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THE BIRTH OF A “NEW” BRITISH EMPIRE: THE WORLD OF LEARNING  
(EL NACIMIENTO DE UN “NUEVO” IMPERIO BRITÁNICO: EL MUNDO  
ACADÉMICO)

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*Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties,  
and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire  
and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years,  
men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'*

— *Winston Churchill*  
*18 June 1940*

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## **TABLE OF ACRONYMS**

BA Bachelor of Arts

BEIS Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

BSc Bachelor of Sciences

CAP Common Agriculture Policy

CBI Confederation of British Industry

CENTO Central Treaty Organization

CSC Commonwealth Scholarship Commission

CSFP Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship

DFE Department for Education

DFID Department for International Development

DUP Democratic Unionist Party

EEC European Economic Community

EU European Union

EUT European Union Treaty

GCE General Certificate of Education

HECA Home Energy Conservation Act

HEFC Higher Education Funding Councils

HESA Higher Education Student Data

IMF International Monetary Fund

IRA Irish Republican Army

MA Master of Arts

MEP Member of the European Parliament

MSc Master of Science

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OFFA Office for Fair Access

PhD Doctor of Philosophy

SARP South African Republic Police

SNP Scottish National Party

UK United Kingdom

UKIP United Kingdom Independent Party

US United States

USA United States of America

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

## **1. ABSTRACT**

This essay focuses on the analysis of the British education system as a possible market after the Brexit, building an educational empire as an alternative to the former British Empire.

The essay is developed around three necessary points to understand the conclusions of it.

First, a journey is made from a brief mention at the end of the eighteenth century, through the peak of the British Empire in the nineteenth century and the end of it in the twentieth century. This analysis is especially indispensable to understand the dimensions of the Empire, the inheritance that is still found in the countries that belonged to the Empire and why they are a focus of interest for an "academic empire". Then the dilemma of the United Kingdom with the European Union, from its inception to the current concept of Brexit. Finally, the British educational system is exposed, as well as its reputation and importance at the international level; in addition, statistics about the existing academic market that can be found in countries that belong to the Commonwealth are studied and contrasted with the academic market offered within the European Union.

**Keywords:** Commonwealth, European Union, Brexit, Educative System, Universities, Erasmus.

## **RESUMEN**

Este trabajo se centra en el análisis del sistema educativo británico como posible mercado tras el Brexit, construyendo un imperio educativo como alternativa al antiguo Imperio Británico.

El trabajo se desarrolla en torno a tres puntos necesarios para entender las conclusiones del mismo.

En primer lugar, se realiza un recorrido desde una breve mención al final del siglo XVIII, pasando por el máximo apogeo del Imperio Británico en el siglo XIX y el fin del mismo en el siglo XX. Este análisis es especialmente necesario para comprender las dimensiones de este, la herencia que aún se encuentra en los países que pertenecieron al Imperio y el por qué son foco de interés para un “imperio académico”. Seguidamente se desarrolla el dilema del Reino Unido con la Unión Europea, desde sus inicios hasta el actual concepto del Brexit. Finalmente se expone el sistema educativo británico, así como su reputación e importancia a nivel internacional; se estudian, además, estadísticas acerca del existente mercado académico que se puede encontrar en países que pertenecen a la Commonwealth y se contrasta con el mercado académico que se ofrece dentro de la Unión Europea.

**Palabras clave:** Commonwealth, Unión Europea, Brexit, Sistema Educativo, Universidades, Erasmus.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Every principle has an end. Indeed. And so it happened with the British Empire that came to spread across the five continents. Without wishing to mention them all, there are countries like Canada, India, Australia, South Africa and a long etcetera that ranges from countless islands in the Atlantic – what we know today as the Caribbean –, to numerous countries of the African continent, all for not to mention enclaves of the Far East – Hong Kong – or of the Middle East – what today continue to be the troubled lands of Israel and Egypt. These colonial possessions all belong to the splendour of the power and glory of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, with Queen Victoria as Empress of India, who had a Viceroy until the mid-twentieth century, in the person of Lord Mountbatten, killed by the IRA in the 1970s. But that is yet another story.

Already in the twenty century, United Kingdom was getting ready to pass the baton of first world power to USA. Nevertheless, the force of foolishness, or the foolishness of force, got the world into a bloody war, First World War, that razed lots of countries. Only the United Kingdom had to pay the very high price of 6 million casualties.

During these years, in the rear, there were already altercations that claimed rights that nobody had ever claimed before. At that time, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. That occupation happened centuries before and had never been accepted by the Irish. Many of them, already in the nineteenth century had taken the road of the diaspora either to the United States or to neighbouring Scotland, where at least their rights were not trampled so flagrantly. After the war, two aspects were going to be put on the table: a general election to the Parliament of Westminster and the vindication of the female vote to participate in those elections. What interests us here is that the 76 deputies elected on the Isle of Ireland never sat in Westminster, and as an alternative, they did so in Dublin to find a way out that decades later, would lead to the independence of the Republic of Ireland. Negotiations between the Irish deputies were not simple. So much so, that led to a civil war: north, which claimed self-government but still linked to London; and the radicalism of the South that aspired to the proclamation of the republic.

The 1920s was a complicated stage: women claimed, as it could not be otherwise, a more preponderant role in British society; the trade unions, the so-called Trade Unions, reached more and more strength in the demand for labour rights that today would not be discussed; the Labour Party, hand in hand with the unions, was making its way into British politics,

although it was only a small government test that lasted nine months and literally beheaded the general strike of 1926.

The 1930s have two important points for the identity of the British people, although of very unequal importance: on the one hand, there was the threat of the National Socialist Party of Germany, headed by Adolf Hitler and, on the other, an issue that, for some people, may be of a minor character: in the year 1937, Edward VIII ascended to the throne. His relationship with a doubly divorced American exceeded the limit of what was politically correct in Britain at the time. The king was given a choice between the Crown and the woman he loved. He was succeeded on the throne by his brother George VI, father of the current monarch.

The Nazi threat did not wait. The United Kingdom, like practically all European countries, and later worldwide, had no alternative but to stop the feet of a monster. It is worth noting that in this Second World War the troops that belonged to the countries of the Empire still participated.

After the war, the British population was called to a general election. The victorious leader of the War, Winston Churchill, was defeated more by the draconian British electoral system than by the difference of votes with the winner, close to 1%. The mandate of the Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, helped the nation begin to look inside and gradually less to its outside. These were the years of the municipal housing plans, the timid establishment of the national health service and the implementation of an educational system that would be in force for decades.

British people pragmatism understood in 1951 that the reforms carried out by the Labours were enough (enough is enough) and that it was time that in those 1951 elections Winston Churchill was the winner.

For the issue at hand – Brexit and Commonwealth – we must point out that during the post-war Labour Government three important events were going to change the perspective of the United Kingdom and its role in the imperial policy that was beginning its end. In the words of British historians, the Empire was beginning to be dismantled. The first shock was caused by the loss of the jewel of the Crown – India – which in 1947 reached its independence. Two years later, 1949, the Republic of Ireland was proclaimed. If traumatic had been the loss of India, much more would the so-called "Partition of

Ireland" be: The South became a republic and the North, composed of 13 counties, continued to be part of the United Kingdom, which was no longer named United Kingdom. Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to clarify that its new name was United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Also in 1949 George VI, having heard the opinion of the Privy Council created the Commonwealth as a possible alternative to the British Empire. As will be seen throughout the work, the measure, which has been resurrected in the recent times of the Brexit, did not succeed and did not stop the bleeding of the gradual loss of practically the entire Empire.

The colonies scattered all over the world, little by little they were claiming their independence. The nations that had been the source of raw material were cutting the umbilical cord with the metropolis.

Strategic points such as the Suez Canal led to a warlike confrontation whose final result was the loss of control over it. This historical fact sheds good light on the absence of the United Kingdom in the Treaty of Rome (1957). It is true that the legend has repeatedly spread that General De Gaulle's animosity towards Churchill was the reason why the United Kingdom was left out. It was not so. Churchill was no longer Prime Minister. And the foreign policy of Great Britain was more aware of being able to overcome the War of the Suez Canal than to join, along with the other six European countries, the Treaty of Rome.

Both during the 1950s and 1960s, the successive governments of London and the population in general, were assimilating that the Empire was lost and that there was no alternative but to link to the European Economic Community, by elementary geographical sense of its location. In this presentation it is worth remembering certain decisions that the Government of London took wrongly. We understand that, for historical reasons, these are details that at the present time they want to ignore. Thus, the population of the colonies that became independent were given the possibility of obtaining what was cynically called "British First Class Nationality". In these provisions, and not in the arguments presented decades later by the Brexit advocates, we find the reason for the significant number of emigrants who in some cases today are in second and third generation.

The loss of the Empire, then, meant an absence of resources and a forced industrial reorientation of the country. At that time of the late 1950s and all of 1960 belong the

young people who came to be called "Angry Young Men". Heavy industry received fewer requests from ships and railways; the mining industry gradually began to shrink. And, above all, the population was disoriented by the loss of the status of reference country to become a country located in Europe.

The arrival of the 1970s also led to entry into the European Economic Community. And interestingly he did it in the hands of a conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath. We will not be surprised that in 1973 the United Kingdom joined along the Republic of Ireland. As we will refer in our work, the referendum that sanctioned entry into the European Communities obtained a clear victory of 67%.

The inexplicable, at times, of political evolution, caused the Conservative Party to lose the 1974 elections and to return to power the Labour Party that had already occupied the number 10 of Downing Street from 1964 to 1970. Edward Heath, in 1976 at the Congress of the Conservative Party was defeated by the imprint of a woman: Margaret Thatcher. The Labour Government, which lacked an absolute majority, lost the confidence of the Parliament and in 1978 elections were held and were won by the new conservative leader.

In 1982, generated by the Argentine dictatorship, presided by General Galtieri, to save more a domestic crisis than an international claim, the Falklands war broke out. The victory was sung in favour of the United Kingdom, which had the valuable support of the White House tenant, Ronald Reagan. Margaret Thatcher immediately called new general elections where she obtained a very large absolute majority. At this point it is worth remembering that for the election campaign Thatcher insisted on two points that give meaning to both the Brexit and the Commonwealth: the recovery of "the Honour, the Power and the Glory of the British Empire" and the return to the "Victorian Values".

The decade of 1980 sought a substantial growth in the number of countries that were incorporated into the European Economic Community, including Spain. The EU authorities understood that a new orientation should be given to what would end up being the European Union, especially taking into account the political and economic changes in the countries of Eastern Europe. In the final years of the 1980s, there were movements in favour of a European Commission with more powers, a European Bank that would manage a common currency (the ECU that would later become the Euro), a European Parliament that could make binding decisions to the member countries and a European

Court of Justice that will order decisions of obligatory compliance on the part of the member countries.

Margaret Thatcher understood that it was a full-fledged surrender and that what was involved was the handing over of executive, legislative and judicial powers to the European authorities and institutions. The crisis between Great Britain and the European countries was served. And the resignation to her post of Prime Minister also. A "provisional" successor was John Major who simply followed Thatcher's line only with greater caution.

In 1996 Tony Blair won the elections, invoking a so-called "New Labour" that kept him in power until 2008 when he was succeeded by his Minister of Economy, Gordon Brown. Labours did not want to know anything about the common currency, the Euro, and they got out of it with the indefinite promise that in later years they would hold a referendum. Of such a referendum never again spoke.

In 2010, after a long period of 14 years of Labourism, the general election would be won by the Conservative leader, David Cameron. For the first time in history, the electoral results granted an insufficient victory to a political party that needed to build a governing coalition. That support was given to them by the Liberal Democrats, the result of a Labour split with the old Liberal Party. It is necessary remembering that a good number of conservative parliamentarians have always been Eurosceptic. In any case, it was always considered that the entry into the then European Economic Community was a lesser evil, but an evil, in short. The pro-European vocation of the Liberal Democrats made the Eurosceptic fever of the conservatives not come to the surface in a shameless way.

However, back in 1999 Wales and Scotland had received what was called "devolution of powers": it was nothing more than the opening of a Parliament in Scotland and an Assembly in Wales together with a government. In 2014 by an agreement signed between the Government of London and the one of Edinburgh a referendum for the independence of Scotland was summoned, although the form of State would continue being the Parliamentary Monarchy. On September 19, 2014 the result of the referendum was a no to independence. In any case, the Prime Minister had saved his face and presented the aforementioned referendum as a personal victory.

Within the ranks of the Conservative Party something important was being cooked by the group of so-called Euro sceptics. Timidly first and then rapidly, the Euro sceptics, although not all, were leaving the conservative ranks to form the UKIP (United Kingdom Independent Party). In 2015, in the European elections they became the first party of Great Britain in number of MEPs. Since the general elections were about to be called, David Cameron promised his conservative Euro sceptics that, if they won the general election, they would call a referendum which has since been called Brexit. Curiously, the Prime Minister's hope was winning the elections but, as had happened in the previous call, with insufficient majority. The result would force him to weave an electoral coalition again with the Liberal Democrats, willing to break the government agreement if the aforementioned referendum was called. David Cameron, whose first mistake was to appropriate the victory in the Scottish referendum (the main figures who defended the status quo of Scotland in the United Kingdom were the Liberal Democrats and especially Labour), he confided his fate to two possibilities: first to the coalition government that wouldn't allow him to call the referendum and the second to that, if convened, as had already happened with the Scottish government, he would also win this second. The promise had effects: the drip of Euro sceptics stopped; but he made a mistake in the first and second premises that we have just indicated. The constitution of a government electoral coalition was not necessary because the conservatives won the election by an absolute majority; in addition, the Liberal Democrats suffered a humiliating defeat for which the 57 parliamentarians of 2010 became 7 of 2015. Thus, David Cameron was forced to call the Brexit referendum scheduled for June 23, 2016. The Conservative Party, because of its leader, left free way for Tories politicians to campaign on demand; In other words, scarcely academic: everyone did what they wanted. The votes of the urbanite, professional and trained United Kingdom voted mostly to stay in Europe. It is worth highlighting the case of Northern Ireland and Scotland, where the general vote was in favour of permanence. Rural England, scarcely educated and of mature age, believed itself to be the ideology sold by the supporters of Brexit: the UK's contribution to the European Union would serve to have a higher quality health service; the abandonment of Europe would imply the arrest of the immigration of the EU nationals coming, above all, from the former Eastern European countries (Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, etc.).

Unexpectedly the Brexit emerged victorious. David Cameron, as is tradition in British politics, resigned the next day. On March 29, 2017, the British Ambassador to the

European Union presented the letter notifying that Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon was being implemented. Since then, the negotiations are absolutely deadlocked. There is not yet a single document in which both parties (British and European) agree. The negotiations, at least in theory, must be completed by March 29, 2019, having agreed a transition period that will end in December 2020. The pitfalls that led to Brexit could not be avoided. On the one hand there is the bill that the government of London must pay and that the European Union figures at 100 billion euros; In terms of immigration, what it seemed to be is no longer: a good part of European immigrants are qualified professionals who, should they be expelled, would not find a replacement in the British autochthonous population; the juridical axiom that "the one who obligates himself, obligated remains" makes that a good part of the orders issued by the European Court of Justice cannot have an immediate disconnection. In other words, as regards Brexit, the situation is, in practice, exactly the same as the day after the referendum was held.

On the other hand, we must stop, at least for a moment, in a reflection on the events, fundamentally political, that await the United Kingdom. As we know, the Conservative Party enjoys the parliamentary support of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). In this regard both in the Republic of Ireland and the Northern Irish party cited want to continue enjoying a weak border to not have a strong, which is the approach of the European Union. The loss of support from this party and the adverse results that the Conservative Party can reap in partial elections (by-elections) can cause either the opposition, or the conservative party in power, with Theresa May in Downing Street to conclude this parliamentary term and we were again face to face a general election (remember that the last took place on June 8, 2017). As if this confusion was not enough, the Government of Edinburgh seems to be studying the possibility of convening a second independence referendum.

But let's retrace our steps. When the Commonwealth was created in 1949, it was done trying to stop the independence wave of all the colonies. The play went awry, but, as we have said, supporters of Brexit (do not forget that some of the most outstanding figures belong to the current British Government) handled the advertising claim that a good exit for the United Kingdom, once abandoned Europe, would be the more than 50 countries that make up the Commonwealth, by the way, at present and from a very recent date presided over by the Prince of Wales, heir of the Crown, and no longer by the Queen.

This sense in favour of a Commonwealth as a way out of the European Union has an educational aspect, fundamentally at a tertiary level, higher education, which is presented to us as an engine of the British universities and which, as we have already indicated, with a certain dose of reason.

Namely: most Commonwealth countries use the English language as a vehicular in the State Administration and in the Higher Education System. As Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a decision was made to unify higher education institutions. In this way, the numerous polytechnics became universities. Likewise, in the university sphere the idea was introduced, which is mandatory, that all higher education institutions should work and function as if they were productive enterprises.

Despite the fact that the lines that follow may be or seem inconvenient and, in any case, politically incorrect, the British universities handle a reality for them incontestable and for me refutable, given my degree studies in International Trade. Both the professors and the British university authorities have always handled the idea that European university students lack a sufficiently good command of the four skills in English, so, they understand, communication is certainly impossible. Whatever it is, British universities on the one hand and potential university students from Commonwealth countries understand that these young people do not suffer from this problem. In first place, because the countries of monolingualism in English are alien to such a doubt and, secondly, because those from countries where education is taught in English feel comfortable in the language.

