimate nature of reality as meaningless, insofar as such questions could not be answered through empirical investigation or logical analysis.

One of the defining doctrines of logical positivism is the verification principle, which holds that the meaning of a statement is determined by the method of its empirical verification. According to this principle, a statement is cognitively meaningful only if it can, in principle, be verified through observation or experience, or if it is analytically true by virtue of logic or mathematics. Statements that fail to meet these criteria such as metaphysical claims about transcendent realities, essences, or absolute values are considered meaningless from a scientific standpoint. Through this principle, logical positivism sought to draw a sharp boundary between meaningful scientific discourse and speculative metaphysics.

Underlying this methodological and semantic framework is a set of deeper ontological and epistemological assumptions, among which the assumption of objective reality plays a central role. Logical positivism presupposes that there exists a reality external to and independent of human consciousness, perception, or interpretation. This objective reality is not constructed by the knowing subject but exists prior to and independently of any act of cognition. Scientific inquiry, on this view, is a process of discovering and describing this reality through systematic observation, experimentation, and logical reasoning.

The assumption of objective reality is fundamental to the logical positivist conception of scientific objectivity. If reality exists independently of the observer, then it is possible, at least in principle, to acquire knowledge that is not merely subjective or relative, but objectively valid. Logical positivists maintained that by adhering to strict methodological rules—such as reliance on empirical evidence, logical consistency, and intersubjective verification—science can minimize subjective bias and provide reliable knowledge about the world as it actually is. Objectivity, in this sense, is not a metaphysical guarantee but a methodological ideal grounded in shared empirical practices.

Within logical positivism, reality is typically conceived as a structured physical world governed by universal and law-like regularities. These laws of nature are assumed to operate uniformly across space and time, regardless of human beliefs or cultural contexts. The task of science is to identify these regularities, formulate them into general laws, and integrate them

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<sup>2</sup> Asad Zaman, "Logical Positivism and Islamic Economics," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, advance online publication, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2195043>.

<sup>3</sup> Sander Verhaegh, "Logical Positivism: The History of a 'Caricature,'" *Isis* 115, no. 1 (2024): 46–64, <https://doi.org/10.1086/728796>.

into coherent theoretical systems capable of explanation and prediction. Scientific theories are thus regarded as representations of the objective structure of reality, even though they remain provisional and subject to revision in light of new evidence.

The commitment to objective reality is also reflected in the logical positivists' emphasis on scientific language. Language is viewed as a representational tool whose primary function is to describe facts about the world. For this reason, logical positivists devoted considerable attention to the analysis and formalization of scientific language, seeking to eliminate ambiguity, vagueness, and metaphysical confusion. Rudolf Carnap, in particular, argued for the use of formal languages and logical syntax to clarify the relationship between theoretical statements and observational terms. Through such linguistic clarification, the connection between scientific theories and objective reality was expected to become more transparent and precise.

Despite its internal coherence and initial appeal, the logical positivist account of objective reality has been subject to significant philosophical criticism. One of the most persistent challenges concerns the relationship between observation and theory. While logical positivism treats observation as a neutral foundation for knowledge, critics have argued that observation is always theory-laden. What scientists observe is influenced by their conceptual frameworks, background assumptions, instruments, and expectations. This raises doubts about whether observational statements can serve as an unproblematic bridge between theory and objective reality.

The critique of logical positivism became increasingly influential in the mid-twentieth century. Karl Popper famously rejected the verification principle, arguing that universal scientific laws can never be conclusively verified by finite observations. Instead, Popper proposed falsifiability as the demarcation criterion of science: a theory is scientific if it can, in principle, be refuted by empirical evidence. According to Popper, scientific knowledge advances not through verification, but through conjectures and refutations. Although Popper maintained a commitment to objective reality, his critique undermined the logical positivist claim that empirical verification provides a secure foundation for scientific knowledge.

