

Patterns of theory use in qualitative research in higher education studies in Latin America: a geopolitical interpretation

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The relationship between theory and qualitative research has been extensively examined in the literature and has emerged as a problematic matter. This debate has been driven forward mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries and has done scant justice to an understanding of these issues in regions of the South. This paper addresses this matter by drawing on a geopolitical perspective. The study here provides an analysis of 24 papers by Latin-American researchers in higher education, as included in the Web of Science between 2006 and 2015. Theories in Latin America are mainly produced in the North and exhibit two patterns: (i) critical perspectives are used to address local problems??epistemic problematization?; and (ii) a nuancing of Northern theories so as to contextualize them??epistemic nuancing?. Suggestions are also made for a new configuration of knowledge production in higher education studies?a model of knowledge from and for the South.