The international programs, but mainly those of European creation, ERASMUS, have never been welcomed with enthusiasm in British educational institutions. Although it is not the opportune case, I myself could attest to the scarcity of exchanges with British universities and ours. But, in addition, we must not forget the consideration made above: The British university must meet an income statement. Nobody better than the university students from the Commonwealth who are reserved for admission percentages and who attend universities in the United Kingdom not for an annual stay but to study the relevant undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Without going into details: take the example of an American student, who does not belong to a Commonwealth country. With the \$ 32,000 average you must pay for your tuition at an American university, about three academic courses are paid in Great Britain. And if we specify, in more than a dozen

Scottish universities, where national and European students do not pay tuition, the entry of Commonwealth students keeps the number of university students, increases the percentage of international students and throws higher income in the account of results. Regardless of whether we objectively recognize that Commonwealth students belong to the highest classes of the society from which they come, it is no less true that the Commonwealth has an educational policy on scholarships that makes it possible access to British universities for students from the most disadvantaged classes.

The British universities, it must be recognized, do not lose sight of the European students who are preparing to take short stays, but mainly for the learning of the English language. With them they also safeguard the internationality of those who study in their classrooms. But that would be insufficient. The facilities of students from the Commonwealth, in terms of visas and immigration, are much higher than what is included in the different negotiating drafts between the United Kingdom and Europe regarding university students. For now, give us an example: some draft has gone so far as to say that the European university student at the conclusion of his studies, will necessarily have to return to his country of origin. It would remain in the air an extension of residence in the matter of postgraduate studies or of possible search of a work, that would be forbidden to them. Commonwealth students have superior immigration rights for historical, if not economic, reasons.

Perhaps, and only perhaps, is true that phrase traditionally attributed to British governments: "Her Majesty's governments have no friends or enemies; just interests."

### **3. GOALS**

The main objective of this work is to analyse British higher education as a way to resuscitate the old British Empire, and its special relevance if Brexit were to finally occur.

The development of the work is divided into three main points:

1. To carry out this analysis it is vital to start from a historical development. It is necessary to explain the history of the end of the British Empire, as well as the creation of the Commonwealth to understand the current relationship with its member countries. In first place, we have exposed a development of the history of the fall of the British Empire, with a general vision of it and going through different key points such as the case of Ireland, the case of India or the return to power of Churchill among others; until the creation of the Commonwealth that supposes a search of union between the old British colonies after the loss of these territories.
2. It is also convenient to explain the relationship that the United Kingdom has maintained with the European Union since the beginning of this, because this is the only way to understand, together with the history of the British Empire, the Brexit and its reasons for being, in order to analyse a whole timeline. In this way, we have made an explanation of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, including an exposition of several topics that have been considered vital for understanding the current situation, such as the creation of NATO in 1949, the Margaret Thatcher government and entry into the European Economic Area, and passing through the special case of Scotland. All this leads to the mention of Brexit from its approach to the current situation of it.
3. The central axis of the work is none other than the resurrection of the British Empire under the guise of Commonwealth, and its potential value if the Brexit were to become definitively effective. All focused on higher education seen as a company that generates money, benefits. For these reasons, we have created a series of sub points that we have considered necessary to understand why universities are seen as companies: explanation of the British educational system focused on higher education and its consequent crisis, the mention of financing

and conflicts generated by this. It has also been considered interesting to mention the two most prestigious Universities of the world, Oxford and Cambridge, speaking of their history and their international approach.

All this leads us to talk about international students as a potential market and its consequent economic impact, contrasting the number of students belonging to European programs with the number of students coming to the United Kingdom from different countries (most Commonwealth members) to complete their training

In addition to the historical analysis, totally necessary to understand the conclusions, an analysis of statistical data has been carried out, because without them the essay would lack demonstrable empirical facts and would not be sustained except but suppositions. These data offered through graphics, are developed in textual form and offer a numerical view of what is intended to be demonstrated throughout the essay.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

The work that we propose to carry out is a study, with certain variations similar to an infantry attack: why, by whom, for what, where, how and when. Throughout our study we will try to give answers to these six points that will lead us to some conclusions. Unfortunately, over time, we are facing social, political, economic and academic events that, taking into account their proximity to the present are not closed concepts and some, as will be seen, are still more in the field of speculation than of fact cash.

The six questions that this work raises deserve a clear answer that, as we commented sometimes is difficult to find.

- The United Kingdom, for several centuries, but especially in the nineteenth century, was the first world power and its power spread throughout the world. Already in the twentieth century Britain passed the baton to the United States and, hit by the world wars, had to think of a different future for the nation.
- The loss of the Empire led the British authorities to seek accommodation in the then European Economic Community. The growth in the number of members, the strengthening of institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice, the European Commission and the Council of Europe made the London Government realize that belonging to a European entity entailed loss of sovereignty and a more collegial approach to speak, on equal terms, with the United States and China as an emerging power.
- As the colonies became independent, both the British Crown and the Government devised the creation of the Commonwealth that, in short, tried if not to maintain, at least recreate a kind of new British Empire supported by old cultural and economic ties that they had shared for centuries.
- The discomfort of some within the European Union led to the Prime Minister Cameron calling an exit referendum: Brexit. And against all odds the supporters of leaving the European institutions won the battle. It was said over and over again that European immigration is the one that generates unemployment in the United Kingdom; that the Commonwealth created can be an escape because many of its countries are still in a frank process of development.
- One of the most important points is that which refers to the academic world and, specifically, to the higher education segment. The supporters of Brexit, as well as

a good part of the British universities, understand that there are still more union links with the more than 50 countries that belong to the Commonwealth than with the diversity of European nations.

- The degree in International Trade entails a mastery of import and export and, although it may seem strange, one of the fundamental pillars is based on higher education.
- Our own experience throughout the undergraduate studies, whose curriculum states the minimum stay of one semester in a European university mandatory, presented a reality for which, at that time, we did not have an answer: while accessing a German, French or Italian university, just to name the three largest countries in the European Union, is fairly possible, access to British universities is something that is almost impossible. Immediately we were asked the question: with the United Kingdom being one of the four great nations of Europe, how is it understood that the number of ERASMUS + program destinations is even lower than the places offered in other smaller countries of the European Union?
- With all these questions raised, Brexit effect showed a clear reality over the last decades and is contrasted by the figures of foreign students officially recognized by the competent agencies: British university prefers undergraduate and graduate students to start and finish their studies in them, paying the rates that turns them into a one more productive company.

A good part of all this data will be collected in our essay. But there are others that today belong to the world of mere speculation. Although they must be analysed to the extent to which the unknowns that the United Kingdom has raised by the Brexit can be cleared.

No one today knows in what the United Kingdom - European Union negotiation process will end. Thus, European immigration does not turn out to be as simple as the Euro sceptics posed. In most cases, these are human resources of high academic preparation for which the British natives do not have spare parts.

The negotiation entails an uncertainty coming from the invoice that the United Kingdom will have to pay if, finally, it leaves the European Union. For now, something is clear: the deadlines for disconnection (March 29, 2019) have been extended, through a transition period, until December 2020.

Will the conservative government, currently in power, be the one to carry out all the negotiations? Will the Prime Minister remain in power, given her meagre majority, until December 2020? And in the event that the government falls, who will be the new Prime Minister? Will new general elections be called and, in that case, what government will come out of the polls? If a new government were to be given, would this continue with the negotiations? Would the few negotiations that were made be annulled and would there be a second referendum that, in the opinion of political scientists, is possible that the final result was opposite to the first?

Two positions are clear: the supporters of a continuity in the European Union that simply intend to remain in the same as to date have done for 45 years. Euro sceptics who are determined to leave the European Union in any of the cases; including the lack of agreement. And for the survival of the United Kingdom they maintain that the alternative at all levels is within a restructured Commonwealth and that, of life, with the modifications that are necessary to a new British Empire in which education, but above all the superior, open the way to a new superstructure based in the United Kingdom and on which the future of the entire Commonwealth would revolve.

The data that our study intends to collect will try to run through the investigation of what is true in this proposal. From the start we have our own experience: the undeniable reality that British universities prefer permanent students, fluent in English, generators of economy and possible links of union between companies in the United Kingdom and the rest of the Commonwealth countries; from the United Kingdom and China; and from the United Kingdom and the United States.

The critics with Brexit affirm, and we are not very far from them, that the United Kingdom with Brexit initiated an unnecessary problem and that now does not know how to leave if it is not through the old recipe to resurrect the British Empire that gave so many fruits in the nineteenth century but today is manifested as a clear enigma.

After all, John Henry's words, Cardinal Newman, may still be in force: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt." Time will not take long if this illustrious Oxford professor is still right.

## 5. HISTORY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

### 5.1. EMPIRE: GENERAL VISION

It was in 1750 when what today we know as Second British Empire was born. We will deal with this era due to the fact that it was at this time when Great Britain started its biggest expansion alongside world map.

This decade is surrounded by conquests and ambition for being the biggest known power. But not only was this period an important fact for Great Britain but for the territories they conquered. Great Britain reached a favourable position due to the expansion they got but this time was also followed by a huge number of losses.

What it is left today of the British Empire it's a small portion of what it was but its legacy is still alive.

### 5.2. THE SENSE OF COMMONWEALTH

Great Britain was a huge potency in the late XVIIIs, as important as France or Russia at that moment. It was also one of the principal countries. Empire grow due to territory and economic issues. All this expansion was linked to the development of a modern and capitalist Great Britain. F.H. Hinsley explained:

“In the nineteenth century [...] the expansion of territory and... the seizure of colonies was a natural, not to say unavoidable, objective of the basic urge to power. Imperialism in the nineteenth century was not the necessary outcome of capitalism but the natural expression of power in the condition of the time.”  
(Hyam, 2002)

The growth of Great Britain as an Empire supposed the creation of several “Imperial Commitments” in different territories. This Imperial Commitments were created to ensure the protection of the Empire and to justify its presence in those areas. Nevertheless, those commitments tended to create more problems than to benefit the Empire. Moreover, Great Britain development as “colonial ruler” ended up in the creation of political and constitutional bonds between colonized and colonizer.

Empire expansion biased in British culture, and not only the culture was influenced but also the world vision British citizens had. (Porter & Low, 1998)

We define Commonwealth as an ex-colonial association that has a sense of union based on fundamental freedoms, trade, financial aids, investment and economic cooperation. (John, 2001)

### **5.3. EMPIRE TO COMMONWEALTH: HISTORY**

Throughout George I and George II kingdoms (1714-1760), power was on Whig<sup>1</sup> hands. Sir Robert Walpole favoured Britain colonial expansion. In 1763 British Empire was expanded around three different main lands: America, Africa and Asia. The expansion in America was restrained due to the Thirteen American colonies' insurgency in 1776, nevertheless they maintained sovereignty in Canada.

Industrial Revolution encouraged international trade, so Great Britain dominated the European market and after, colonial's market. This led to an economic prosperity which in turn fostered population growth. Overpopulation resulted in cheap labour in factories and settlers in the new Empire territories. (Editorial Planeta, 2006)

After French Revolution there was an economic blockade against England and thus, economic blockade against France. In 1815 took place the Congress of Vienna that put an end to 21 years of war against France and the result was a British triumph. England saw herself in a less advantage economic situation after the conflict because its industry lost positions. Some countries had started their own industrialization while the conflict was taken place.

Australia and New Zealand (1786) replaced the loss of the American colonies. These new colonies were populated with free citizens. This was not the case of Ireland due to the catholic discrimination. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1801, its denomination changed to United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> "A member of the British reforming and constitutional party that sought the supremacy of Parliament and was eventually succeeded in the 19th century by the Liberal Party." ('Oxford Dictionaries', 2018)

In 1825 with the opening of the first railway, Second Industrial Revolution was born. It led out to labour union creation, as Trade Union. In 1833 slavery was abolished in colonies.

Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837. During her reign (1837-1901) United Kingdom consolidated as the first economic and military potency in the world. The colonial expansion fostered English as the international language par excellence; and industrialization ensured United Kingdom world hegemony along nineteenth century. The world hegemony was strengthened by the sign of free trade commercial agreements. During the second half of the nineteenth century, also known as Victorian Era, free trade and liberalism were replaced by conservatism, protectionism and imperialism. At the end of the century in the course of the major imperialism expansion, United Kingdom broadened its colonial dominions and imposed its interests over those of their competitors. At this period, they owned one quarter of earth's surface. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Most of the annexed territories were in Africa or in the Mediterranean route to India: Suez Canal (1882), Cyprus (1878), Egypt (1882) and large part of Oriental Africa (the Empire was uninterrupted from Egypt to South Africa). In 1902, United Kingdom dominated a riot in South Africa. It was held by Dutch colonists (Boers) who tried to create an independent state. Oil fields discovery in Near East was the reason for United Kingdom to firmly settle down in the region, thus controlling Persian Gulf.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the new German Empire turned into a major industrial and military power. This threatened the British hegemony. Due to this matter, United Kingdom modified its international politics in the early twentieth century: as they couldn't maintain the isolation of the past century, they teamed up with Japan in 1902. This joint was born to stem the progress of Russia in Asia. In addition, United Kingdom started to be closer to France (1904) and Russia (1907) to face Germany. When First World War (1914) erupted, they joint Russia and France. First World War supposed a huge military effort to United Kingdom. Peace Treaties (1919-1920) neutralized German threat and supposed a territorial increase for the British empire. They gained a major part of German colonies and control over the strategic territories of the Near East (Iraq, Jordan and Palestine). First World War also supposed the emergence of three new economic and

military powers. Those new powers would undermine British world hegemony in the next decades and they were: United States of America, Japan and USSR. (Editorial Planeta, 2006).

This year, 2018, Europe commemorates the centenary of the end of First World War.

Henceforth 1867, United Kingdom had granted self-governance to Canada. This was extended to Australia (1901), New Zealand (1907) and South Africa (1909). They started to be named “dominions” and ever since they were almost independent inside Commonwealth, with a sovereign from United Kingdom as the Head of State.

After the secession of a major portion of Ireland except for Northern Ireland, in 1922 it became United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The Statute of Westminster (1931) converted dominions into totally independent states with a common sovereign. Independence was granted to Egypt in 1922 and to Iraq in 1932, but United Kingdom maintained economic and strategic control over them. After Second World War (1945), United Kingdom had reached victory but it had also lost its global supremacy nature. Independence demands in the colonies started to proliferate. At the beginning, Great Britain attempted to maintain its empire but they ended up adapting more flexible policies. They accepted the end of the colonial relationship, seeking to maintain economic and cultural bonds with the new independent countries. (Editorial Planeta, 2006)

It was in 1949, while George VI kingdom, when British Empire gave birth to the concept of Commonwealth.

Since the end of the fifties and in coincidence with the loss of the empire, a process of economic decadence was born.

Nowadays, every state wants to be a member of the Commonwealth. The reason for this to happen is that it offers a sense of security to small nations. There is no longer bitterness against the colonial past of Great Britain. (John, 2001).

Talking in numbers, the Commonwealth is formed currently by fifty-three countries. (The Commonwealth, 2018)

Since April 2018, the head of Commonwealth is Prince Charles II and no longer Her Majesty the Queen.

#### **5.4. IRELAND**

Ireland was one of the main problems for the British. For the Irish, English's aim was maintaining Imperial power and refuse giving Ireland its independency. The major fact was situated in Northern Ireland, the Ulster: they wanted a different relationship with England and so, a different solution to the Anglo-Irish confrontations. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Ireland was a British colonial since 1171, but Great Britain couldn't dominate it completely. In 1918, "Sinn Fein" achieved majority in Dublin's Parliament. Since this very moment, there was a situation of political instability and this led to armed conflict. The sixth of December 1921, British Government had to recognized the Free State of Ireland, not including Northern Ireland.

A fraction of IRA, headed by Eamon De Valera, opposed to island partition but conservative govern of M. Collins and A. Griffith accepted the treaty conditions of United Kingdom. A brief civil war (1922-1923) happened and ended with the conservative conciliate politic consolidation. Ireland was governed till 1932 by W.T. Cosgrave, when De Valera relegated him with "Fianna Fail". In 1949, Eire (Republic of Ireland) left Commonwealth and reached total independency. (Moussaoui, 2012)

Discriminations happened in Ulster against the catholic minority and this led to tensions. Those tensions were specially worrying as of 1966 and they ended up in violent conflict. The so called "Bloody Sunday" happened the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972: British government shot against some protestors. Consequence of this was the "Direct Rule", direct govern from London which didn't help to pacify the country. In 1973, Northern Ireland certificate of incorporation was approved by plebiscite; this confirmed Northern Ireland permanency in United Kingdom and a shared govern. Nevertheless, some discrepancies appeared within the elected cabinet and this provoked assembly dissolution and the reinstatement of direct govern from London. (Sulutvedt, 2002)

IRA (Irish Republic Army) was born in 1920 as an Irish terrorist organization, just after the Govern of Ireland Act presentation. Its aim was to unify Northern Ireland with Eire. IRA was the “Sinn Fein” military arm and was declared illegal in 1939. In 1969 was split in two strands:

1. Official arm with political nature.
2. Armed arm, known as the Provisionals.

In 1976 and forward, elections were celebrated almost every year and an alternance of parties happened in the govern. All this supposed low stability to the country. Terrorist attacks happened against English contingency in Ulster and in British territory.