Another major challenge was articulated by Willard Van Orman Quine in his influential essay *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*.<sup>4</sup> Quine questioned the logical positivist distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, arguing that no clear boundary exists between truths of logic and truths of fact. He proposed a holistic view of knowledge, according to which scientific theories are tested as interconnected systems rather than as isolated statements. This holistic perspective implies that any statement, including those of logic and mathematics, could in principle be revised in response to empirical evidence. Quine's critique further weakened the logical positivist framework and complicated the notion of a direct correspondence between language, observation, and objective reality.

Beyond these analytic critiques, historians and sociologists of science introduced additional challenges to the logical positivist conception of objectivity. Thomas Kuhn's analysis of scientific revolutions emphasized the role of paradigms—shared conceptual frameworks that guide scientific research. According to Kuhn, scientific development is not a linear accumulation of objective knowledge, but a series of paradigm shifts in which fundamental concepts, standards, and worldviews change. This perspective suggests that what scientists

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<sup>4</sup> W. V. Quine, *Word and Object*, Nachdr. (MIT Press, 2002).

take to be “reality” is, to some extent, shaped by the dominant paradigm, calling into question the idea of a fixed and theory-independent objective reality.

Similarly, Paul Feyerabend argued that there is no single, universal scientific method capable of guaranteeing objectivity. He emphasized the historical and pluralistic nature of scientific practice, contending that methodological diversity and even theoretical inconsistency have played a crucial role in scientific progress. From this standpoint, the logical positivist ideal of a unified, objective science grounded in strict methodological rules appears overly simplistic and historically naïve.

Despite these criticisms, the assumption of objective reality remains deeply embedded in many contemporary scientific practices. In fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, and positivist-oriented social sciences, researchers continue to operate under the assumption that the phenomena they study exist independently of their observations and can be measured, modeled, and explained objectively. Concepts such as reliability, validity, replication, and measurement precision reflect an ongoing commitment to objectivity that can be traced back, at least in part, to the legacy of logical positivism.

Understanding the assumption of objective reality in logical positivism is therefore not merely of historical interest. It provides critical insight into the philosophical presuppositions that continue to shape scientific methodologies and epistemic standards. By examining these presuppositions, philosophers and scientists alike can gain a clearer understanding of the strengths and limitations of objectivist approaches to knowledge. Such reflection is particularly important in interdisciplinary contexts, where different conceptions of reality and objectivity often coexist and sometimes conflict.

Moreover, a careful analysis of logical positivism’s commitment to objective reality helps clarify the boundaries between science and other forms of inquiry. While logical positivism sought to exclude metaphysics entirely, subsequent philosophical developments suggest that some ontological assumptions are unavoidable in scientific practice. Recognizing these assumptions does not necessarily undermine scientific objectivity; rather, it enables a more reflective and self-critical understanding of how scientific knowledge is constructed and justified.

In light of these considerations, this article aims to provide a systematic examination of the assumption of objective reality within logical positivism. The discussion will explore the ontological and epistemological foundations of this assumption, its role in shaping the logical positivist conception of scientific method and language, and the contributions of key figures associated with the Vienna Circle. In addition, the article will analyze major criticisms of logical positivism and assess their implications for the notion of objective reality in science. Through this analysis, the article seeks to contribute to ongoing debates in the philosophy of science concerning objectivity, realism, and the relationship between scientific theories and the world they purport to describe.

## **B. Methodology**

The methodology of this research is grounded in philosophical doctrinal research, which focuses on the analytical examination of legal concepts, principles, and normative structures within the legal system. This approach views law not merely as a set of observable social facts, but as a system of normative reasoning that requires conceptual clarification and philosophical interpretation. The study employs a conceptual analysis by examining statutes,

legal doctrines, and scholarly interpretations in order to identify the underlying legal concepts, principles, and theoretical foundations relevant to the subject of the research. Through this approach, legal norms are analyzed systematically to understand their meaning, coherence, and normative justification within the broader framework of legal theory.<sup>5</sup>

