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Local vs global knowledge: Is it a meaningful dichotomy?

A WIDESPREAD DISTINCTION between local and global knowledge reflects two rival orientations in contemporary epistemology which can be identified as cognitive universalism and cognitive particularism. Both of them are often considered, without proper reason, as mutually exclusive or dichotomic. A range of causes lay at the ground of this dichotomic approach: a lack of due attention to the distinctive role performed by empirical and general components of experience in the process of interpretation and understanding of conceived phenomena; a neglect of logical implication connecting the epistemological categories of universality and particularity; some deficiencies characteristic of prevailing conceptions of relationships between the experiential basis of knowledge and the domain of its application; etc.

There are reasons to assume that any sound explication of the links between universal and particular knowledge should be based on the following theoretical principles:

- interpretative and pragmatic conception of human experience with a particular emphasis upon dialectical interaction of its genetic and applicative aspects;
- an approach to particular and general or universal components of experience as to its two interdependent, integral elements, which logically implicate each other and perform distinctive functions in the process of human understanding;
- a relationship of certain adequacy which binds the genetic basis of some knowledge and the domain of its application. This relationship must be taken into account by those who try to explain how knowledge, gained in the particular or local contexts, can be used in wider sociocultural contexts.

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