In 1993, British govern offered a project of peace: Downing Street Declaration. It was accepted in 1994 but IRA broke the truce in 1996. In 1998, Sinn Fein supported Stormont Peace Agreements. Those Agreements stated that Ireland renounced Northern Ireland shires claim and United Kingdom accepted an eventual reunification of Irish territories by democratic ways; moreover, nor-Irish self-governance would be re-establishing, general disarming of paramilitary groups would take place as British army withdrawal. IRA accepted foreign inspectors’ supervision of their disarming. In 2001, Ireland was one of the European Union countries that changed its national coin for Euro. In 2002 IRA announced its dissolution and in 2005 the dropout of armed struggle.

(Editorial Planeta, 2006c)

### **5.5. 1947: INDIA AND PALESTINE**

In 1945, Great Britain was one of the most powerful countries in the world. Second World War left the country more over-extended than in 1918; it was also weaker economically. Exports had fallen two-thirds and Great Britain was facing a “financial Dunkirk” as Keynes said. (Read, 2012)

Meanwhile there was a concern about India and Palestine. Finance cost of maintaining them was constantly raising. It was needed to sum to this a moral cost because of repression. All those facts were found untenable and appalling to the “Liberal England”.

Nevertheless, the most important aspect was that India and Palestine were no longer vital economically. Fabric exports to India had diminished since First World War; they were replaced by imports from Japan or national commerce. In other words, they had turned into a very expensive luxury. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

There were only a few defenders, as Churchill, with a romantic idea of the Empire who refused to give India and Palestine the “dominion” status. New Labour Government did sympathise with the idea of an independent India.

There was a religious problem between Hindus and Muslims. Hindus looked for Congress Party control under Gandhi and Nehru mandate; they wanted, as Labour Party, maintain unity in an independent India. Muslims, conversely, asked for the separation of Pakistan. After regional elections in 1946, differences between both of them was clear. Those differences resulted in violence: lots died in Calcutta in August 1946. Civil war was possible and Great Britain would be in the middle of it. In August 1947 took place the end of the British Raj in India (1858-1947). Partition and independence was followed by cruelties, in between 250,000 and 1 million people died. Given religious tensions, violence was unavoidable but it is argued if it could have been less intense if Great Britain had acted before. However, there was no hostility against Great Britain. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

India was the only “Third World” country established as a democracy. First President of Republic of India, Dr. Rajendra Praed expressed:

“Our achievement [...] is the consummation and fulfilment of the historic traditions and democratic ideals of the British.” (Pandey, 1979, p. 219)

Even though the atrocities that set British exit of India, it was seen as major accomplishment of Labour Government.

Palestine withdrawal was anything but success and its consequences have cursed the world for forty years. This was because of tensions between Arabs and Jewish. At the end of 1939, an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine was taken place. This caused law and order problems. Great Britain wanted to move away as soon as possible because they

were in the middle of an impossible situation. They wanted to sustain friendship with Arabs regimes of Iraq, Saudi Arab and Egypt, they also wanted to keep Palestine to use it as military base in the Middle East; but USA tended to favour Jewish, as Jewish voting power was huge in New York. USA pushed Great Britain to accept more Jewish in Palestine. At the beginning, this was not a problem for Great Britain but after the terrorist attacks executed by Jewish in Palestine, Great Britain decided to leave Palestine in 1947. The problem was delegated to United Nations who voted the partition of Palestine. Great Britain abstained in the vote and refused to cooperate, as they were aware of the situation. In May 1947, British mandate in Palestine ended and the Jewish proclaimed the State of Israel, this was the signal for the first Arab-Israeli war. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Despite India's independence, there was no intention of tearing the whole empire down. Maintaining British presence in the Middle East was highlighted because of its strategic importance.

At this point, Empire had not come to an end; but the end was near.

### **5.6. CHURCHILL IS BACK (1951)**

Churchill's return to power supposed a threat for Labour Party. New Tory Administration had backups about nationalization, moreover they turned down last governments' policies: they privatized metallurgic industry and road transport. Other policies that they applied could also had been applied by Labour Party. Churchill conformed its ministers' team with ministers from the middle and the left of the party. Churchill's first petition was 20% cut in ministers' salaries and 30% salary cut to himself. This policy set a precedent for Margaret Thatcher. Conservatives had inherited a shaky economic situation. This situation got Labour Party confronted along its last government days. The delicate situation could be easily observed on the surface: a spiral deficit was happened in balance payments, approaching £700 M. Against this background, Churchill imposed: credit reduction, imports cut down, demined govern food subsidies and drastically reduced travel aids. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

The so-called Robot Plan was implemented to work on pound convertibility. Butler incremented exchange rates from 2% to 4%. This way he reduced demand. Korean War end and general happiness return influenced to change the situation as well.

In 1952, George VI died and in 1953 Queen Elizabeth was crowned. New Elizabethan Era looked like bringing some prosperity but government knew that it should look like The Crown was doing something. Population expected more than austerity.

It was also decided to construct H-Bomb. This ensure Britain to be part of the first division of powers (along USA and USSR). Great Britain did join two anti-communist associations: Treaty Organization, in 1955 along South-East Asia; and CENTO<sup>2</sup>. (John, 2001)

A token economy happened in government: official cars were reduced from 722 to 444; civil service also suffered cuts to its staff of £25,640. This “economize” need was diminished in the second year of govern: they earn benefits and renewed economic trust. Most memorable Tories’ measure was launched by Harold Macmillan, it was about housing: he promised 300,000 houses. In 1953, 327,000 houses were built; and in 1954, 354,000 houses were built. Furthermore, he incremented housing allowance from 22 to 35£ per house. He also pursued an active policy encouraging mortgage loans grant. “New Towns” was completed, as well as some electorate requirements. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

In 1955, social benefits were marginally more, in real terms, than in 1951. This was another indicator of Tories turning Labour’s welfare state down.

Churchill priorities were:

“Houses, meat and not being scuppered” (Addison, 2005)

His govern was known as “Indian Summer”. Lots of things hadn’t been touched. Education could have been improved more than it actually was, and same thing happened with Unions’ legislation. Immigration was one of the problems the govern had to face: at the end of 1950, there were around 26,000 migrants per year from West India to Great Britain. Its arrival made difficult to achieved full employment. Nevertheless, no measure

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<sup>2</sup> “Central Treaty Organization” Mutual security organization dating from 1955 to 1979 and composed of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. (‘Oxford Dictionaries’, 2018)

was implemented. Regarding Health Service, some measures were taken such as increment of recipes' cost from 2 to 10 pens.

Mixture of inactivity, good luck and maintaining confrontations to its minimum made Conservatives reach 1954 at the top of a prosper country. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Churchill retired in April 1955, letting door open to Anthony Eden, who had been Foreign Minister. Eden's priority was organizing the Party for elections and choosing a date for them: 26<sup>th</sup> May. They won with a 54 seats majority. It was the first time in 90 years in which a Party improved its situation in comparison to the previous elections. Eden's mandate was brief, 1955 to 1957, with Suez Canal disaster.

### **5.6.1. Suez Canal**

Churchill considered maintaining power over Suez Canal of major interest. It was a strategic point for the navy, air force and army. In 1955, Churchill retired and Eden was the one to step in. There were strong indications of weakness in Eden and in Great Britain international position. (John, 2001)

Colonel Gamal Abdal Nasser was the new Egyptian Leader. He was an Arab nationalist and pretty much bitter against the old British imperialist power and its continuous call for supremacy in the Middle East. He did deny to join CENTO and incentivised other Arab states to deny joining it as well. Eden travelled to Egypt and tried to persuade Nasser to join CENTO. Visit was not successful, Nasser kept on playing the "anti-colonial" role. Nasser bought arms to Russia and Czechoslovakia, he also encouraged Egypt against Occident. Eden tried to convinced him with British aids to Aswan Dam construction but he drastically changed his opinion when its commandant in Jordan was fired. Eden blamed on Nasser this event. Hence, Eden pushed USA who was already in the game once Nasser recognized the communist China. USA allied with Great Britain. Russia couldn't participate and it seemed that Nasser was about to be humiliated. In response to this, Nasser announced Suez Canal nationalization, in other words, he decided kicking away Occident. Some Arab countries encouraged Eden to beat Nasser harder: plans changed to military intervention, known as "Operation Musketeer"<sup>3</sup>. Great Britain

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<sup>3</sup> "Operation Musketeer was the Anglo-French plan for the invasion of the Suez Canal in 1956." (Royal Marines Association, 2018)

decided urging France to participate in it, as long as they were one of the main concerned by nationalization. France did also have conflict with Nasser because he supported terrorism in French Algeria. USA and the Dulles preferred avoiding conflict, they hoped for a change in Egypt govern during elections. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

A deal was reached between France and Israel. Israel moved to Egypt. United Nations asked for a ceasefire. Decision was taken just one day after British forces arrived in. All this supposed a disaster for many reasons:

- Alliance with Israel did not like in Middle East.
- Nasser was seen as a Third World celebrity.
- Middle East British friends were displeased; British enemies saw themselves stronger.
- Russia allied with Egypt.

Suez Canal disaster symbolized Great Britain downfall; Eden resigned.

### **5.7. 50s AND 60s INDEPENDENCIES**

During the 50s and 60s, Great Britain suffered a period of decolonization:

- 1947: India and Pakistan.
- 1948: Palestine, Burma and Ceylon. After them, Sri Lanka.
- 1956: Suez's crisis. This was the evidence of the end of world British army power. It also accelerated decolonization process.
- 1957: Ghana and Malaysia.
- 1960: Cyprus and Nigeria.
- 1961: Sierra Leone and Tanganyika.
- 1962: Uganda.
- 1963: Kenya.
- 1964: Zambia and Malawi.
- 1965: Malta.

(Editorial Planeta, 2006)

All of them remained in the Commonwealth.

## 5.8. SOUTH AFRICA

Great Britain arrived in South Africa with the excuse of suppressing a Boer riot against Dutch East India Company. British occupied the Cape region in 1795 and instituted a colonial regime there. Tensions happened between Boers and British and after several riot attempts, Boers emigrated to the North in 1837. They set between Orange and Vaal rivers; another group set in the oriental coast, establishing a Republic in 1849: Natal.

Natal was invaded by British army in 1842. This made Boers moved to the other side of the Vaal river. In 1852, British recognized Transvaal Federation and two years after, Autonomy to the territories situated at south of the Vaal: Orange Free State. In 1856, Boers republics allied in a federal state: Republic of South Africa. This was considered as an infringement of others conventions by the British. Conversely, British discovered a diamond and gold deposit. This incremented British pressing and Orange had to cede part of its territories. British also imposed a protectorate over Sotho and Swazi territory. In 1872, Cape colony obtained British government autonomy. (Editorial Planeta, 2006d)

Cecil Rhodes<sup>4</sup> ensured to British mining monopoly over the regions situated in the North, called by them Rhodesia. In 1877, Transvaal annexation was proclaimed. Boers rebelled because of this and British were defeated. British had to recognize Republic of South Africa independency once again. Nevertheless, gold deposit discovery in Witwatersrand and new miner town appearance in 1886, Johannesburg, attracted the British again.

In the 80s, two developments provoked more tensions and turned Gladstonian establishment into something unacceptable for the British:

1. A group of Britons settled down in Transvaal looking for fortune. They were quite different to the Dutch farmers who had hardly changed since nineteenth century. This situation was seen with hope and concern by the British government of London and of Cape for two reasons:
  - This numerous group of new rich, the Britons, could transform Transvaal into the economic heart of South Africa while it wasn't under British

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<sup>4</sup> “British-born South African statesman, prime minister of Cape Colony 1890–6; full name Cecil John Rhodes. He expanded British territory in southern Africa, annexing Bechuanaland (now Botswana) in 1884 and developing Rhodesia from 1889. By 1890 he had acquired 90 per cent of the world's production of diamonds.” (‘Oxford Dictionaries’, 2018)

control. It worried even more because of the possibility of them developing links with the rest of the world.

- Increasing non-Dutch population could bring up a peaceful solution: they could take Transvaal control from inside and federate with the British Empire.

In the 90s, this matter was still uncertain for everybody.

2. Arrival of Germans as a local power worried the British as well. In 1884 Germans took control of German South West Africa and in 1890 they started to show some interest for Transvaal. President Kruger<sup>5</sup> throw himself into the arms of the Germans, looking for German diplomatic support. Salisbury wanted to avoid conflict in South Africa but in 1895 he left the situation in Chamberlain's hands, the Colonial Secretary, who was particularly happy for working through Prime Minister of Cape Province, Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes was impatient for resolving the situation in Transvaal. Under Chamberlain's blessings, Rhodes prepared a plot that could provoke a revolution in Johannesburg among foreigners with the objective of tearing down the Republic of South Africa. He did believe in a British African Empire that went from Cairo to Cape Town. Rebellion in Johannesburg would be supported by an army invasion of his South African Company, police under Dr. L.S. Jameson mandate; they wanted to attack from Mafeking. The whole episode was a farce. Rebellion stroke in 1896. Jameson was captured by Boers and Rhodes was forced to resign as Prime Minister of Cape Province. Chamberlain saved himself by refusing knowing anything about the situation. Kruger and extreme Boer nationalists got stronger. It was in this moment when Kaiser interfered, sending a telegram congratulating Kruger and offering him his support. A German ship was sent to Delagoa Bay. Great Britain got annoyed and sent a battle squadron as well. The German ship withdrew. This was followed by four years of manoeuvring of positions. After this, some negotiations took place between Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner. Negotiations went around foreigners'

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<sup>5</sup>“(1825–1904), South African soldier and statesman, president of Transvaal (1883–99); full name Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger. He led the Afrikaners to victory in the First Boer War in 1881. His refusal to allow equal rights to non-Boer immigrants was one of the causes of the Second Boer War.” (‘Oxford Dictionaries’, 2018)

rights question. A final crisis happened in 1898 with Tom Edgar shooting by SARP, South African police. This situation led to a mass petition sent to the Queen asking for British intervention and protection. A deal was reached with Boers leaders in which most of foreigners' demands were reached. Nevertheless, Chamberlain persuaded the Cabinet to send 10,000 reinforcements. This provoked an ultimatum from Boers asking for the reinforcements to leave, but they didn't leave so war happened. War started with a series of British disasters in December. Queen stated:

“We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist.”

In the end, superiority in number and resources was the determinant of the war in favour of Great Britain in 1900. Despite of this, British had to fight two years against Boer guerrillas. Signing the Peace of Vereeniging in May 1902, Kitchener's “barbarian methods” were needed. Chamberlain extended the Empire but the cost of doing so was high.

(Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Treaty of Union, 1902 stated two Boers republics as British colonies and with the promise of becoming autonomies in the near future. In 1910, four colonies: Cape, Natal, Orange and Transvaal, were reunited as a British dominion known as the Union of South Africa. In 1931 was recognized by the Treaty of Westminster as an independent state, member of the Commonwealth. (Editorial Planeta, 2006)

British interest for remaining in South Africa was the naval base in Cape.

(Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

## 6. INTO EUROPE

### 6.1.1949: NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Great Britain was still hostile towards an integration in Europe. At the end of the forties, Second World War had finished and the victory allies had to confront two fronts: the position of strong ideologies and interest conflict. Ideological confrontation between the big powers is not remarkable; Soviet Republics were more focused in a domestic reform than in looking for a union for East Europe, where democracy was crumbling. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

At the end of the forties, old security systems were absolutely weakened owing to Second World War events. Priority relied on building a new system based on cooperation. This way a new order was created: the NATO. (John, 2001)

It was an intergovernmental military organization created after the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty. Based in Brussels and originally signed by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, The Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom and USA. It was launched with the goal of establishing mutual defence system. They wanted to use it to face the military threat of the Soviet bloc and to ensure international security and members' welfare. (Editorial Planeta, 2006a)

Treaty of Washington is the founding charter of the NATO, its creator was Ernest Bevin<sup>6</sup> who was also the Article 5 instigator. Failure in conversations between France, Soviet Union, USA and United Kingdom happened in December 1947; Bevin was convinced that occidental powers should be organized to defend each other of Stalin's expansionist ambitions and Soviet military power. This way, Treaty of Brussels happened in 1948 as a prelude of the NATO. This Treaty had a strong clause of mutual defence which the Allies tried to put in the Treaty of Washington with some inconveniences from USA. USA doubted because of US isolationist heritage and the opposition to forge official alliances; those issues still had Congress representation. (Editorial Planeta, 2006)

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<sup>6</sup>“(1881–1951), British Labour statesman and trade unionist. He was one of the founders of the Transport and General Workers' Union and a leading organizer of the General Strike (1926).” (‘Oxford Dictionaries’, 2018)

Finally, Bevin could insert Article 5 that states:

“Collective defence means that an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies.” (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2018)

Article 5 offered warrantee requirements for the Europeans and political acceptance for the Americans. It was thought to be a symbolical article but Soviet Union incentivized Occident to act because of: Berlin blockade and proof of a soviet nuclear weapon existence. This boosted US military aid that was increased with the North Korea attack to South Korea. All those events gave credibility to Article 5.