The analysis is conducted through logical and philosophical reasoning, emphasizing conceptual clarification, interpretation of legal principles, and critical evaluation of doctrinal arguments.<sup>6</sup> Rather than focusing on empirical measurement, this method seeks to reconstruct and refine legal concepts, explore their theoretical implications, and assess their consistency within the normative structure of the legal system. Accordingly, the validity of this research lies in the strength of its conceptual argumentation, coherence of legal reasoning, and consistency with established legal principles and theories, enabling a deeper philosophical understanding of the legal issues under examination.<sup>7</sup>

## C. Results and Discussion

### Critique of the Singular Recognition of Objective Reality

The Concept of Objective Reality in Logical Positivism.<sup>8</sup> Objective reality, according to logical positivism, refers to an external world that exists independently of human perception or subjectivity. In this view, reality is not a mental construction or the product of individual interpretation, but rather a world that can be observed and understood through systematic scientific methods and empirical verification. This approach is rooted in the belief that valid knowledge can only be obtained through direct observation of phenomena that are testable and verifiable.<sup>9</sup>

Logical positivist philosophers such as Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and A. J. Ayer emphasize that all legitimate scientific knowledge must be testable through experimentation or empirical observation. In other words, objects existing in the external world whether observable or not possess measurable properties that can be expressed in the form of scientific statements capable of being tested by anyone, at any time, and in any place.<sup>10</sup>

For Carnap, the scientific world must be constructed through a logical and structured language, in which scientific claims are acceptable only insofar as they can be verified through observation and experimentation. Objective reality, in this sense, is a world unaffected by subjective viewpoints, grounded instead in empirical data obtained through appropriate instruments and capable of being replicated by others under the same conditions. Schlick and Ayer, who place even greater emphasis on empirical verification,<sup>11</sup> argue that reality can only

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<sup>5</sup> Elia Radianto, "Interpetasi Modern Tentang Teori Dan Filosofis Penelitian," *KRITIS* 32, no. 1 (2023): 56–74, <https://doi.org/10.24246/kritis.v32i1p56-74>.

<sup>6</sup> Andika Adhyaksa dan Fathurrahim Fathurrahim, "Kondisi Materil Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Dalam Aspek Pembentukannya Dengan Penggunaan Artificial Intelligence," *Nomos: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Hukum* 5, no. 3 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.56393/nomos.v5i3.2943>.

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Wasi Feny Rita Fiantika Sri Jumiyati, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 1 (PT. Global Eksekutif Teknologi, Sumatra Barat, 2022), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anita-Maharani/publication/359652702\\_Metodologi\\_Penelitian\\_Kualitatif/links/6246f08b21077329f2e8330b/Metodologi\\_Penelitian-Kualitatif.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anita-Maharani/publication/359652702_Metodologi_Penelitian_Kualitatif/links/6246f08b21077329f2e8330b/Metodologi_Penelitian-Kualitatif.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Zaman, "Logical Positivism and Islamic Economics."

<sup>9</sup> Radianto, "Interpetasi Modern Tentang Teori Dan Filosofis Penelitian."

<sup>10</sup> Verhaegh, "Logical Positivism."

<sup>11</sup> Harry Stopes-Roe, "Wesley C. Salmon. Logic. Foundations of Philosophy Series. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1963, Xiv + 114 Pp.," *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 29, no. 2 (1964): 89–90, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2270413>.

be accessed through experiences that are demonstrable and testable by all, independent of individual interpretation.<sup>12</sup>

### 1. Critique of the Singular Recognition of Objective Reality

Although logical positivism advances objective reality as a concept free from subjectivity, this view has received substantial criticism from various philosophers and scholars. The main critique of the singular recognition of objective reality is that it overlooks the complexity of how we understand the world and is limited in explaining more abstract phenomena that cannot be directly measured.<sup>13</sup>

