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**Abstract**

This paper examines patterns of participation in higher education (HE) Wales, in the context of the devolution of powers over HE to the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. In particular, this democratic devolution has resulted in the introduction of arrangements for student finance which are quite distinctive from those in other parts of the UK. In the event, trends in participation amongst Welsh-domiciled young people (even when disaggregated by gender and socio-economic background) show little evidence of impacts from these arrangements. Analysis of the geography of participation within Wales does reveal some evidence of convergence between areas of low and high participation. The picture is further complicated when the flows of students into and out of Wales, which are much larger than for other parts of the UK, are taken into account. This poses major questions for Welsh policy makers, especially because, from 2007?2008, there will be a significant price differential for Welsh-domiciled students studying in Wales and those who wish to

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go elsewhere. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)