Problems of Culture in the Human Sciences

Theory of Knowledge

*To what extent can we say that the theories of the Human Sciences can be applied across all cultures?*

**Instructions:**

The Human Sciences, compared to the other 5 AOK’s, is a rather new discipline (developing the in the last 200 years at most). Apart for the last 30 years or so, its experts have primarily been Western (American and European) men and the vast majority of its studies are published in English. These facts bring into question the universality of the knowledge claims that they make. Admittedly, as we discussed in our unit of methodology, the Human Sciences have some structures in place to limit the most radical forms of cultural bias but these problems of cross cultural application are far from solved.

In this activity we would like you to work with a partner to find, research and report back on one problem of culture (including race, language group, sexual orientation, other subcategories) that has led to unreliability of knowledge claims in a Human Science. Your goal is to create a three slide presentation, no more than five minutes, that explains the issue [slide 1], implications and consequences of this problem [slide 2] and attempts in the Human Science to rectify the cultural problem [slide 3].

**Example of a Problem of Culture**

In Macro Economic Theory, a reduction in the interest rate by the Central bank should lead to a significant increase in consumer spending because the incentive to save has been reduced and cost of borrowing money has fallen. In China however, economists have noticed that a large block of Chinese consumers maintain high rates of savings despite record low rates of interest. Why?

Your presentations will be due when you come to class next time.

**Human Sciences (In case you forgot)**

Economics, Psychology, Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Law, Religious studies, Political Science, Gender Studies, and Archaeology.