



Department of Political Science, PPE

Thesis in

*HOW FORMER BRITISH COLONIES IN AFRICA HAVE REACTED TO THE
BREXIT*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
CHAPTER I.....	5
3.1 The origins of the African dependency on the European countries.....	5
3.2 Forms of control.....	5
3.3 Explorations.....	6
3.4 Berlin Conference and its consequences.....	8
3.5 Economic indebtedness.....	9
3.6 Resistance and rebellion	10
3.7 The Victorian “Three C”	11
CHAPTER II.....	12
2.1 Spoils of war.....	13
2.2 Atlantic pact 1941 and Brazzaville conference 1944.....	14
2.3 Manchester Pan-Africanism congress.....	16
2.4 End of the indirect rule.....	16
2.5 South Africa.....	17
2.6 Nigeria	19
2.7 Keyna.....	21
CHAPTER III.....	22
I part	
3.1 What is Brexit?	23
3.2 Who wanted the referendum to happen?.....	26
3.3 Why move away from the European Union so abruptly?.....	27
3.4 Considerations.....	28
II part	
3.5 How does the Motherland handle the former African colonies?.....	29
3.6 South Africa.....	29
3.7 Nigeria.....	32
3.8 Kenya.....	34

3.9 Conclusion.....37

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....40

INTRODUCTION

Many scientists and authors have examined the intricacy of the African nation from a variety of angles in an effort to shed light on its underdeveloped economy. The total analysis in this study has been done while considering the economic, social, and political ramifications, as well as numerous other realms like culture, climate, and religion.

This study aims to identify the factors that led to the economic underdevelopment of Africa and the symbiotic relationship between Africa and Europe that still exists in modern society.

In Chapter I, the colonialism era between the 19th and 20th centuries by the major European countries will be examined, with a particular emphasis on the British Empire under Queen Victoria and its conquest in the uncharted territory. It will be possible to grasp the principles of the economic dependency that many African states have on what is now the United Kingdom and have an understanding of how this extremely strong dependence came about.

The second chapter of the thesis will present a brief survey of the major historical events and happenings involving major international players such as the USA, England and France from World War II to the early 1960s. Next, the following former British Colonies-South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya-will be taken as tools for analysis their process of independence from London. The latter, by virtue of Brexit, will highlight the consequences of economic interdependence and related trade with London.

In Chapter III, Through the study of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, it will be analyzed how the Brexit has transformed the economic relations between former British colonies, presented in the previous chapter (South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya), and London. The first part of the third chapter will analyze brexit itself, who wanted it and who voted for it. Then the reasons for the united kingdom's exit from the European union will be described and general considerations will be drawn. To conclude the third chapter will look at how Brexit has transformed economic relations between former British colonies, presented in the previous chapter and London.

The Conclusion will summarize how the Brexit reform has altered the economic and political relationship with Africa and how the United Kingdom and the African continent have traded over the years.

CHAPTER I

1. THE CAUSES OF AFRICA'S DEPENDENCE ON THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Between 1870 and 1945, the violent expansion of imperial regimes and the struggles against them by indigenous populations rapidly and constantly changed the world map. The frenzied desire to conquer lands rich in precious materials and the inexorable will to impose oneself on the global stage as a standard to follow meant that by the 1930s, almost eighty-five percent of the earth's surface was part of an imperial system¹. Before delving into a topic as broad as colonialism, it must be remembered that this process was formalized and expedited by the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), which established new rules for European trade in Africa and geometrically defined territorial possessions on the continent. At the end of the 19th century, Liberia and Abyssinia were the only African states not subject to European territorial claims. Among the major European powers, to be understood as true empires, despite some of them not being formally declared as such (i.e. in Italy, only under Mussolini was the word 'empire' used), there were collaborations in the medical, economic, and environmental fields. At the same time, the empires watched each other, ensuring that borders and territories were respected and not violated. In addition, the construction of cities administered by Europeans within colonized territories meant that the colonizing country had a way of being even closer to the overseas realities and local governments. A first object of study is the analysis of the different forms of domination and control, which will be examined in the paragraph below, over local populations characterized by violence and brutality.