Since NATO creation, different countries had joined it. Nowadays it counts with 29 independent member countries and article 5 has only be invoked once: after 9/11 terrorists' attacks against USA. (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2018)

NATO structure was a triumph for Bevin. NATO has ensured 40 years of peace for Europe. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

## **6.2.1973: EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY**

New Prime Minister, Edward Heath from Conservative Party, was a big supporter of Europe, more than just being part of NATO. He did admire Europe promptness in modernizing itself and he felt that Britain was starting to be outdated. He thought that Britain's way to regain power was entering Europe. Nevertheless, “Europe” wasn't something to talk about in 1970 Elections; Labours were ready to be back in power with Wilson, who was pro-Europe by head, facing Heath, pro-Europe by heart.

When talking about entering EEC, there's an important fact to mention which is the “Common Agriculture Policy” (CAP) of 1960, an inimical policy for Britain's interests. It did implied tariffs over food from outside EEC. This was the traditional British resource on cheap food; moreover, high prices were paid to European farmers to support their incomes. This whole system was created to protect French peasants' interests. So if Great Britain wanted to enter in the EEC, they would have to accept this just like many other topics to negotiate. In addition, there existed the French ban possibility, that is why Heath

convinced French President, Georges Pompidou, of Britain's good intentions for Europe. (Pompidou, 2014)

Once this was solved, the rest of the problems to enter in the EEC were "at home": many opposed to the entrance in EEC. On 28<sup>th</sup> July the Party's National Executive sentenced the request and in October the majority of Party Conference voted to stay out of EEC. However, some rebels pro-market was enough to state a good opinion of Heath's European Community Bill. Therefore, Heath signed the Treaty of Accession in Brussels on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973, when Great Britain finally entered the EEC.

Entrance didn't finish with EEC discussions. Labour return to Government in 1974 reopened the argument. In order to avoid divisions inside the Party, Labours made a referendum in which sixteen members of the Cabinet voted for yes and seven voted for no. This led to strange alliances. Majority of Labour Cabinet was supported by a huge part of Tory Party and CBI. Eventually, 67% confirmed Govern recommendation of staying inside Europe. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

"EEC topic" seemed closed but arguments about Britain's payments to CEE continued to happen. In 1977, Treasury forecasted net-payments of £880 million, especially to CAP (only Great Britain and Germany made those payments, something which Britain considered unfair), that was going to be the cause of many frictions. It was November 1979 during Dublin summit when Margaret Thatcher pronounced the famous quote:

"I want my money back!" (Sanhermelando, 2016)

Big portion of tension was out of British Government's control; moreover, many monetary problems happened around the world: USA abandoned gold-standard was one of the situations that occurred. With all the chaos happening in the monetary world, oil prices raised up, something Great Britain was very vulnerable to. British pound started to devaluated. Labour govern embraced monetary restriction, it looked like Great Britain was the weakest power in between the biggest economies, the "Sick Man" of Europe.

Besides economic downturn, it seemed that Britain's world roll was increasingly fading:

- Defence expenses were reduced to 6% in 1978.

- Simons Town Agreement with South Africa was cancelled, which supposed the end of Naval facilities in Cape.
- In 1976, its Indic Ocean aero-base closed.

(Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

### **6.3.MARGARET THATCHER (1979-1990)**

On the surface, new Thatcher Conservative Government seemed to highlight Great Britain world importance in 1980. She found in US President, Ronald Reagan, a similar ideology and she established an Anglo-American relationship that hadn't exist since Macmillan days. USA decided to sell "Trident Missile" to Great Britain, this system allowed Great Britain maintaining nuclear status along the century. Thatcher was popular in USA, something that didn't happen since Churchill; this popularity was beneficial along Falklands War, US help was decisive. In return for this help, British Government was the only USA ally in Europe in 1986; they allowed USA operating with American jets from British territory against Libya. Great Britain really looked like biggest and most loyal ally to USA. Probably because of her close relationship with Washington, new Gorbachev Soviet Administration decided to court Thatcher, and surprisingly a good relationship was born between both of them. Huge longevity of her mandate increased her world profile in moments when Great Britain seemed to be the link between Europe and USA, and even the Soviet Russia. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Empire ghosts appeared to conspire to enhance Thatcher's roll as world leader:

1. At the beginning of her Administration, her first Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington, reached an achievement with the solution to Rhodesian situation with black guerrillas. Lord Carrington secured all the interested parts to participate reaching success when the three black rivals accepted Constitution and supervising elections. Lord Soames was last British Governor. Mugabe won the elections and he expressed its trust and warmth for the British Governor in African territory. The whole situation was a Foreign Office success, essentially of Carrington, not Thatcher. (The Guardian, 2017)
2. Two years later, another imperial issue happened regarding Falkland Islands. They were inhabited by 1800 British progeny and they were left in oblivion. For

years, Foreign Office had been looking for a friendly agreement close to Argentina, who has claimed the Islands since 1830. Nicholas Ridley, Foreign Minister, explained that they were exploring a “lease-back”: Argentina acquired the Islands with sovereignty but in time they will give it back to Great Britain. This idea was barracked in the Commons.

In 1981, General Leopoldi Galtieri took the leadership of a military junta which had govern Argentina since 1975. Falklands size would consolidate junta’s popularity and everything suggested that Great Britain wasn’t going to resist. In the same year, Thatcher Government Defence proposed withdrawing British naval unit of South Atlantic, the “Endurance”; British indifference looked very clear.

In 1982, Argentina invaded the Islands surpassing the small military garrison. Same day, the Cabinet ordered the preparation of a team-work; at the beginning this was probably to increased British negotiation power but it received many complains in a special session of the Commons. This was why Thatcher declared that they would do everything they could so the Islands were back under British mandate. Carrington insisted in resigning and carrying the fault of being twisted by “misleading Argentine intentions”. It was at this point when Margaret Thatcher earned her “Iron Lady” nickname with firmness display that surprised many of her Ministers.

British handled situation assuring USA and EEC support, which was vital, and condemned Argentina in the Security Council of the United States; in addition, Great Britain sent 44 military vessels and 28000 men. On 14<sup>th</sup> July, Argentina surrounded and the Union flag waved once again in Port Stanley. Costs of all this were £1,500 million, 225 death men and 777 wounded.

(Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

Great Britain world status and the one of Mrs. Thatcher enhanced because of this small colonial conflict. Prime Minister achieved in 1984, in Fontainebleau Summit the British rebate (still standing) that turned the Germans and the Frenchs into the ones who more money had to give to the Community Budget. (Sanhermelando, 2016)

Between 1982 and 1987, British development looked like it was the most powerful of Europe but decline was still there: in 1980 Italy surpassed Great Britain in the

league of the most powerful. Britain was rich and powerful still in comparison with the majority but it was also the less important of Occident.

Its growth sunk in 1989 below West Germany and France and balance of payments deficit indicated economic weakness.

3. Thatcher was asked to stop insisting in Hong-Kong's sovereignty.
4. Regarding Europe, few friends were made due to her inflexibility, her attempts to reduce British contribution to EEC budget and her opposition to Europe Monetary Union and to Social Charter. All this seemed to side-line Great Britain, not forgetting geography as well. Changes in 1989 added more issues to this process of marginalization:
  - New US President, Georges Bush, wasn't very interested in the relationship with Great Britain.
  - Soviet Empire rupture in Eastern-Europe changed the spotlight to Germany.
  - German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, wasn't a Thatcher fan, and the idea of reunification made the importance of Germany increase.

Great Britain was seen again as what it was: a middle-ranking European state, forced by its geographical situation and its economic problems to stand aside. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

In 1990, Saddam Hussein of Iraq ordered his trop to invade a region in Kuwait, this led to an international crisis that ended up in the Gulf War (1991). This situation strengthened once again relationships between USA and Great Britain. Great Britain made the second biggest contribution, Thatcher show the determination the world expected from her. This war benefited British self-stem but in reality it only showed the comparative national decline. They couldn't defend Kuwait (old British protectorate) where they had economic interests, that is why only with US help could they secure its presence in Middle East. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

With all this happening, there were some politics like Heath that saw the union with Europe as the only way of equalling the USA giant but Margaret had already stated her position in several occasions. Nevertheless, in 1990 she wasn't Prime Minister anymore,

she was replaced by John Major; but at this point there were some plans between leaders for Treaty of Maastricht to be signed next year. This Treaty embraced issues like: European citizenship, European Parliament powers, budget controls, common security and foreign policies, justice, home affairs and immigration, social agreements, new politic initiatives that include networks, bigger cohesion, regional affairs and trans-European transport; and of course, monetary and economic union.

Great Britain thought that some of this subjects were difficult to discuss at that moment. Notwithstanding, final Treaty arrived with the “British Protocol” that allow the exclusion from monetary union. John Major also ensured to be excluded from Social Chapter of the Treaty, this way other member could move forward without Great Britain to implement European social policies including a minimum wage. For some politics the most important thing was that Major could eliminate the word “federal” from the Treaty. (House of Lords. European Union Committee, 2008)

Despite all this, Great Britain continued highlighting the NATO as the most crucial organism, above EEC. (Pearce & Geoffrey, 1996)

In 1995, Great Britain occupied a completely different place in the world than in 1945. Empire was gone and they had entered in Europe still being the less enthusiastic member. Twenty-first century was starting, presenting a new Europe with old problems.

#### **6.4.SCOTLAND**

Scotland was never a dominion of the Empire; it was part of the central power after its union with England. Inside the islands, that model of strong government and very centralized politic institutions was also reflected. Demands of a bigger politic autonomy for Scotland weren't heard till the seventies. At the end of the sixties, SNP<sup>7</sup> incremented the number of votes they had and at the beginning of the seventies this was what supposed a shift in Labour politic in Scotland. It was during these years when the Conservative decline in Scotland started. For the Labours, Scottish vote was and still is very important in the run for leading power in United Kingdom. That is why, Labours in order to cut

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<sup>7</sup> “Scottish National Party, a political party formed in 1934, which seeks autonomous government for Scotland. It won its first parliamentary seat in 1945.” (‘Oxford Dictionaries’, 2018)

SNP promotion, they proposed to introduce a territorial autonomy regime or Scotland Devolution; but the party was divided by this issue. British Labour Government introduced several draft legislations in Parliament which were approved in 1978, only after opponents (from the party) achieved introducing the Cunningham Amendment in the Commons. This Amendment meant that if the referendum was going to take place in Scotland to approve the autonomy and the result was negative or even being positive they didn't reach a 40% of electoral census, Government would be forced to introduce the repeal order so the Government proceeded to derogate that legislation. (Rivera, 1999)

It was celebrated in 1979. Welsh declined the devolution. Scottish supported it with a 51,6% but there was a 62,9% of electoral participation which meant that it actually was a 33% of support, in other words, it didn't reach the required minimum. This way, derogation of devolution legislation was promoted.

Conservative policies of Thatcher's government weren't welcomed in Scotland where British Government was seen as foreigner. Without doubt, those Conservative policies revived autonomy desire, even though that wasn't the only reason for de devolution to be concretized in 1997. Devolution support in Scotland was due to the weariness towards British political model, known as Westminster Model, erosion suffered by institutions and constitutional British model, and the search of a new model of politic harmony. One of the innovations incorporated to the devolution design for Scotland by Tony Blair's government was the introduction of a proportional representation system to choose part of the representatives of the Scottish Parliament. Taking this decision was due to the electoral weight; it was thought that system would prevent a SNP majority in Scottish Parliament. In 1996, Labour party announced the call for a referendum to introduce autonomy in Scotland, only if they win the 1997 elections. They won and in September 1997, the referendum was celebrated. The majority of Scottish electorate supported the creation of a new Scottish Parliament. Nevertheless, devolution didn't fulfil Scottish expectative, they were still unhappy. (Sánchez Ferro, 2015)

At this point, United Kingdom Parliament stated three devolution Acts (United Kingdom Government, 2013):

- 1998, The Scotland Act.
- 1998, the Northern Ireland Act.

- 1998, the Government of Wales Act.

In 2007, SNP ran by Alex Salmond ascended to power in Scotland, in minority. He proposed a revision of the autonomy model. In August 2007, the SNP started the “National Conversation” with the publication of “Choosing Scotland’s Future” report, where an argument about the possibility of deepen in territorial decentralisation in Scotland was opened. In November 2009, Scottish government published the “Your Scotland, Your Voice” report, which stated that even if they had considered other options, independence seemed to be the only via for Scottish Govern. Next step was the call for a referendum so the Scots decided if Scottish Parliament competencies should be amplified and in what size. In 2011, SNP won elections with absolute majority but they couldn’t call for a referendum because British government stated that they would invalid the legislation. In 2012, British government expressed its desire to celebrate the independence referendum. Cameron’s government stated that the future of Scotland in United Kingdom should be decided by the Scots. This way, negotiations between both governments started and in October 2012 they signed the Edinburgh Agreement, where they remarked referendum vital elements. Competence to celebrate the referendum would be temporary transfer to Scotland till the end of 2014. Alex Salmond dated the referendum on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014. After a model campaign of both of them: “Better Together” and “Yes Together”; and a final intervention of Gordon Brown in favour of “no” to independence, that reaffirmed his compromised and the one of all the unionist parts in favour of introducing a bigger autonomy for Scotland if “no” won the referendum. (Libby Brooks, 2014)

Eventually, the results were: 44,7% for yes, 55,3% for no. Cameron announced that a commission presided by Lord Smith of Kelvin was named, the Smith Commission. Its mission was to reach an agreement of the politics forces to strengthened Scottish autonomy before November 2014. The report was published in November and it was agreed to approve a legislation that turned into permanent the Scottish Parliament with other concessions. (Sánchez Ferro, 2015)

## 6.5.BREXIT

This episode started in January 2013 with a David Cameron's speech, at that moment Prime Minister. Debt crisis had incremented British mistrust towards EU and Eurosceptic sector of the Conservative party were pressing Cameron. He promised that in case of being re-elected in 2015, he will renegotiate once again United Kingdom position inside EU and he would convoke a referendum, the latest in 2017. In 2015, Conservatives achieved an absolute majority and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015, Cameron sent a demands' list to remain in EU to his European partners. Right after this he state that he was going to call for a referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, known as Brexit. (Sanhermelando, 2016)

Promised of celebrating the referendum was also motivated by the idea of cutting down pressure exercised by the UKIP progress. It Is true that Cameron dedicated few months to negotiate with EU a list of concessions that allowed Europe to look more attractive to his electors. Those concessions were quite difficult to achieve because most of them affected key EU principles: common market, European citizens' migration, economic competitiveness and integration and politics. The agreement reached by David Cameron and the rest of the European Union members included a clause known as "self-destruction": in case of Brexit winning the referendum, none of those concessions would be applied. (The Economist, 2016)

It should be taken into consideration that even if a country has the right of leaving the EU it doesn't mean that it can do it freely and unilaterally. The procedure must be formalized following the intended paperwork in Article 50 of European Union Treaty:

*"1. Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements.*

*2. A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. [...] the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. That agreement shall be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [...].*

*3. The Treaties shall cease to apply to the State in question from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification referred to in paragraph 2, unless the European Council [...] unanimously decides to extend this period.*

*[...]*

*5. If a State which has withdrawn from the Union asks to re-join, its request shall be subject to the procedure referred to in Article 49.”*

(‘The Lisbon Treaty: Article 50 EUT’, 2008)

United Kingdom breakup with Europe has set an inflection point since it is a non-precedent situation. The only case known dates of 1962 when Algeria got the independence from France which ended up in them not being part of the EEC anymore.

### **6.5.1. Politic Scene**

Political parties had to choose a side when referendum was a real fact coming:

- Cameron’s Conservative party was deeply divided. He and his Finance Minister, Georges Osborne, were the principal boosters of the pro-EU campaign; but there were others like Boris Johnson, Chris Grayling and other ministers who defended Brexit.
- UKIP headed by Nigel Farage has always defended the idea of United Kingdom being outside the European Union. It was born at the beginning of the nineties as a Euro-sceptic platform but in 2004 elections they acquired 16% of electorate vote.
- Labour party presented a more homogeneous posture; only a small fraction of their deputies were in favour of Brexit.
- SNP made his position clear: they were pro-European. Leaders of the party would much rather like to be outside United Kingdom if they finally got outside the European Union.
- Liberal Democrats defended permanence in European Union as their only option. Its leader, Nick Clegg signed a letter along Tony Blair where he urged to reject division and to embrace permanency option.

- Green Party of England and Gales were also in favour of staying in the European Union.

It's important to understand that not only political parties expressed their position or ideology regarding Brexit but also international institutions did:

- European Central Bank stated that leaving European Union could jeopardize finance business of the City of London.
- IMF affirmed that it could cause severe regional and global damages because it affected established commercial relationships.

And so on, like OECD or US President at that moment, Barack Obama who expressed that he didn't contemplate a commercial agreement with United Kingdom, understanding that his relationship with Europe meant more, at least in short terms.

## **6.5.2. Arguments for leaving or staying in the EU**

### *6.5.2.1. Arguments for leaving the EU*

- Immigration: numbers of immigrants in UK established that the year before Brexit took place, more than 300,000 immigrants arrived to the UK. This means less public services, transport, education and healthcare. They also considered that immigrants were accepting working for less money, this way they considered that immigrants were "stealing" British people work and perverting salaries and tariffs so they could be more competitive. Only way to recover British's borders control would be leaving the EU because being part of it means free movement of people.
- Safety: given global events, they consider that the only way to ensure safety is border's control.
- Sovereignty: some factions considered that it is essential getting back whole sovereignty without complying Brussels' laws or European Court of Justice's judicial rulings.