#### a. Karl Popper's Critique: Falsifiability as a Substitute for Verification

Karl Popper is one of the principal critics of logical positivism, particularly with regard to the principle of verification. In his seminal work *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959), Popper argues that scientific theories should not be assessed through verification but through falsification. According to Popper, a scientific theory must be testable and, if necessary, capable of being proven false (falsifiable), meaning that no theory can be regarded as final or permanently true. Verification, which requires supporting evidence for a theory, is considered too limited because it focuses solely on confirming evidence, whereas genuine scientific progress depends on attempts to identify errors in existing theories. Accordingly, Popper rejects the logical positivist notion of objective reality that is accepted solely through empirical verification.<sup>14</sup>

Popper further maintains that recognition of objective reality must not ignore the theoretical nature of scientific knowledge. All observations or scientific claims are theory-laden, implying that no observation is entirely free from theoretical interpretation. Therefore, the physical world regarded as objective by logical positivism is, in fact, a theory-dependent construction rather than a world that can be understood independently of a theoretical context.<sup>15</sup>

#### b. Willard Van Orman Quine's Critique: Epistemological Holism

Willard Van Orman Quine, in his influential work *Word and Object* (1960), extends the critique of logical positivism by introducing the concept of epistemological holism. Quine rejects the view that observation can be clearly separated from theory. For Quine, all human knowledge, including observation, is interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation. He argues that scientific statements cannot be considered true or false solely on the basis of particular experiences or observations, because such statements depend on the entire system of theories within which they are embedded.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (The Classic Text Which Founded Logical Positivism and modern British Philosophy, 1935), <https://ia801606.us.archive.org/22/items/AlfredAyer/LanguageTruthAndLogic.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> John Austin, *Austin: The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*, 1 ed., ed. oleh Wilfrid E. Rumble (Cambridge University Press, 1995), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511521546>.

<sup>14</sup> Marcel Boumans dkk., "Popper's Logic of Discovery," dalam *Economic Methodology*, oleh Marcel Boumans dkk. (Macmillan Education UK, 2016), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-54557-2\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-54557-2_4).

<sup>15</sup> Haruo H. Horaguchi, "Organization Philosophy: A Study of Organizational Goodness in the Age of Human and Artificial Intelligence Collaboration," *AI & SOCIETY* 40, no. 3 (2025): 1961–73, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-024-01980-6>.

<sup>16</sup> Quine, *Word and Object*.

According to Quine, claims about objective reality in logical positivism fail to account for the way scientific theories not only interpret data but also shape how we perceive the world. Consequently, the supposedly objective world that can be observed through scientific methods independent of theory is in fact a construction bound to a broader system of knowledge involving language, culture, and historical context.

c. Critique from Cultural Perspectives and Subjectivity

The logical positivist emphasis on empirical observation and verification as the basis for explaining objective reality is frequently challenged in discussions of subjectivity and cultural relativism. Thomas Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), argues that science does not develop linearly through discoveries that continuously confirm previous theories. Instead, scientific progress occurs through paradigms that are tied to particular scientific communities and historical periods, indicating that objective reality cannot be understood in absolute terms or independently of the cultural and social contexts of scientists.<sup>17</sup>

While logical positivism maintains that valid scientific knowledge must be objectively verifiable, contemporary perspectives in sociology and anthropology suggest that the reality we observe is always influenced by cultural factors, social values, and historical contexts. Therefore, even though scientists strive to minimize subjectivity, scientific knowledge inevitably carries traces of subjectivity that cannot be entirely eliminated.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Melesse Solomon, "The structure of scientific revolutions (Thomas S. Kuhn, 1970, 2nd ed. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press Ltd. 210 pages)," *Philosophical Papers and Review* 4, no. 4 (2013): 41–48, <https://doi.org/10.5897/PPR2013.0102>.

<sup>18</sup> Roger A. Shiner, "W. J. Waluchow, *Inclusive Legal Positivism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, Pp. x + 290.," *Utilitas* 10, no. 2 (1998): 249–52, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820800006142>.