1.1 Forms of control

The expansion of the British Empire into Africa was challenging as it had to confront peoples of different origins and ethnicities; from the Boers in South Africa, Dutch settlers who established themselves in southern Africa in the first half of the seventeenth century², to local tribes that inflicted great defeats to the Redcoats. Nonetheless, British superiority in medical, technological, and military fields were overwhelming to the point of conquering and annexing 12 regions in the presence of Queen Victoria. However, the British granted significant autonomy and freedom to the conquered populations, thus the form of control took the name of *Indirect Rule*. Indeed, their control can be defined as indirect, as they granted significant

¹ FIELDHOUSE 1982, p.373

² I.STADERINI, p. 82

autonomy to local forces. British indirect rule consisted of endorsing existing European powers, such as the Boer people, and using them as intermediaries to control the new conquered territories. The British Indirect rule was often internationally known as a protectorate, a "masked" form of control that allowed the colonized country full autonomy in internal affairs, but at the end directed the foreign affairs by the occupied state, organizing its defence and implementing a certain political influence³. An historical example of a protectorate was Egypt from 1914 to 1922.

The British Indirect Rule contrasted with French *Colonial Assimilation*. The Jacobin French Empire distinguished itself from the British one by imposing a centralized government that closely controlled all conquered territories. In this specific case, Africans were full-fledged French citizens who could hold the highest political office in the French state⁴. The idea was that these territories were part of France and that over time even the local population would become French. Algeria, for example, was part of metropolitan French territory, and was therefore administratively organized exactly like major French cities. However, both French and British colonialism proved to be unsuccessful, as will be seen in the following paragraphs.

1.2 Explorations

The first steps of late 19th century colonialism can be attributed to King Leopold II of Belgium. Despite the small size and relative population of Belgium in the 1800s, Leopold II considered his state equal to the great neighbouring powers such as France and the German Empire, which were much larger. In fact, in terms of industrial development, Belgium was second only to Great Britain and, thanks to the territories acquired in the 17th century and their subsequent privatization, had considerable economic resources that could fund overseas initiatives⁵. To understand Leopold II's colonial intentions, who opened the doors to 20th century colonialism, it suffices to read what he wrote in a letter in November 1877: "we must grab a piece of this *magnifique gatau africain*⁶". However, the message, quite clear, did not have much resonance and did not raise the fears of European powers, allowing for the Flemish to organize a first inspection in the East African territories that led to the proclamation of the "Free State of Congo" under Belgian domination in 1885. Nevertheless, it must be said that the creation of this state by Leopold II and his desire to possess a settlement in Africa is simply the consequence of