- Saving money: it is thought that UK contributes £350 million per week to EU maintenance, around £20,000 million per year. If UK wasn't a member of EU they could use that money for other purposes.
- More efficiency, less bureaucracy: some people considered that Brussels works with too much paperwork and little transparency and democracy. It is believed that some policies are inefficient.  
(Robert Sayers, 2016)

#### 6.5.2.2. Arguments for staying in the EU

- Irreversible and irresponsible action: once they're outside EU, they will be left in an unknown place till date. In that case, they won't be able to return, tentatively.
- Economy: British economy would be depleted because they would stop being part of a common market of 500 million people and they would be also excluded of every commercial agreement with more than 50 countries. It is believed that more than 3,000,000 direct jobs in UK depend on commerce with EU, 44% of UK exports go directly to EU. Besides, for every pound UK contributes to EU, they get in return ten pounds as investments and commercial interchanges. UK receives per year £24,000 million in EU investments. It is necessary to mention the effect this could cause in the financial markets: British pound devaluation, rise of British life and cuts in public expenses.
- Geopolitics: leaving the EU means losing UK importance that it had inside EU and, in addition, losing international politics and geostrategic influence.
- Safety and immigration: even if UK gains back border's control this is not a warranty for the global threats to be finished. This kind of threats such as terrorism, needs coordination between countries. Regarding immigration, it is

thought that EU immigrants provide more than they receive, economically talking.

- Nationalist demerges: saying goodbye to the EU could highlight a big part of Scottish citizens' willingness of calling for a new referendum that allows them to leave UK and be part of the EU. Northern Ireland could follow this same path so they could guarantee free movement of citizens inside Ireland; and this could be applied for Gales as well. Adding to this the problems for British citizens in terms of travelling, studying or working in other European countries; retired people would lose the right of using public services in other European countries where the reside.

(Robert Sayers, 2016)

### **6.5.3. Referendum**

On 23rd June 2016 took place the referendum. Initial question was "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?" but due to electoral commission recommendation it was changed to "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?". Voting was open for British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens as long as they were over 18 years old and residents in the United Kingdom. British citizens living outside the United Kingdom could vote only if they had been registered in a British direction in the past 15 years.

"Leave" achieved a 51.9% of the votes while "Remain" achieved the 48.1%. After results were known, David Cameron resigned and Theresa May was elected as Prime Minister in return. Nevertheless, voting dates showed opinion gaps depending on the geography and the age of the voters.

- Leave: it was especially remarkable in English and Welsh cities like Sheffield, Birmingham and the south and east of England.
- Remain: this option won in London, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Gibraltar was especially striking as most of the population voted for remaining in European Union.

In general, most of youngest voters voted for remaining even though it was also in cities with a bigger proportion of youngest people where less participation was registered.

The reality was that for a small margin, they decided to leave European Union.

(Carretero Negrete, 2017)

#### **6.5.4. Scene after the Referendum**

Theresa May announced at the beginning of October that she would invoke Article 50 of EUT to leave European Union before the end of March. She pretended doing this without Parliament's voice but she had to retract herself as on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017, High Court blocked her when starting the "Brexit" process. In any case, she maintained the plan of activating Article 50 of EUT in March 2017 which gives a 2 years' period to negotiate the exit of the European Union. This was voted in the Parliament with 498 votes in favour and 114 against activating Brexit.

In between the concessions the Parliament asked for we can find:

- Immigration control: even outside European Union, Government pretends securing international talent as one of their key assets. Nevertheless, they are trying to design a new migratory system that allows ensuring control over the number of people that can be relocated from European Union. This is why, in the future, free movement of people directive would no longer be applied. United Kingdom would go on welcoming students and experts that make their nation a better place.
- They also look for ensuring a good position for United Kingdom in sciences and innovation. United Kingdom is pioneer in sciences and innovation. One of their biggest strengths is the existing community of scientists, this is supported by the best world universities. This is why the Government would try to become a huge scientific base that attracts the biggest scientists, innovative people and technology investors.

(Carretero Negrete, 2017)

### 6.5.5. Today's scene

Theresa May has announced that she will publish in the European Council in June 2018, for the first time in detail what United Kingdom expects from its future relationship with the European Union. She wants to be the one to make the first step in negotiations but her plan has a small problem: her Cabinet have to decide what to state in the document policy, including an agreement for the future relationship with customs. Committee hasn't been able to reach an agreement regarding custom's plan but ministers recognised that time for discussions it's almost over and big decisions need to be taken during next month.

The document that will be presented in Brussels will include: customs, regulatory divergence and the financial services sector. It will also examine a future security relationship. Nevertheless, it's not expected a detailed description of United Kingdom's interpretation of the "back-stop" plan for Irish border. United Kingdom and Brussels have agreed that it won't exist a "hard" border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This document presentation supposes a step forward in the Brexit process. Despite Theresa May suggested the Board's intentions of willing for a plan regarding the future relationship between United Kingdom and the European Union, there are still several details which are not conquered, including the grade to which some economy sectors will continue to be allied with the European Union.

(Parker, 2018)

Notwithstanding, United Kingdom faces a new problem: Scottish Parliament has rejected giving its consent to the project of leaving European Union. Even though Scottish Parliament has none right of veto over the draft legislation, denial on giving its consent establish a new confrontation between Edinburgh and London. This situation complicates even more Theresa May's plans for Brexit. (La Vanguardia, 2018)

Although Prime Minister, Theresa May, affirmed in first place that she would opt for a "Hard Brexit", the truth is that today, United Kingdom's future is still uncertain. Implementation date has been delayed, stating 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020 as the end of the period.

## **7. THE WORLD OF LEARNING**

It's important to analyse changes in British education in order to understand current situation.

Between 1870 and 1944 a mass education system was created in England. In this period, a change in power happened as well: the passage of control by the Church to control by the State. The State was a mix of powers of local and central authorities: "A national system, a local administration". (United Kingdom Parliament, 2018)

The emphasis on facilitating a massive elementary education in 1870 as a State project changed in 1944 to an emphasis on secondary education. The ideology of this project was included in the expression "equality of educational opportunities". This was intended to satisfy the social demand for equal access to education. This ideology has been falling apart over the past 25 years. The historical and crucial change is that the main political principle of the education system is now economic competition, instead of equal opportunities and social cohesion.

The change in these two principles has its starting point in the government of the ex-Prime Minister: Margaret Thatcher. The label of "Thatcherism" marks a major change in the political, social and economic philosophy of the United Kingdom. It is a compressed political message that emphasized the importance of a small state and a liberated economic sector. A more efficient and more aggressive sector would compete in a world of economic globalization with the countries belonging to the European economic bloc and, outside this, with the economic blocs of North America and Asia.

Despite the speed with which the media would define the world, it is important to note that the creation of a neoconservative vision of the world took time. There were many debates within the Conservative Party with the aim of finding solutions to the welfare state that had been created since 1944 and to the broad consensus around the idea that education fulfilled social rather than economic purposes. This led to an alternative vision that ended up becoming the political discourse of the Conservative Party and that was used with great practical flaws in the general elections of 1979, when the Labour government fell and Thatcher's first conservative administration began. (Cowen, 2009)

A radical government had been elected that provocatively established a series of priorities, underlining the need to adapt to international economic competition and the

need to establish a new social discipline to recover from the long decline of the British economic position among nations.

In this way the oligarchies and the bureaucracies were destroyed; among them, the educational service, in which schools and universities were considered to be bureaucracies dominated by professionals.

During the 70s, most of the British left their studies at age 16 and only 5% studied careers. Once a young man entered the university, the State paid for all his studies and his living expenses. In this way, the majority of university students were economically independent of their parents. In elite universities such as Oxford or Cambridge, colleges were divided by gender. For example, at the University of Cambridge there were 27 male colleges, 3 female colleges and only one mixed one. This institutional division already limited the number of female students to just over 10%. (Kinzie et al., 2008)

The educational vision of the period between 1944 and 1974, which had placed so much emphasis on equal educational opportunities, was beginning to fade because of the incipient emphasis on the efficiency of the education system. This system should resemble the company in its management and produce students and useful skills for the future labour market.

In this way, the changes in the conception of education were spectacular. Within the English educational system itself, it went from the principle of equality of educational opportunities to ideas of effectiveness and efficiency. The central idea was the concept of the "market". The economic purposes would derive from economic needs, and in this context the individual would become a consumer of education and the nation would modernize economically. Thus, in education there were enormous structural changes: A National Curriculum was created, exams for children of 7, 11 and 14 years were created as well. The concept of "local management of the schools" was invented, that is to say, the financing and management of the same went to the own school and the historical paper of the local authorities in education that had taken a century in developing, began to decrease. (Cowen, 2009)

The practical consequences of all this were immediate. School principals became managers. The power of the local authority was limited and it became possible to make its own decisions, that is, schools could choose direct financing and control from London.

The universities were forced to enter the market: before, 95% of the university money came from public funds. Now universities would have to become companies and determine the best way to sell knowledge, offer research services and carry out consultancies, and attract more students - who would pay their tuition. Students would no longer receive funding through state scholarships, but would have to work during their university studies or obtain credits with which to live, to return them later when they had found a job. The national determination of the performance of individual academics and university departments was also introduced in that period by abolishing academic posts for life.

Around 90s, many young people studied careers but the government no longer had the resources to pay for their studies. In the 90s they removed the scholarships for living expenses and began charging fees. Many students at the end of the race, were indebted to the neck. In 1997, conservative policies, especially the "New Right", had lost their electoral appeal and the government of Blair (the new Labour Government) came to power. His three priorities, as he said, were: "Education, education and education". His policies softened, in a way, the "disasters" of Thatcherism but he did not try to return to the visions of a state-dominated economy and a strong welfare state. Few controls on the educational system were eliminated, the decision-making process on education by the central government was strongly maintained. Some issues changed although the situation was still very similar to that of 25 years earlier. (Cowen, 2009)

## **7.1. EDUCATIVE SYSTEM**

The British educational system is the one with the greatest history and tradition in Europe and, also, one of the most reputed. Each year they welcome approximately half a million students from all over the world.

(El Mundo, 2018)

Post-school education is carried out in universities, higher education or continuing education centres, in technology institutes, etc. There are other forms of education that are offered in the form of degrees and other courses at a level higher than the level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) or equivalents. In England, the most common degrees for a first degree are: Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc); and

for a second level: Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The first cycle courses are usually full-time and normally last for three years. Master's degrees usually require a minimum of one year of full-time studies or the equivalent of part-time. The minimum time to do a PhD is usually three years. (Cowen, 2009)

Many of the crucial problems of English education lie in higher education, specifically in universities, and in subjects that revolve around what they are supposed to do and the level of quality required.

### **7.1.1. Crisis in higher education.**

This crisis has to do with the creation in the last 25 years of a university teaching system that went from approximately forty-five universities to a hundred; and the question of how "quality" can be controlled in such a system. The following question also arises: How to manage the enlargement of the proportion of the age group that passes through higher education when that proportion goes from less than 20% to approximately 40% in a couple of decades?

If students are "consumers", how is the quality of the "product" they are consuming shown? In this way, there is a need to make efforts to establish a "quality control", that is, to make the work of the universities measurable and transparent. The control agents, for this, include the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC). The universities compete to obtain financing from the HEFC, within a national formula. Universities must "make a living" in the market by deciding to increase the number of students, obtain research financed from outside or increase the production of research publications.

(Cowen, 2009)

One of the strategies that was carried out was to reduce the amount of money from university budgets financed from taxes. In this way they forced universities to enter the market: a market of foreign students who came with research grants and, on the other hand, research in collaboration with the industry. A second strategy was publicizing the results of research and teaching. In this way it was possible to build a market formed by both national and foreign students.

## **7.2.FUNDING**

The current funding situation of education and university research in the United Kingdom is best understood after taking into account the history of the country.

Until the mid-nineteenth century there were seven universities in the British Isles: Oxford and Cambridge in England; Glasgow, Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Aberdeen in Scotland and Trinity College in Dublin.

In the second half of the 19th century, a series of universities was created in large population centres. All of them received funds from different providers. The number of university students increased in the first half of the 20th century, but it was not until the end of the First World War that there was a large increase in the number of university students. It was at this time that the subsidies began to be regulated. In this way the number of university income gradually increased. The new ones increased their capacity and became more academically independent in the 1930s. Second World War contracted the university system but soon recovered by giving the men who had served the opportunity of going to university. In the 1960s, sixteen new universities were created.

(Vaizey, 1977)

Currently the United Kingdom has more than 150 institutions of higher education.

Academic excellence is closely related to the financing model and the incentives obtained with it when investing the available resources. In the United Kingdom it is intended that the students themselves assume certain responsibilities and return the resources provided when they achieve the purchasing power resulting from their training.

Universities are already massive classrooms. Thanks to this, the system feeds back, encourages universities to train their students with an eye on the demands of the market and encourages public-private collaboration and the integration of research into teaching activity.

- Scholarships (bursaries): they are a very widespread element. According to the OFFA, nearly 400,000 students benefit from them through which private foundations and associations take charge to a greater or lesser extent of the costs associated with the studies of the winners.

- Loans: granted by the Government of the United Kingdom to pay tuition, credits that can reach up to 9000 £ for full-time students and whose amount is similar to the fees that a student must pay to study at the main universities English, such as Queen Mary, Cambridge or King's College.

The most interesting part of this is the repayment conditions: the loans begin to be paid only when they have a salary higher than 1750 £, by returning an amount that will depend on the purchasing power of the student. In general, the reimbursement, which can be repaid in 30 years, is not much greater than the principal plus the interests that are the inflation.

To all this is added the low dropout rate, with the savings in resources that this entails for society.

It should be noted that according to HECA, the average salary of recent graduates in the jobs for which they have been trained is 22,000 £, reaching 30,000 £ for careers in medicine or engineering. Youth unemployment in the United Kingdom is 15%. All this explains that it is a successful model.

(Guinea, 2015)

### **7.2.1. Conflicts generated by funding**

University fees were introduced in 1998 and increased in 2006 and 2012; whereas the scholarships have decreased (both enrolment and maintenance). In this way, 96% of the financing comes in the form of credits. The combination of high rates and loans contributes in a good way to British graduates having the highest student debt in the developed world. (Bolton, 2018)

Something to take into account for the cuts is that the credits do not offset the deficit but the scholarships do.

Since 2011 the cost of higher education in the banking deficit has been reduced by 5,700 million pounds, which is 10% of the current deficit; and funding for universities grew. The long-term contribution of taxpayers fell by 3,100 million pounds because the contributions of the graduates themselves grew.

The contribution of the system in the long term is very dependent on the benefits of the graduates, the anticipated reimbursements and the cost of government loans.

This system of financing higher education involves a cost that affects households with less income. We can observe this same problem in the United States, where the Anglo-Saxon method of financing universities is wreaking havoc on the student population.

(Tisera, 2017)

### **7.3.UNIVERSITIES**

British universities are very proud to be part of the international scene, receiving and benefiting students from all over the world.

It is important to note that graduates in UK universities have a higher employment rate than most students in other developed countries. According to the latest employment statistics of the British Government of 2015, 86.6% of graduate students and 87.3% of postgraduates are working full-time.

United Kingdom has a very international outlook on the campuses of its universities, with a culture focused on the outside. One in six students from British universities come from outside the United Kingdom, approximately a total of 436,585 students. If we focus exclusively on students who come from the European Union, the amount exceeds 125,000 students, that is, 5% of the student body.

While it is true that the Brexit establishes a series of measures that would also affect the educational environment, for the time being students will continue to receive the same treatment and funding as before. (British Council España, 2018)

British higher education is among the best in the world and you can find several British universities in the rankings, which are normally led by Oxford and Cambridge. We found a total of up to seven British universities in the top 50. (British Council, 2018b)

This way, we're going to analyse Oxford and Cambridge history and international profile, in order to understand why are they important and a reference among universities all around the world.

### 7.3.1. Oxford University

When we talk about Oxford university we must mention that it is the oldest university in the English-speaking world. Apparently, foundation date is not clear but the teaching already existed in Oxford around 1096. It rapidly evolved when English students were banned by Henry II from attending the University of Paris after 1167.

In 1190 the arrival of the first foreign student known in Oxford: Emo of Friesland. This set in motion the tradition of international academic links of the university. In 1201 it was directed by a magister scholarum oxanie who was entrusted with the title of Chancellor in 1214. In 1231, the masters were recognized as universitas or corporation.

Almost in the fourteenth century, Oxford was already an eminence above any other learning site. The university was from its beginnings a centre of lively controversy, with academics involved in religious and political disputes.

It was from 1878 when academic rooms for women were established and it was not until 1920 that they were admitted as full members of the University.

During the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, it added to its humanistic nucleus a new capacity for important research in the natural and applied sciences. In this way, it has improved and strengthened its traditional role with an international approach to learning and a forum for intellectual debate.

