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**Author**

DONNELLY, Michael (EVANS, Ceryn)

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Michael Donnelly ; Ceryn Evans

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**Abstract**

Since devolution of education policy to the four 'home' nations of the UK, distinct approaches to addressing social inequalities in higher education participation have developed across the four jurisdictions (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). From a critical examination of 12 policy documents, this paper presents a comparative policy analysis of the qualitatively distinct ways that inequalities in higher education are conceptualised across the home nations. Basil Bernstein's theoretical ideas are drawn on to help unearth distinctions in their beliefs about the underlying nature of educational inequalities. These can be understood in relation to their degree of closeness to either neoliberal or social democratic ideological positions, and we show that the home nations of the UK place differing emphases on what form of higher education they aim to widen access to, and how they intend to achieve this. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) DDonnelly, Michael, E-Mail:

m.p.donnelly@bath.ac.uk