³ READER 1997,p.542

⁴ READER 1997,p.543

⁵ BALLANNTYNE 2022, p. 98

⁶ STENGERS, 1988, in Forster, Mommsen and Robinson,pp.229-46

the exploratory missions of the British Empire in Africa between 1841 and 1873, by the "Livingstone East Coast Expedition". The reporting and dissemination of overseas discoveries by the British drew the interest of many states, especially Belgium. British explorers such as Henry Morton Stanley reported their discoveries in the new territories to journalists from the Times, a newspaper that was delivered to Leopold II daily by the secret services. Knowing of Queen Victoria's refusal to continue exploring the equatorial territories, Leopold II hired the British explorer Stanley, who was eager to continue his mission in Africa. Over time, the Belgian King realized the strong potential of Africa, particularly in the territories corresponding to today's Congo, rich in natural resources. In order to give his colonial plans a framework of esteem and respectability, he organized a conference between states, which is now known as the Brussels Geographic Conference of 1876. The "gloriously unrealizable and absurd" plan, as described by participating state delegations, however, met no resistance and continued with the creation of the "International African Association", a special body entrusted with the task of international security in African territory. The Belgian King was elected president of the association and invested with the role of leader of a humanitarian crusade aimed at bringing civilization to Africa. In reality, behind this association, as was soon discovered, lay the expansionist desires of Belgium. When in 1882 the French government embarked on an expedition in the northern part of the Congo, Leopold II dissolved the International African Association out of fear of losing those lands, and in its place established the "International Congo Association", completely lacking any ties to the various international organizations that had been part of the previous society⁷. In other words, the King of Congo had, arbitrarily under international law, created an authentic state under his control. At that point, in the same year, Leopold II offered the French an optional right to his Congolese territories, on condition of recognizing his supremacy. This gesture was not internationally appreciated, especially by the British, who labelled it as "a squalid and mean trick"⁸. Portugal, upon hearing of the recognition of Belgian Congo, proposed a conference to clarify the matter. This conference came to be known as the Berlin Conference.

⁷ SEVERIN, p.249, cit. in Berderman, p.71

⁸ STENGERS 1967, p.162

1.3 Berlin Conference and its consequences

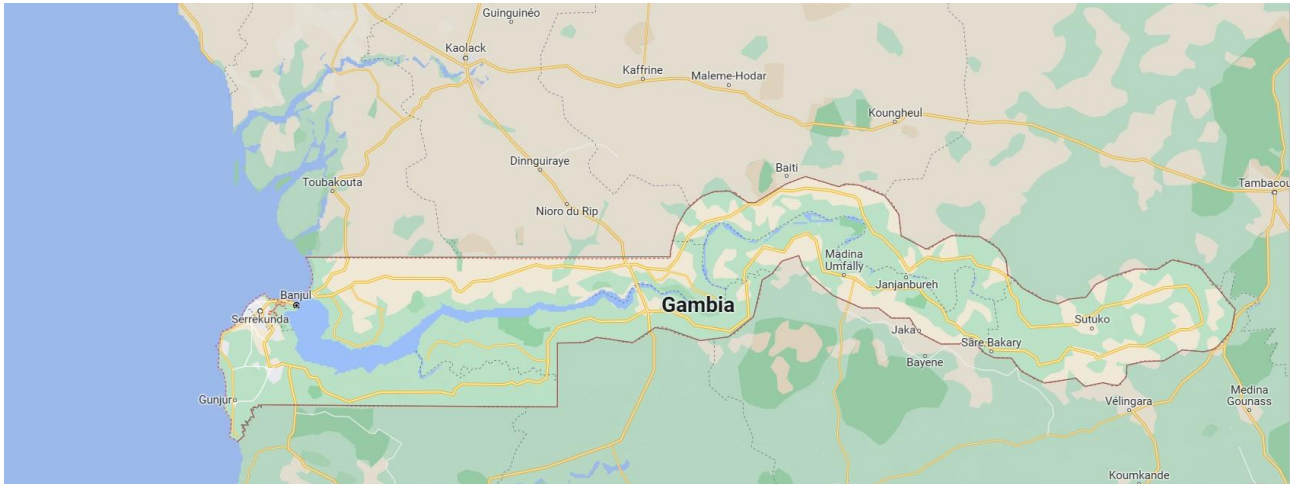
The 1884 International Conference of Berlin was convened by Portugal in order to clarify the situation of the new Congolese state of Leopold II; however, it had quite different outcomes. Thirteen nations participated: Austria, Norway, Italy, Belgium, the German Empire, Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and the USA. The "International Association of the Congo" was not represented, as its international status was under discussion, but it participated, nonetheless. It is worth to remember that no African leader participated in the conference. Despite French interests in the sovereignty of the shores of the Malebo Pool (northern Congo) and Portugal's claim to possession of the Congo River estuary, both states recognized the strategic importance of the new Belgian state as it guaranteed the safeguarding of free trade. At the end of the negotiations, territorial agreements were signed with the German Empire, France, and Portugal, while Great Britain refused to recognize the borders claimed by Leopold II, which were merely "recklessly" drawn lines. The Berlin Agreement, signed on February 25, 1885, which gave international recognition to the vast sovereign state of the King of Belgium, had significant consequences. The main ones were:

- 1) States created artificially.
- 2) It establishes the right of "pre-emption" and the corresponding possession of the occupied territories (who arrives first owns the land).
- 3) Borders drawn unscrupulously.