(Oxford, 2018)

#### *7.3.1.1. International profile*

The international profile of Oxford competes with that of any university in the world. It stands out for the breadth and depth of its research collaborations and a competent global student body. (University of Oxford, 2018a)

The university has connections with almost every country in the world. The students are from more than 150 countries. They have more than 77,000 ex-students in 204 countries outside the United Kingdom. (University of Oxford, 2018b)

Globalization, therefore, is nothing new in Oxford. They received their first international student in 1190. The pace of that globalization has accelerated in recent years, and Oxford now has a strong international character and a worldwide presence different from that of any other University: 41% of its students come from outside the United Kingdom. It is at the forefront in the study of topics of global interest, and have built a large number of research collaborations with international partners, taking English as a reference language through their dictionaries as well as other types of publications, to the whole world.

(University of Oxford, 2018c)

### **7.3.2. Cambridge University**

The University of Cambridge is rich in history. It is as well the centre of attraction for visitors from all over the world. It should be mention that it is one of the oldest universities and academic centres in the world. It has a reputation for excellent academic performance that is known throughout the world and reflects, in turn, the intellectual achievement of its students.

It was founded in 1209, being the second oldest English-speaking university. In 1231, Henry III granted Cambridge a monopoly for the teaching of classes. During those early times the schools were founded so that their students prayed for the souls of the founders and often had to see chapels, if not abbeys. Along with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, in 1536 Harry VIII ordered the University to dissolve its Faculty of Canon Law and to stop teaching scholastic philosophy. Instead of focusing on canon law, school curricula then focused on Greek and Latin classics, the Bible and mathematics.

Firsts women colleges appeared in 1869 (Girton) and 1872 (Newnham). Firsts women doing exams did it in 1882 but it was in 1947 when they could start being truly members of the university. Oxford did it 20 years before. Cambridge has 31 colleges currently; three of them are exclusively for women.

(University of Cambridge, 2018a)

### 7.3.2.1. *International Profile*

The university is famous precisely for her heritage of erudition and historical role. This is compatible with one of the most important centres in the world for teaching and research. The university is determined to remain at the forefront of international research and scholarship.

The University of Cambridge gathers around 17,000 students, with about 3000 foreigners among them. In addition, Cambridge receives a percentage of overseas students which aren't from the European Union, around 1,600 students. (University of Cambridge, 2018b)

## **7.4.COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS**

While it is true that many students from different Commonwealth countries move to study in the United Kingdom with sufficient resources, it is also necessary to mention that the Commonwealth enjoys a series of scholarships for those students who cannot afford studies in the United Kingdom. In addition, Commonwealth scholarships tend to be more focused in developing countries, to give their students the opportunity to train at a prestigious British university.

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK provides the main scholarship system of the government of the United Kingdom. The CSC is a demonstration of the United Kingdom's commitment to the Commonwealth in academic matters. His work combines sustainable development with the UK's national interest in attracting talent to British universities and supporting tomorrow's innovators and leaders of the Commonwealth. Through its programs, it seeks to achieve equity and inclusion. The merits and good behaviour are rewarded, taking into account, above all, those students from less favoured countries. CSC counts on different departments depending on the issue or income: Department for International Development (DFID) which is exclusively for low and middle income countries; Department for Education (DfE), this department awards with scholarships candidates from high income countries; and finally, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which awards with fellowships for postdoctoral researchers. (United Kingdom Government, 2018)

According to Commonwealth Scholarships (Commonwealth Scholarships, 2018), there are 92 universities which have joint funding agreements with the CSC, for low and middle income countries. The list will be shown in the annexes.

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship. The CSFP is mainly intended for those students from Commonwealth countries who could make a significant contribution to their country of origin, once they have completed their studies of higher education in the United Kingdom. It constitutes a source of funding for all countries belonging to the Commonwealth and it is available because of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission. (British Council, 2018a)

There are a large number of scholarships offered to Commonwealth students, which is why we have decided to mention two of them.

- Commonwealth Scholarships in low and middle income countries: these ones will be known as Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships. (The Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2018). Nowadays they host eight fully-funded Master's scholarships in Papua New Guinea, South Africa, South Pacific and Sri Lanka.
- The Rhodes Trust - Rhodes Scholarships: These scholarships help the most outstanding international students for a postgraduate degree at the prestigious University of Oxford. It is the international scholarship program for graduates with more seniority in the world. They are awarded by the Rhodes Foundation and each year they provide a total of 83 prizes that cover the total cost of university tuition fees. In addition, they also grant a subsidy of around 13,800 pounds in maintenance. To all this must be added a personal health insurance. The duration of the Rhodes Scholarships is generally two to three years. The main requirement to qualify for one of these scholarships is that students must come from one of the following countries: Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica and the Commonwealth of the Caribbean, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa (including South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and Swaziland), the United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe. (Rhodes House, 2018)

### 7.5.INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

Academic mobility programs are a growing resource among young students. In this context, we must point out that the United Kingdom is the second most attractive country as an academic destination only behind the United States. The United Kingdom is, in addition, the most recommended country at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. International students in turn represent an input for the United Kingdom, as they improve the experience of local students and develop the country's international connections, as well as its reputation. It also implies an improvement of the national and local economy.

(Universities UK International, 2017)

**TABLE 1: 7.5.1. NUMBER OF EU AND NON-EU STUDENTS IN THE UK**



(HESA, 2017)

Using the table elaborated by Higher Education Student Data, the data that they collect turn out being incontestable. In order to be effective in its explanation, we are going to refer to the 2015-2016 course, whose explanation can be extended to the previous courses, since the series starts in 2007-2008. If anything, we need a clarification that will be completed in the explanations given in the comments corresponding to the following tables. In a historical context, we must bear in mind that the latest figures correspond to the 2015-2016 academic year, precisely the academic year in which the Brexit referendum

was called, the electoral campaign took place and the referendum was held on June 23, 2016.

In this first table, we observe that graduates and graduates who are pursuing a master's degree (in both cases there are still teaching and evaluation tests); and PhD students show the significant figure of 310,575, which compared to 127,440 Europeans is, by far, more than double its number.

These figures, in themselves incontestable, give us a clear vision of British universities:

The British higher education institutions carry out the regulations incorporated by the Thatcher government, by which the universities, after having abolished the polytechnics, must be constituted in companies that yield benefits. As a case study, it cannot be forgotten that, in the long dozen Scottish universities, European students do not pay tuition. In any case, the revenues that could be the enrolment of European students would be, compared to non-European, much lower, but in any case non-existent.

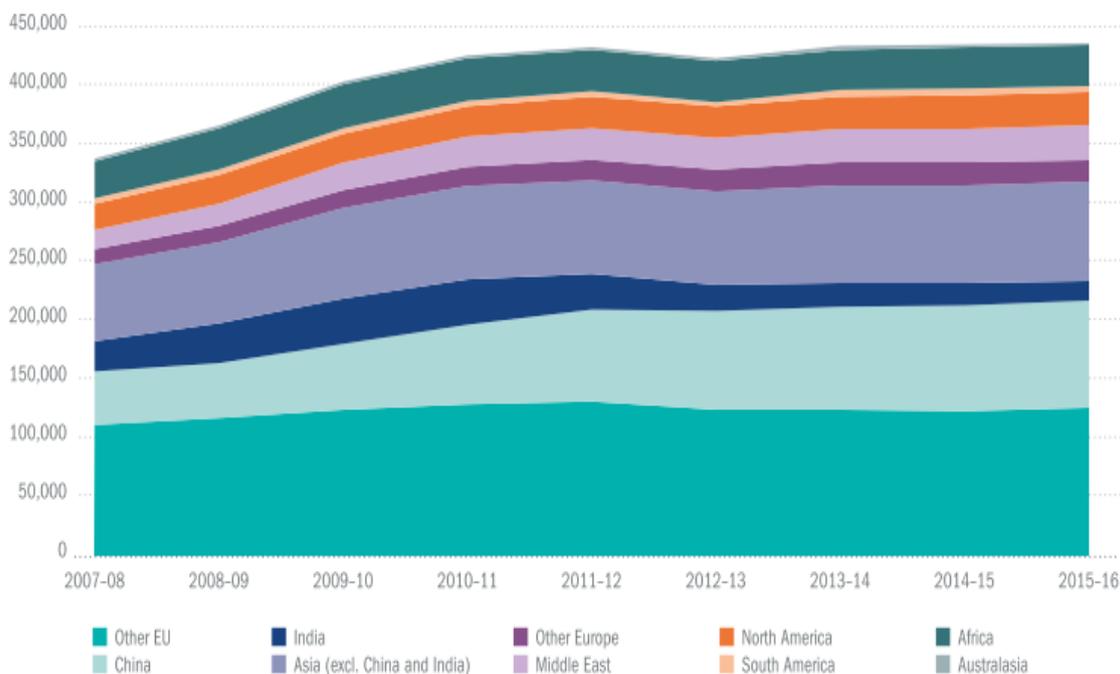
Within the number of European students, the students of the ERASMUS + program are counted, who in no case pay tuition (they do it at the university of origin) and do not pursue the attainment of a degree or postgraduate studies, because, as it is known, the mechanics of the ERASMUS + program leads to a mere process of validation in the university of origin.

It is true that the total number of non-European students, twice the number of Europeans, is more than double. And no less certain is, as will be seen in the following tables, during the decade that we comment, Chinese nationality is dominant, although they begin and complete their undergraduate or postgraduate studies at the British university in question.

The figure of 127,440 European students, at all levels of higher education remains stable, with slight fluctuations since the 2010-2011 academic year. The case is very similar to that of non-European students. This makes us think of a political fact that stems from the elections to the European Parliament in 2014: we must remember that the winning party was not one of the majority. The victory fell to a new party, Eurosceptic court, the UKIP. We must also remember that the Brexit campaign was the responsibility of this same party and that, since its bulging victory in the European elections of 2014, it had been defending the position of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.

Consequently, and as regards this table, it is confirmed that, from an economic point of view, the British universities set themselves the objective of obtaining benefits and that these are not granted by the ERASMUS + program or by the European students, in a specific case, such as Scotland, do not pay academic fees.

**TABLE 2: 7.5.2. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE UK BY ORIGIN**



(HESA, 2017)

In this second table, it can be seen that India, Asia (with the exclusion of China and India), the Middle East, North America, Africa and Australasia constitute, in a majority way, the most significant bulk of non-European students.

When interpreting these data, it is worth remembering that the ERASMUS + program is applicable not only in the countries of the European Union but in other assimilated countries that exceed the figure of 40.

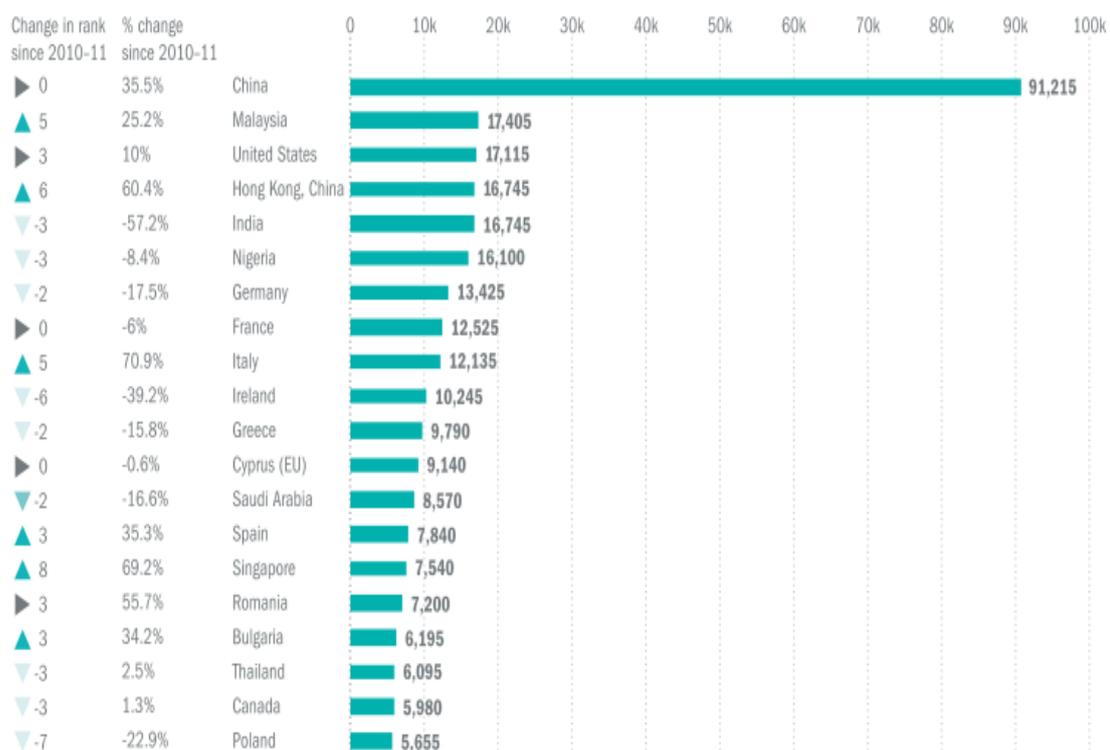
And if we pay attention to geographical distribution areas, the countries belong to the old Commonwealth (India, Asia, where we should consider countries as populated as Pakistan, Bangladesh or Malaysia); North America, which deserves special consideration since in this geographical area the United States and Canada (the latter also belonging to

the Commonwealth) are included; and the same should be said of all of Africa and Australasia (here New Zealand and Australia are included).

With the exception of Europe, China, some countries in the Middle East and South America, the rest have the language of primary, secondary and tertiary education as the language of the English language.

The analysis of the African students is the one that supposes the greater degree of difficulty. There are many countries that once belonged to the British Empire and that still belong to the Commonwealth. Moreover, at the historical level it should be borne in mind that the vast majority of universities in these African countries and, therefore, from where the students who pursue postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom come from, belong to universities founded at the time of the Empire and with a structure comparable to British universities. The incorporation of the native teachers took place in the post-independence times. The language of teaching is English and the level of adaptation to British teaching and research institutions does not imply a greater degree of difficulty.

**TABLE 3: 7.5.3. TOP 20 COUNTRIES OF STUDENT ORIGIN 2015-16**



(HESA, 2017)

This third table sheds an exceptional light as regards the countries of origin:

China, which ranks first in the ranking, is simply an entry of important benefits that places future graduates and postgraduates in an impressive link between Chinese and British companies.

That said, and without wanting to abound in the figures reflected in the table, it follows that, following the ranking set by the table: Malaysia, the United States, Hong Kong, India, Nigeria, Cyprus, Singapore, Thailand and Canada are countries that in one way or another they have close ties, either in their colonial period, of the British Empire or of the Commonwealth with the United Kingdom.

The figures are not surprising and, in addition, they give rise so that it can be concluded that for economic reasons, China and the rest of the countries we have just mentioned are in the first place for historical reasons and, sometimes, for blood ties.

The countries that belong to the European Union are headed by Germany, which turns out to be the largest, but, in any case, it is not difficult to conclude that the largest percentage are in the United Kingdom under the ERASMUS + programs.

Two data are illustrative of the fact that the orientation of British higher education institutions does not look to the European continent but to other geographical areas for economic or historical reasons. Suffice it to recall that the table speaks of more than 90,000 Chinese students in the United Kingdom. In very recent figures made public by the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Spain, the number of Chinese students studying in Spain and claiming a degree or postgraduate degree only exceeds the number of thousand.

**TABLE 4: 7.5.4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BY UK NATION 2016-2017**

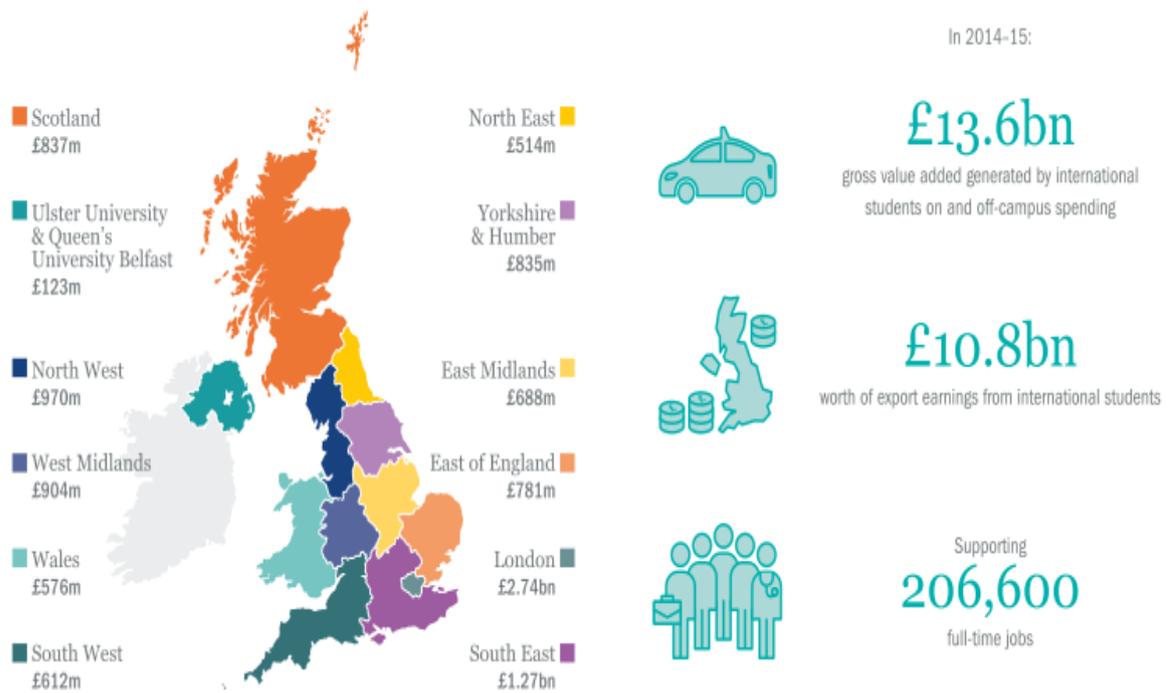
Country	Total EU students (not incl UK)	Total non-EU students	Total international students
England	104,875	258,710	363,585
Scotland	21,245	31,045	52,290
Wales	6,235	14,970	21,206
Northern Ireland	2,480	2,810	5,290
UK	134,835	307,540	442,375

(HESA, 2017)

In the fourth table that we present we can observe the distribution of foreign students, whether European or non-European, distributed in the four nations that make up the United Kingdom. Taking into account the number of universities that exist in the four nations, the data is not surprising, except for the case of Scotland where we found the smallest difference between European and non-European students. Recall once again, that European students, if they take full studies in Scottish universities, do not pay tuition and in any case the Erasmus students.