<sup>19</sup> Melesse Solomon, "The structure of scientific revolutions (Thomas S. Kuhn, 1970, 2nd ed. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press Ltd. 210 pages)," *Philosophical Papers and Review* 4, no. 4 (2013): 41–48, <https://doi.org/10.5897/PPR2013.0102>.

<sup>20</sup> Roger A. Shiner, "W. J. Waluchow, *Inclusive Legal Positivism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994, Pp. x + 290.," *Utilitas* 10, no. 2 (1998): 249–52, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820800006142>.

### 3. Synthesis: Objective Reality in a Contemporary Perspective

Based on the critiques advanced by Popper, Quine, and Kuhn, it can be concluded that a singular recognition of objective reality within logical positivism overly simplifies the complexity of the interaction between theory and observation in science.<sup>21</sup> Objective reality cannot be understood independently of theoretical interpretation and the social or cultural context of the scientists observing the world. Therefore, although the physical world does indeed exist objectively, the way we understand it is always bound to theoretical frameworks and context-dependent perceptions.<sup>22</sup>

### 4. Implications of the Assumption of Objectivity for Legal Interpretation

The Meaning of the Assumption of Objectivity in Law. The assumption of objectivity in the legal context refers to the view that law should be applied and understood objectively, free from bias or subjective interpretation.<sup>23</sup> In other words, law is regarded as a set of norms and rules that stand on their own and apply equally to all individuals, regardless of personal views, values, or particular interests. Within this perspective, law should not be influenced by external factors or personal interpretations, but rather interpreted on the basis of statutory texts and universally applicable legal principles.<sup>24</sup>

This paradigm is rooted in legal positivism as articulated by thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Austin, who emphasized that law consists of rules enacted by legitimate authority and must be applied consistently, without regard to social or political conditions.<sup>25</sup> For Hans Kelsen, law is a system of norms that must be understood separately from moral or social values; accordingly, legal interpretation should be conducted on the basis of existing rules, with a primary focus on the purity of the legal text itself.<sup>26</sup>

In the context of logical positivism, which likewise emphasizes objectivity in science, this understanding is extended to the legal sphere through the assumption that legal texts can be explained and interpreted accurately and objectively, without being affected by the subjectivity of the interpreter. Consequently, an objective understanding of law presupposes a clear distinction between facts (such as written legal provisions) and interpretations (such as personal views or political preferences).<sup>27</sup>

#### a. Critiques of the Implications of the Assumption of Objectivity for Legal Interpretation

Although the assumption of objectivity in law aims to ensure consistency and justice, this view is not immune to criticism, particularly with regard to how law is

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<sup>21</sup> Ulfa Kesuma dan Ahmad Wahyu Hidayat, "Pemikiran Thomas S. Kuhn Teori Revolusi Paradigma," *Islamadina : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 9 November 2020, 166, <https://doi.org/10.30595/islamadina.v0i0.6043>.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*, Dover ed (Dover Publications, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Drew H. Abney dkk., "Joint perceptual decision-making: a case study in explanatory pluralism," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (April 2014), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00330>.

<sup>24</sup> Joko Sriwidodo, *Hukum dalam perspektif sosiologi dan politik di Indonesia*, 1 (Kepel Press, 2020).

<sup>25</sup> Bentham, *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*.

<sup>26</sup> Hans Kelsen dkk., *Introduction to the problems of legal theory: a translation of the first edition of the "Reine Rechtslehre" or pure theory of law*, Repr. 2002 (Clarendon Press, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Richard Bellamy, ed., *The Rule of Law and the Separation of Powers*, 1 ed. (Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315085302>.

applied in practice and how it is interpreted by judges, lawyers, and other legal practitioners. Several major critiques of the assumption of objectivity in legal interpretation concern the impossibility of fully avoiding subjective interpretation and the ways in which law is often influenced by social and political contexts.<sup>28</sup>

b. Critique of the Impossibility of Objective Interpretation (Law as a Social Construction)

