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A long path to divergence : English and Scottish policies on tuition fees

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Abstract

This article addresses the diverging policies of England and Scotland since 1999 on the issue of tuition fees. While the UK Parliament has introduced (and henceforth enhanced the level of) tuition fees for students at English universities, the Scottish Parliament has refuted fees in two successive stages. In this article I trace the political processes leading to divergence, followed by a comparative analysis of the relevant parliamentary debates. I find that while all the three statewide parties have differed internally between arguments promoted in London and Edinburgh, Labour stands out as the party with the strongest thematic continuity. The Liberal Democrats, meanwhile, are distinctive in highlighting the opportunity to chart a separate course for Scotland. Finally, despite the diverging policy tracks of London and Edinburgh, there is a trend towards convergence between the legislatures in the thematic focus of debates. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)