On the other hand, if the proportionality of European students Scotland-England is calculated, it can be verified that in relative figures Scotland receives more students from the continent than England. Not so if you compare non-Europeans. The former colonies still identify England today as synonymous with the United Kingdom.

**FIGURE 5: 7.5.5. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY UK REGION**



(Kelly & Mcnicoll, 2018; Universities Scotland, 2017; Universities UK, 2015, 2017)

As regards the income distributed by nations (in the case of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) and geographic regions as regards England, it can be seen that the figures obtained by the Scottish universities are substantially lower than, in the case, just to give an example, of Yorkshire and Humber where the number of universities does not reach the number of the Scottish. This goes to show that European students who do not belong to Erasmus programs do not report significant direct income by virtue of enrolment for Scottish universities.

Regardless of the casuistry, it is found that the institutions of higher education based in London represent the important figure of 2.74 billion pounds. The total income of 13.6 trillion pounds for foreign students means a source of income that, comparing the group of European and non-European students, the balance tilts in favour of the latter.

We have pointed out that the acceptance in British higher education institutions of Chinese students helps to achieve the goal set about 30 years ago: university operation as a company. However, of the total number of Chinese students should be discounted the

nearly 20,000 from the former colony of Hong Kong, where the language of teaching and research is still English.

The absolute numbers of European students, despite belonging to the European Union; to the proximity of many countries in central Europe and the existence of the ERASMUS + program together with its different modalities, it does not reach even half of the students from the rest of the world taking into account even the almost exorbitant figure of the nearly 70,000 Chinese students from mainland China.

The university education of students of the Commonwealth and even of China finds an echo effect in the commercial interests of the United Kingdom. On this pillar, although without saying it, the Euro-sceptics of all type that continue defending the Brexit, think to support the expectations of the resurrection of a new British Empire disguised as Commonwealth. And as far as the academic world is concerned, it may even be true.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the present work, from a Spanish perspective, and fundamentally in the light of international trade, it is quite probable that the economic and social reality of the United Kingdom has reached us in a diluted way due to its difficulty of assessment when it comes to appreciating reality.

With the arrival of the 20th century, the United Kingdom went from being the first world power, in favour of the United States; gradually it would lose the Empire; and had to go through the harshness of two world wars. In addition, several aspects of a political nature deserve to be highlighted: the vindication of the civil rights of the population, fundamentally as regards the electoral right of women; the vindication of social and Labour rights by the appearance of the unions and the new presence of a party that annulled the rotation in the Liberal-Conservative government to become Labour-Conservatives.

With these changes, the United Kingdom, almost in a traumatic process, sought its place in Europe and did everything possible to contain the dismemberment of the Empire.

The creation of the Commonwealth in 1949 had the purpose of reinventing the Empire; As we know, it was a failed attempt and the successive Conservative and Labour governments were granting independence to the colonies that were claiming it.

In terms of immigration, there is an important aspect that, in general, has gone unnoticed by economists, sociologists, political scientists and foreign jurists. The United Kingdom wanted, at all costs, to maintain the Empire or what could be of it under the Commonwealth. Nobody says today that in the middle of the 20th Century all citizens of the colonies were granted the option of accessing citizenship of "First Class". This surprising concession led to the initiation of immigration from many colonial territories to the United Kingdom, which today is between the second and third generation and which reach a figure close to 4 million people of British nationality acquired. Many of them have never been in their parents' country of origin. No less true is that the British authorities never started the effort to incorporate them into the general society, but they were allowed a life in "parallel" according to their original identity.

Despite the bulk of that immigration figure, as it is easy to deduce, never reached figures that would have simply revolutionized the British society and coexistence.

Lost the Empire, and lost much of the acquisitions of raw material in import and manufactures of all kinds in export, the United Kingdom had no choice but to apply for membership in the European Economic Community. Initially, it was considered an option that there was no choice but to accept, but feeling the longing for an Empire and a power already lost. This is so, that the application for membership in the European Communities was made to stop an economic crisis and much less for a European vocation. In the British subconscious of the 1970s there was a longing for a country that simply did not exist anymore.

Over the years, and with the United Kingdom within the European Union, the community perspective has deepened, mainly in the Conservative Party and in rural areas. It is also clear that the new British generations, precisely because of their membership in the European Union, were feeling more and more members of Europe, as was reflected in the results of the Brexit referendum.

This referendum was held, to society and to British politicians, they were asked and still pose a question: what now? Well, the referendum, or its result is exactly the same as on June 24, 2016. Nothing has been agreed on immigration issues. Here we must remember that immigration regulations for non-EU citizens, and those from the Commonwealth countries, are still advantageous for all of them. Not so for European citizens and, in the case of university students, the certainty of knowing what they can do after completing their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. The conservative government today considers the possibility that they have to leave the country finished their studies.

In judicial matters, the European Court of Justice, through its orders, has left its mark on the functioning of the British courts. Pending is the "bill" that Britain must pay for leaving the European Union and encrypted by this around more than 100,000 million euros.

In commercial matters Great Britain, in spite of wanting to be a privileged partner of Europe, will become any country with bilateral relations with European nations to which an agreement is reached.

In pureness, we only know that the close date of March 29, 2019, the disconnection agreements must be completed to open a transition period that will end in December 2020.

The uncertainty of how the negotiations will go in all areas is huge. As regards our work, we have to conclude that any academic exchange, especially related to the ERASMUS

programs, could be without effect. In fact, in this aspect it must be recognized that, at present, British universities prefer Commonwealth students to European nationals.

Although it is surprising, we must formulate a whole series of conclusions, referring to the Brexit that cannot have any other form than the question: everyone ignores that a minority government like the conservative, pending the support of the DUP has an uncertain life. Especially as regards the final type of land border that will remain between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. For this particular case, the British defend a weak border in contradiction with the strong they want to establish by sea.

The high percentage of Europeans residing in the United Kingdom belong to the world of science and technology and their expulsion from the United Kingdom would entail a clear crisis due to a lack of qualified British personnel.

The fall of the conservative government would lead to a call for general elections whose results cannot be more than mere inquiries: the younger generations, urbanites in general and citizens of university education are prone to its maintenance in the European Union. So much so, that in the event that the election results would require a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition, the latter would at least demand the holding of a second referendum, without discounting the annulment of the first.

In addition to the uncertainty of Brexit and its final outcome, the Euro sceptics and those who supported reviving the Commonwealth as an alternative, continue to insist that an institution made up of more than 52 countries can be a substitute, even unbeatable when compared to the European Union.

Throughout the work there is an incontestable fact that has been produced, uninterruptedly in education. The middle and upper social classes of the former colonies have always maintained an interest in pursuing their studies in the United Kingdom. The countries that cynically are called domains (former white colonies, in which we include the United States) have always understood that it is, even economically more favourable, to study in British universities than in their countries of origin. It is also true that the regulations, frankly favourable in immigration matters; the scholarship policy and the actual figures of students from the former countries of the Empire, are data that speak for themselves and are reflected in our study.

The strategy of the Brexit defenders seems clear: the old and now extinct Empire can be replaced by a new one in which the "importable and exportable matter" is education. Independently of the final agreements of the Brexit, a new configuration of the Commonwealth, at present already presided over by the heir of the Crown, something is becoming clear. English is the lingua franca of the world of business, education and science. Brexit yes or no, the old Europe will continue to send students for the learning of the English language in intensive language courses and short stays. This will continue to be an important source of income for universities and for British society.

And on the other hand, we have the reality of the students coming from the Commonwealth. Many countries continue to maintain, since the time of the Empire, English as the official language of education. Remember just one example: it is the case of India that today has more than one billion inhabitants. Many of these countries, also, for their educational system, have adapted the British educational system, in many cases thinking about the possibility that their future university students will move to the metropolis to do their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. In other words: the matter of import and export is simply education.

As shown, only one button: The Royal College of Surgeons of England, only native Indians, belong 26,000. Recall that this figure does not include the collegiate of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Yes, the professionals, coming from the Commonwealth, former students of the British universities guarantee a link between the former colonies and the United Kingdom in industrial matters and in this academic case.

And if the search for British identity can and should be extended in education, against all questions education could well guarantee the resurrection of the power of the old Empire. Where it was a politician it could now become an academic and in all his technological endings. In our opinion, we will live to see it.

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## 10.ANNEXES

TABLE 1 UK UNIVERSITIES WITH JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Aberystwyth University	Kingston University	Robert Gordon University	University of East Anglia	University of Roehampton
Aston University	Lancaster University	Royal Agricultural University	University of Edinburgh	University of St Andrews
Bangor University	Leeds Beckett University	Royal Holloway, University of London	University of Essex	University of Salford
Bath Spa University	Liverpool Hope University	Royal Veterinary College	University of Exeter	University of Sheffield
Birkbeck, University of London	Liverpool John Moores University	Sheffield Hallam University	University of Glasgow	University of Southampton
Birmingham City University	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	SOAS, University of London	University of Greenwich	University of Stirling
Brunel University London	London School of Economics and Political Science	Swansea University	University of Huddersfield	University of Strathclyde
Cardiff University	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Teesside University	University of Hull	University of Surrey
City, University of London	London South Bank University	Ulster University	University of Kent	University of Sussex
Coventry University	Loughborough University	University College London	University of Leeds	University of the West of England
Cranfield University	Manchester Metropolitan University	University of Aberdeen	University of Leicester	University of Warwick

Durham University	Newcastle University	University of Bath	University of Lincoln	University of Westminster
Glasgow Caledonian University	Northumbria University	University of Birmingham	University of Liverpool	University of West London
Goldsmiths, University of London	Nottingham Trent University	University of Bradford	University of Manchester	University of Wolverhampton
Harper Adams University	Open University	University of Bristol	University of Northampton	University of Worcester
Heriot-Watt University	Oxford Brookes University	University of Cambridge	University of Nottingham	University of York
Imperial College London	Plymouth University	University of Central Lancashire	University of Oxford	
Keele University	Queen Mary, University of London	University of Chester	University of Portsmouth	
King's College London	Queen's University Belfast	University of Dundee	University of Reading	

(Commonwealth Scholarships, 2018)



Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales

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**MEMORIA DEL TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO EN ESPAÑOL**

THE BIRTH OF A “NEW” BRITISH EMPIRE: THE WORLD OF LEARNING  
(EL NACIMIENTO DE UN “NUEVO” IMPERIO BRITÁNICO: EL MUNDO  
ACADÉMICO)

Alumna: María Malillos Lata

Tutor: Juan José Lanero Fernández

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## A

Contrario a lo que se pudiera pensar, la historia política, comercial y académica del Reino Unido a lo largo del siglo XX y primeras décadas del XXI ha sido sangriento, controvertido, plagado de crisis sucesorias, políticas y estratégicas.

El Reino Unido pasó, como la mayoría de los países europeos, por el trance de dos guerras mundiales que, según el pensamiento euroescéptico es lo único que compartieron con el resto de Europa. Concluida la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el Reino Unido quiso adaptarse a los nuevos tiempos admitiendo el sufragio universal e incluyendo en la sociedad británica el denominado “estado de bienestar social” en materia de sanidad, pensiones, seguridad social, vivienda y la controversia de una industria que comenzaba a debatirse entre lo público y lo privado. Podría decirse que lo aquí señalado también era compartido por toda la vieja Europa que intentaba reestablecer la normalidad después de la contienda.

Pero el Reino Unido tenía, además, una importante asignatura pendiente que lo diferenciaba de la vieja Europa: el Imperio Británico. El Gobierno Laborista pronto se dio cuenta de que la pérdida de la India no era más que el inicio tormentoso del desmantelamiento de todo el Imperio Británico. El mismo rey Jorge VI ideó en 1949 un remedio que coincidía en el tiempo con la pérdida de Irlanda: la creación de la Commonwealth.

Iniciada la década de 1950, el electorado devolvió el poder a los conservadores, una vez más de la mano del casi legendario Winston Churchill. En su primer discurso en el Parlamento advirtió que la nación no estaba dispuesta a renunciar al Imperio. El viejo político se equivocó totalmente: en los años siguientes y arreciando en la década de 1960, a modo de efecto dominó, las colonias fueron independizándose, convirtiéndose en repúblicas, a excepción hecha de Canadá, Australia y Nueva Zelanda, las cínicamente llamadas *Dominios* o colonias blancas. Estos países conservaron, como forma de Estado, la Monarquía Parlamentaria personificada en la reina británica y dejando dos aspectos fundamentales, asuntos exteriores y defensa en manos del gobierno de Londres. Hay que señalar, no obstante, que ese estatus fue tan solo temporal, pues a inicios de la década de 1970, los referidos países redactaron una constitución en la que todas las atribuciones, incluidas las de defensa y asuntos exteriores pasaban a su gobierno correspondiente. Desde entonces en adelante, la Corona está representada por el denominado gobernador general, figura que se conserva hasta nuestros días.

La pérdida del Imperio y, lo que es más grave, la desaparición de un comercio hasta entonces controlado desde la metrópolis, dio paso a una crisis de identidad y económica para la que, por la fuerza de los hechos, el Gobierno Británico comenzó a considerar la solicitud de su ingreso en la, por entonces, Comunidad Económica Europea. No resultaba ser la opción preferida. De hecho, los recuerdos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial se mantenían extraordinariamente vivos. Con todo y con ello, el premier británico consumó el ingreso en 1973. Dos años más tarde, los británicos, por una amplia mayoría del 67% aprobaron en referéndum la adhesión a la Comunidad Económica Europea.

Pero, a finales de la década de 1970, estando ya en el poder Margaret Thatcher, y con la adhesión de sucesivos países europeos, comenzó a surgir la desconfianza. Los políticos británicos de aquel tiempo querían una relación comercial con Europa que les hiciera salir de la crisis a la que les había llevado la desaparición del Imperio. Nada más. Las discusiones en materia del fortalecimiento de la Comisión Europea, el Parlamento Europeo y hasta la redacción de una Constitución Europea merecieron siempre el rechazo del Gobierno de Londres. El Reino Unido se convertía así en la nación grande discordante en Europa. La obstinación de Thatcher y su negativa a aportar más dinero al presupuesto europeo, puso en peligro la propia existencia de una Unión Europea unida política, económica y socialmente. Fue el propio partido conservador el que apartaría a la llamada “Dama de Hierro” del número 10 de Downing Street. Su sucesor, John Major, no hizo otra cosa que seguir la línea marcada por su mentora, si bien con una sordina que tranquilizara a los mercados europeos y a la propia población. En 1996, tras un prolongado periodo de sequía, los Laboristas regresaron al poder con Tony Blair. El Nuevo Laborismo, como así se le llamó, entendió que, para conservar unas relaciones fundamentalmente comerciales con Europa, precisaba amortiguar un choque frontal que podría llevarles a una situación muy impredecible. Así, el Reino Unido, con la herencia de Thatcher, renunció al Tratado Schengen y a su ingreso en la Zona Euro. Por entonces, los políticos británicos entendieron que su relación con Europa satisfacía sus necesidades y no deseaban avanzar en ninguna otra dirección.

La crisis mundial que comenzó a verse hacia el año 2007, empezó a encontrar dos ecos importantes: de una parte, el Gobierno Laborista, después de una década en el poder, comenzaba a dar los primeros síntomas de cansancio, acusado por la Guerra de Iraq. En segundo lugar, dentro de las filas conservadoras comenzaba un tenue pero constante desencuentro con el espíritu europeo. Ya por entonces, comenzó a hablarse de los

euroescépticos. Parecía que estaba a punto de iniciarse un nuevo ciclo, esta vez de manos del Partido Conservador, que ganó las Elecciones Generales de 2010. Durante este primer mandato conservador (2010-2015), los euroescépticos fueron ganando terreno hasta producirse una escisión en el Partido Conservador con el nacimiento del UKIP.