One of the main critiques of the assumption of objectivity in law comes from legal philosophers such as Ronald Dworkin and H.L.A. Hart.<sup>29</sup> Dworkin, in his book *Taking Rights Seriously* (1977), argues that law is not merely a set of rules to be interpreted mechanistically based on statutory texts, but rather a system that must be understood within a broader context, including moral principles and considerations of justice. Dworkin rejects the view that law can be applied in a purely objective manner without regard to the ethical or moral values embedded within society.<sup>30</sup>

According to Dworkin, even in cases involving seemingly clear legal texts, judges must still rely on moral judgment and principles of justice. This is because law often encounters situations that are not fully regulated by existing rules, thus requiring interpretation that involves ethical considerations. Consequently, he contends that law cannot be understood as an entity detached from its social and moral context, and therefore the assumption of full objectivity in legal interpretation cannot be entirely sustained.<sup>31</sup>

c. Critique from Marxist and Feminist Perspectives (Law as an Instrument of Power)

Beyond philosophical critiques, challenges to the assumption of objectivity in law also arise from Marxist<sup>32</sup> and feminist perspectives, which argue that law cannot be understood merely as a neutral and objective set of rules. Karl Marx and other Marxist thinkers maintain that law is fundamentally a product of social structures that are never truly neutral or objective. From this perspective, law often reflects the interests of the ruling class and functions as a tool to preserve the status quo that benefits dominant groups within society.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Susi Dwi Harijanti Shidarta Imran, Nathanael E. J. Sumampouw, *Bunga Rampai; Memotret Pertimbangan Putusan Hakim Dari Berbagai Perspektif*, 1 (Sekretariat Jenderal Komisi Yudisial Republik Indonesia, 2024), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Shidarta-Shidarta/publication/386462289\\_Penerapan\\_Aspek\\_Filosofis\\_Yuridis\\_dan\\_Sosiologis\\_dalam\\_Pertimbangan\\_Putusan\\_Hakim/links/6755db38ad10b614ef38fa2a/Penerapan-Aspek-Filosofis-Yuridis-dan-Sosiologis-dalam-Pertimbangan-Putusan-Hakim.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Shidarta-Shidarta/publication/386462289_Penerapan_Aspek_Filosofis_Yuridis_dan_Sosiologis_dalam_Pertimbangan_Putusan_Hakim/links/6755db38ad10b614ef38fa2a/Penerapan-Aspek-Filosofis-Yuridis-dan-Sosiologis-dalam-Pertimbangan-Putusan-Hakim.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Lionel Adolphus Hart, *Law, Liberty and Morality*, The Harry Camp Lectures (Oxford university press, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Ruth Gavison, "Taking Rights Seriously. By Ronald Dworkin [Harv. U.P., 1977, Enlarged Edition, 1978].," *Israel Law Review* 14, no. 3 (1979): 389–97, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021223700006427>.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander L. Nikiforov dan Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences, "Ludwig Wittgenstein and Logical Positivism," *Epistemology & Philosophy of Science* 58, no. 1 (2021): 22–30, <https://doi.org/10.5840/eps20215813>.

<sup>32</sup> Harry Setya Nugraha dkk., "Logico-Empirisme Paradigma Positivisme Logis: Kritik Dan Tawaran Epistemologi Alternatif," *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 32, no. 3 (2025): 556–80, <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol32.iss3.art2>.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Tushnet dkk., "Marx and Engels on Law," *British Journal of Law and Society* 7, no. 1 (1980): 122, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409759>.