En 2014, el Gobierno de Londres tuvo que afrontar una de las primeras exigencias nacionalistas: el referéndum de independencia de Escocia. Los partidos nacionales realizaron una campaña común que finalmente les llevó a que la demandada independencia fuera rechazada. Pero el sentimiento antieuropeo en el UKIP y en las propias filas conservadoras forzó al Primer Ministro Cameron a prometer un referéndum para abandonar la Unión Europea en el caso de ganar las Elecciones de 2015. Entendió Cameron que, aunque la victoria estaba garantizada, esta vendría sin mayoría absoluta y teniendo que apoyarse, como lo había hecho en el primer mandato, en el Partido Liberal Demócrata, de observancia europea confesa. El arrogante Cameron pensaba que el referéndum, por la pérdida del apoyo de los Liberal Demócratas, no se celebraría. O que, de celebrarse, se ganaría con la misma facilidad que había sucedido en el de Escocia.

La partida de ese referéndum se jugó en un campo dividido en dos: los euroescépticos que supieron vender que el Reino Unido contribuía a la Unión Europea más de lo que le correspondía; de que esa contribución bien podía servir para reestructurar el servicio nacional de salud y los servicios en general; de que las avalanchas de inmigrantes europeos eran los culpables de que la población no tuviera acceso a puestos de trabajo que por derecho propio solo a ellos les correspondía. En definitiva, supieron vender el producto en la población de mayor edad y en los ámbitos de la denominada Inglaterra rural y agrícola. Los perdedores quedaron de la parte de los ciudadanos urbanitas, de educación superior y de dos zonas con un acento agravante: Escocia e Irlanda del Norte.

## **B**

La inmensa mayoría de la población entendió que el referéndum del Brexit lo iban a ganar los partidarios de la permanencia. El referéndum sería, pues, un mero suceso en el que todo continuaría como estaba y que los euroescépticos, perdida una batalla, habrían ganado otra que sería la de un próspero futuro político, el suyo, y una garantía para que

la Unión Europea llegara a la conclusión de que era muy posible poner en funcionamiento el Artículo 50 del Tratado de Lisboa.

Así las cosas, el premier británico dimitió al día siguiente y los inesperados ganadores se encontraron con la realidad de que no existía un plan B que sustituyera la muy favorable posición del Reino Unido en la Unión Europea. La sustitución de Cameron se produjo de forma inmediata en la figura de su ministra del interior Theresa May. May, que durante la campaña había defendido la permanencia se convirtió en una *Brexitieer* convencida dando paso a las figuras más representativas del conservadurismo euroescéptico: Boris Johnson como Ministro de Exteriores y David Davis como Ministro del Brexit. Llama la atención que, desde el 24 de junio de 2016, del que acaban de cumplirse dos años, el Gobierno de Londres no tomó ninguna iniciativa. La primera en tomarse sucedió el 29 de marzo de 2017 en el que se comunicó al Consejo de Europa que el Reino Unido activaba el ya mencionado Artículo 50 del Tratado de Lisboa. Desde entonces hasta la fecha actual de la mesa negociadora no ha salido ningún acuerdo sustancial. Si acaso, la aclaración de que el plazo para la conclusión de la desconexión, previsto para el 29 de marzo de 2019 tendrá un periodo de adaptación que concluirá en diciembre de 2020.

Lejos de encontrar un camino hacia el acuerdo, con obstáculos significativos como el pago de la “factura” de más de 100.000 millones de euros, la Primera Ministra tuvo la peregrina idea de convocar unas elecciones generales adelantadas para el 8 de junio de 2017. May pensaba que la mayoría absoluta de 333 diputados en el Parlamento de Westminster era de propiedad de Cameron y que, con una nueva elección, especulaba, ella podría hacerse con una amplia mayoría cercana a los 400 diputados. Con ellos podría negociar un acuerdo muy favorable para el Reino Unido. Nada de ello sucedió. Lejos de incrementar el número de diputados May descendió a 319 y precisó del Partido Unionista Democrático del Norte de Irlanda para alcanzar la mayoría absoluta. Hablamos de un partido radical en lo social pero abierto a la permanencia en la Unión Europea en lo político y económico, so pena y amenaza de iniciar unas hipotéticas negociaciones para alcanzar la unificación de Irlanda.

El futuro del Reino Unido se encuentra ante una incertidumbre que, brevemente podemos cifrar en los siguientes obstáculos: todo el mundo ignora hasta cuándo la Primera Ministra conservará la mayoría en el Parlamento Británico, bien por causa de la retirada del apoyo norirlandés o por una revuelta palaciega dentro de los muros del grupo conservador en

Westminster. Si esto sucediera, la incertidumbre es, si cabe, todavía más grande: es difícil predecir si la nueva situación conduciría al nombramiento de un Primer Ministro o a la convocatoria de unas nuevas Elecciones Generales en las que, en todo caso, el Partido Conservador no obtendría la mayoría absoluta. Si los ganadores fueran de otro partido, o coalición de partidos, se cierne la duda de si se anularía el referéndum del Brexit o se convocaría un segundo, con el fin de anular el primero.

Ante esta situación, los euroescépticos, amparados por la Primera Ministra, han entendido y así lo propagan, que una alternativa seria y verosímil sería la de conceder una nueva vitalidad a la Commonwealth. Esa vitalidad vendría de la mano de la industria, del comercio y, sobretodo, de crear los contenidos de una nueva Commonwealth sedimentada en los lazos comunes que concede el desaparecido Imperio Británico.

## C

La desconexión de la Unión Europea conllevaría un cambio de rumbo para un Reino Unido que se convertiría en el eje de una asociación de naciones que, bien pensado, está cercana a los 2000 millones de habitantes. Evidentemente, esa Commonwealth debe mantener viva a la City de Londres, hoy dando los primeros pasos de su desmantelamiento hacia otras ciudades europeas; debe reformular un comercio abierto en ámbitos en los que los socios africanos, sobretodo, tienen mucho que avanzar, fundamentalmente en el campo de las nuevas tecnologías. Pero para dar salida y verosimilitud a esa Commonwealth debe prestarse atención a un ámbito que viene exigido por la propia sociedad británica en particular y de la Commonwealth en general.

Buena parte de los ciudadanos europeos residentes en el Reino Unido pertenecen a un mundo de profesionales, docentes, investigadores y ejecutivos que, según los borradores de las negociaciones en materia de inmigración, no tienen garantizada su continuidad de residencia en el Reino Unido.

En materia educativa, debe tenerse en cuenta que la desconexión de las Universidades Británicas de los programas europeos, fundamentalmente ERASMUS+, plantea una reorientación en la enseñanza superior que también busca las raíces en el devenir de la Commonwealth. Es cierto que las Universidades Británicas nunca han estado demasiado abiertas a los programas ERASMUS+. La normativa universitaria británica concibe la

universidad como una empresa que genera resultados fundamentalmente económicos. Como es sabido los alumnos ERASMUS+ abonan las tasas de sus matrículas en el lugar de origen, cursan sus estudios en la universidad de destino y, de regreso, convalidan las asignaturas superadas en la institución en la que cursan sus estudios de grado o postgrado. Las autoridades universitarias británicas, desde hace décadas, han entendido que los estudiantes europeos no resultan interesantes ni beneficiosos para cursar parte de sus estudios de grado o postgrado en sus aulas. Resultan beneficiosos para incorporarse a los miles de programas existentes que ofertan cursos intensivos de lengua y civilización británicas o, llegado el caso, de cursos intensivos, de alta carestía, en los que en periodos cortos seguirán cursos de especialización. Esta estrategia viene definida por considerar la Universidad como fuente de ingresos, lo que no sucede con los programas europeos. A su lado siempre se ha expresado una deficiencia, algunos la declaran incapacidad de utilizar la lengua inglesa como lengua vehicular de estudios universitarios.

A cambio, las universidades británicas, desde una perspectiva imperial o, para algunos, imperialista, han centrado su interés en los potenciales estudiantes universitarios que cursen sus grados o postgrados completos previo pago de las tasas correspondientes (unos 11.000 euros por curso). En ese mercado estudiantil han incluido a todos los estudiantes de la Commonwealth, usuarios como son de la lengua inglesa como vehicular, además de dos países de singular importancia para ellos: Estados Unidos, que podría ser asimilable a un país de la Commonwealth, y China, economía emergente que pronto sucederá a Estados Unidos como primera potencia mundial.

Los problemas que en materia de inmigración pudieran tener los estudiantes europeos en el Reino Unido es materia que todavía hoy pertenece al campo de la mera especulación. En lo que toca a los estudiantes provenientes de la Commonwealth, merece recordar que las leyes británicas de inmigración resultan para ellos favorables y en lo que toca a las antiguas colonias en proceso de desarrollo, favorecidas por un sistema de becas igualmente favorable para quienes pertenecen a las clases más desfavorecidas de la sociedad.

## D

Toda esta historia singular y particular del Reino Unido, del Imperio Británico, de la incógnita que plantea la desconexión del Brexit, y sobre todo de una Commonwealth que todavía sigue fijándose en las universidades inglesas en concreto para la obtención de una formación íntegra que les abra paso en cualquiera de los campos en su país de origen y, llegado el caso, en el propio Reino Unido es el foco de nuestro interés teniendo en cuenta el tamaño de algunos de esos países (Estados Unidos, India, China, Pakistán y Bangladesh) o bien que, sin ser miembros de la Commonwealth revisten unas características muy concretas: Estados Unidos y China.

Las cifras que hemos manejado para nuestro estudio certifican la toma de pulso que venimos haciendo en este resumen. Las universidades británicas, desde la creación del programa ERASMUS, siempre se han demostrado remisas a la aceptación de estudiantes europeos. Y ello, se debe a dos razones: la primera que los alumnos europeos que realizan una estancia ERASMUS en las universidades británicas no aportan ingresos a sus arcas (recordemos que los alumnos ERASMUS abonan su matrícula en la universidad de origen y en la de destino únicamente cursan los estudios que, posteriormente, serán validados por su universidad de procedencia). Un segundo y constante hándicap que han aducido las universidades británicas es la “falta de nivel” en lengua inglesa de los alumnos procedentes de Europa, a excepción de los escandinavos y de los alumnos cuya raíz lingüística pertenece al ámbito de las lenguas eslavas.

En las tablas que presentamos en la versión extensa de este trabajo, hechas públicas por *Higher Education Student Data (HESA)* se percibe con claridad que el número de estudiantes no europeos dobla al número de los europeos. De nuevo, se demuestra el afán recaudatorio de las universidades británicas que deben de demostrar, como una empresa cualquiera, unos beneficios al final del ejercicio económico.

En el año académico 2015/2016, precisamente en el que se celebró el referéndum del Brexit, los estudiantes no europeos pertenecientes a los países de la Commonwealth y de la China emergente son mayoría definida. Esto es debido a que los estudiantes no europeos cursan estudios de grado o postgrado efectuando sus matrículas en la universidad británica de que se trate a la vez que una buena parte de ellos pertenecen a la Commonwealth en donde bien tienen la lengua inglesa como idioma nativo, bien el inglés es la lengua vehicular para los estudios primarios, secundarios y terciarios. A modo de

ejemplo, bástenos citar la casuística concreta de las universidades escocesas: los alumnos escoceses y europeos no abonan tasas de matrícula, únicamente derechos de examen. En contraste, los alumnos no europeos provenientes del resto del mundo abonan sus matrículas y a los estudios de grado le añaden un año introductorio y obligatorio en las materias que, dependiendo de los estudios de que se trate, están tipificadas de obligado seguimiento. Por otra parte, los alumnos no europeos, a excepción de los de la Commonwealth, que acreditan sus estudios a través de los certificados pertinentes, casi siempre redactados en inglés, deberán demostrar un manejo de la lengua inglesa equivalente al nivel europeo de C2.1. Este último extremo también es de aplicación para aquellos estudiantes europeos que quieran cursar cualquiera de los tres ciclos en los que se divide la enseñanza universitaria. A modo de ejemplo también, son escasas las universidades europeas que imparten cursos de lengua inglesa a ese nivel o superior (C2.2).

En el caso concreto de la Universidad de León, y específicamente en el grado de Comercio Internacional, cuya estancia europea es obligatoria en el tercer curso, la oferta que se nos presenta para los destinos británicos no supera media docena de un total de unos sesenta alumnos matriculados.

En la tercera tabla se detalla, por países, los que envían mayor número de estudiantes a universidades británicas. Destaca el número de estudiantes chinos, pero inmediatamente después, los cuatro países que le siguen, bien pertenecen a la Commonwealth o son procedentes de Estados Unidos, que ocupa el tercer lugar, por razones lingüísticas evidentes y económicas fáciles de comprender (las universidades norteamericanas suelen cargar, de media, unos 32.000 euros por tasas académicas y curso universitario). Teniendo en cuenta que las matrículas para curso completo en las universidades británicas ascienden a unas 11.000 libras, en el caso del estudiante norteamericano con el importe de un año americano puede afrontar tres en el Reino Unido.

La acepción cultural de confundir una parte por el todo, es decir, Inglaterra por el Reino Unido, hace que la mayor concentración de estudiantes extranjeros se produzca en Inglaterra. Finalmente, en la tabla cuarta, se observa que los ingresos producidos por los estudiantes extranjeros en el Reino Unido que abonan sus matrículas, significan una importante fuente de ingresos para las arcas de las universidades británicas en concreto, y del propio país en general.

A la objeción que se pudiera plantear señalando que las universidades británicas pudieran tener un espíritu antieuropeo, hay que señalar que prefieren a los estudiantes no europeos fundamentalmente por razones de naturaleza económica. Ellos son los que siguen ciclos de estudios completos, se gradúan por una universidad británica determinada y, consecuentemente, abonan las tasas. Las cifras que han de abonar los estudiantes europeos no ERASMUS suponen unas cuantías difíciles de afrontar, ante lo que la opción del estudiante europeo prefiere optar por estancias breves o cursos intensivos que igualmente debe abonar, bien sea en materia lingüística o de contenido específico.

## E

Ante todo lo expuesto, los partidarios del Brexit, y que hoy ocupan el gobierno británico se inclinan por la desconexión de Europa con acuerdo o sin él. Presentan, como alternativa, la reestructuración de una nueva Commonwealth, hoy en día, quizás como rasgo premonitorio, ya presidida por el heredero de la Corona. Esa alternativa se trataría de que Londres volviera a convertirse en epicentro de una especie de nuevo Imperio Británico. Y desde él, poder competir en igualdad con el resto del mundo con Europa en términos, cuando menos, de igualdad si no es que de superioridad.

Algo hay de cierto en el discurrir de las finanzas universitarias: los estudiantes provenientes de la Commonwealth no tienen la barrera lingüística. En términos de las clases sociales que envían estudiantes al Reino Unido, su extracción pertenece a la clase alta o media alta. Pero, además, dos son los aspectos que sitúan a estos alumnos en una mejor posición ante las universidades británicas que los europeos: la política de becas apadrinada por la Commonwealth es un elemento destacable y que, fundamentalmente, se concentra en los países de la Commonwealth en vías de desarrollo ubicados en el continente africano. De otra parte, se encuentra la legislación específica en materia de extranjería para los súbditos estudiantes provenientes de la Commonwealth, claramente mucho más convenientes que la ideada para estudiantes europeos una vez que entre en vigor tras la desconexión (el gobierno de Londres en su borrador propone la posibilidad de que estudiantes europeos cursen estudios en el Reino Unido, si bien fuera de los programas ERASMUS a los que dejarían de pertenecer. Por si esto fuera poco, los estudiantes europeos no tendrían garantizada su permanencia en el Reino Unido a la conclusión de sus estudios y, por tanto, podrían verse en la tesitura de tener que rechazar

posibles ofertas de trabajo. En esa dificultad también entra las restricciones que en el borrador quieren aplicarse a los estudiantes europeos que desearan, durante su estancia en el Reino Unido, permanecer en el mismo acompañados de miembros de su familia. La dificultad de estos últimos para la obtención de un visado de referencia sería poco menos que imposible de obtener).

En los momentos en los que se cierra este trabajo, el Gobierno Británico y las instituciones europeas comienzan a prepararse ante un posible NO acuerdo y cómo debería abordarse esta situación. En Europa viene en crecimiento la idea de una imposición dura que generaría una circunstancia imprevisible entre el Reino Unido y la Unión Europea. En segundo lugar, sospechosamente, el Partido Laborista, primer partido de la oposición está mudo ante esta situación de desconcierto. Y, en tercer lugar, se halla la ciudadanía británica que según la empresa demoscópica *YouGov* es partidaria en un 57% de que en caso de producirse un acuerdo Reino Unido – Unión Europea, el tal acuerdo debería someterse a referéndum, teniendo así la última palabra el pueblo británico. Si en ese hipotético referéndum la opción victoriosa fuera la del rechazo al acuerdo, generaría unas repercusiones imprevisibles y, en todo caso, la caída del actual gobierno. No sería de sorprender que se quisiera interpretar la celebración de ese referéndum como una invalidación del celebrado el 23 de junio de 2016.

Entre tanto si la incertidumbre actual genera desconfianza en los mercados, los partidarios del Brexit ahondan todavía más en unas posibles buenas expectativas económicas en el ámbito de una Commonwealth reestructurada y fortalecida.

Mientras esto ocurre, las universidades británicas, con independencia de sus preferencias europeas o anti-europeas, tienen una idea clara para sus finanzas universitarias: interesan más los alumnos que abonan tasas (no europeos) en detrimento de los europeos que, aunque nunca lo han hecho en cifras importantes en su mayoría llegarían al Reino Unido bajo el programa ERASMUS.