Feminist perspectives add an important dimension to this critique by emphasizing that law is frequently shaped by gender bias and tends to marginalize women's interests. Scholars such as Judith Butler<sup>34</sup> and Carol Smart<sup>35</sup>, for example, highlight how legal systems often overlook women's experiences. As a result, interpretations of law that are claimed to be objective frequently fail to address existing social inequalities. From this viewpoint, law is never free from social and political contexts, and therefore the assumption of objectivity in legal interpretation is inherently limited and does not fully reflect social reality.<sup>36</sup>

d. Critique from Legal Positivism Itself (Law as a Normative System)

In addition to moral and social critiques, the assumption of objectivity in law has also been questioned by legal positivists themselves, particularly H.L.A. Hart. In *The Concept of Law* (1961), Hart argues that law is a normative system composed of rules that must be applied by legal officials. However, he also acknowledges that, in practice, legal interpretation often involves a degree of subjectivity, especially in cases where rules are unclear or cannot be applied directly.<sup>37</sup>

Hart explains that law consists of primary rules (which govern conduct) and secondary rules (which govern the recognition, change, and adjudication of primary rules). These secondary rules inevitably allow room for discretion and interpretation, which frequently involve subjective elements. Therefore, although law aspires to objective application, legal practice necessarily incorporates flexibility and interpretive judgment that may introduce subjectivity into both interpretation and enforcement.

5. Implications of the Critiques for Legal Interpretation

The critiques of the assumption of objectivity in law demonstrate that legal interpretation cannot be entirely objective or detached from moral, social, and political values. In practice, law must often be interpreted within a broader context that includes ethical, social, and historical considerations. While the principle of objectivity serves to promote consistency and fairness in the application of law, judges and legal practitioners are frequently compelled to take external factors into account when making legal decisions.<sup>38</sup>

The implication of these critiques is that law cannot be regarded as an entity separate from its social and political environment. Legal interpretation must therefore engage with power dynamics, social interests, and moral values operating within society. As critical approaches in legal philosophy continue to develop, they open space for a more holistic understanding of law—one that extends beyond legal texts and formal rules to encompass the social realities that shape and influence legal practice.

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<sup>34</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (Routledge, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*, *Sociology of Law and Crime* (Routledge, 1989).

<sup>36</sup> Florczak, "Capturing Truth for the Moment."

<sup>37</sup> Hla Hart dan Leslie Green, *The Concept of Law*, ed. oleh Joseph Raz dan Penelope A. Bulloch (Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/he/9780199644704.001.0001>.

<sup>38</sup> Aziz Alfa Andi Putra Sagita, "Eksistensi Aliran Positivisme Hukum," *Prestisius Hukum Brilliance* 6, no. 3 (2024), <https://journalversa.com/s/index.php/phb/article/view/2904/3377>.

## D. Conclusion

This research has examined how logical positivism understands the concept of objective reality in legal interpretation and the philosophical critiques directed toward this perspective. Within the framework of logical positivism, objective reality is understood as something that can be observed, verified, and expressed through clear and logically structured propositions. In the context of law, this perspective encourages the view that legal interpretation should rely primarily on the objective meaning of legal texts and formal rules, minimizing the influence of moral, political, or subjective considerations. The positivist approach therefore emphasizes certainty, consistency, and neutrality in the application of law. However, various philosophical critiques have challenged this understanding of objectivity. Thinkers such as H.L.A. Hart, Ronald Dworkin, Karl Marx, and Judith Butler argue that law cannot be fully separated from the broader social, moral, and political contexts in which it operates. These critiques highlight that legal interpretation inevitably involves normative judgments, institutional practices, and power relations that shape how legal rules are understood and applied. As a result, the assumption that legal meaning can be entirely objective and value-free becomes increasingly difficult to sustain.

From this perspective, the idea of objective reality in law should not be viewed as an absolute condition but rather as an ideal that must be balanced with contextual awareness. Legal interpretation therefore requires not only attention to the linguistic and structural aspects of legal rules but also sensitivity to social justice, human rights, and the lived realities of society. In conclusion, while logical positivism provides an important foundation for legal certainty and methodological clarity, philosophical critiques demonstrate that law is ultimately a human practice embedded in social life. Consequently, a more reflective and context-sensitive approach to legal interpretation is necessary so that law can function not merely as a system of formal rules but as an instrument capable of achieving substantive justice in society.

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