I omit from the analysis the savage genocide committed in Belgian Congo against local tribes between 1890-1910, caused by the exploitation of environmental resources, such as the India rubber. The Berlin Conference gave rise to multiple new states, each under the control of the major European powers. What is essential to understand is that the main cause of the poverty of the African continent today is due to the fragmentation into numerous states by the colonized territories. A statistical study confirms that in Africa, no less than 177 cultural-ethnic areas have been divided by international borders⁹. It is also necessary to emphasize how the borders that delimited the new states were decided. To understand the indifference and superficiality with which the borders were drawn, it is worth quoting the text that described the border between Tanzania and Kenya, born from the Anglo-German agreement: "On the high bank, the border goes from the

⁹ READER 1997,p.492

baobab tree to the second baobab tree. Two blocks of cement were placed in the intermediate space and some signs were carved on the trunks". "In 1993, neither of the baobab trees adopted as a reference point in the treaty was still identifiable"¹⁰. Another example is the border between Senegal and Gambia.



The border between the two states is entirely geometrical, consisting of arches and straight lines. All these divisions were made without hesitation, without taking into account the local populations, who were most often absorbed by other states or divided and merged with others. Exactly like the Jassini people, who, after the division of the territories of Kenya and Tanzania, did not appear in any Kenyan or Tanzanian administrative office, so the inhabitants were not even aware of their own residency.

1.4 Economic Indebtedness

The three decades of transition from dependence to economic self-sufficiency marked the entire continent's dependence on colonial domination¹¹. Indeed, before achieving economic self-sufficiency, economic debts contracted with the colonizers inexorably grew. Initially, these debts were incurred with private companies such as the British Imperial East Africa, but as the private companies' deficits increased, the colonial powers were forced to increase their state financing. At that point, whether they liked it or not, debts were contracted with the colonizing state, and it was subsequently necessary to repay the loan obtained. To make this concept a little more tangible, I propose an example: a bank acquires a land on which a needy farmer works the land, in order to bring home just enough to survive. The bank invests money in that land for purely personal reasons, detached in every way from those of the poor farmer. After 20 years,

¹⁰ READER 1997, p. 489

¹¹ READER 1997, p.489

aware of the wrong investment, the bank's shareholders oblige the farmer to repay their mistakes, (i.e., repaying the bank money invested using the farmer minimal assets).

Unfortunately, these investments in African territory were mostly unprofitable or even failures.

In 1913, for example, the Africa voice represented only 7% of Great Britain's foreign trade, excluding gold, and tropical Africa accounted for less than 2% of British trade.

The mandates under which the League of Nations had distributed Germany's African territories among the allied colonial powers in the post-World War I period established that it would be a "sacred task of civilization" to govern them until they were able to "stand on their own in the difficulties of the modern world."¹² In other words, the colonial powers were not only obliged to govern the colonies but also to develop them into active members of the international community in economic and political terms. All this made the economic bond with the European country even closer, making their economy more dependent on foreign state financing.

1.5. Resistance and Rebellion

Despite the limited presence of the colonizing people in African territory, African individuals and groups were forced to surrender their lands, pay taxes, and submit to foreign laws. However, this passivity was forced and indispensable for their survival. First and foremost, European troops had superior weapons such as the Maxim machine gun, which fired 11 bullets per second compared to old single-shot muskets used by the few tribes who emerged victorious from mid-nineteenth century wars. Moreover, the signatories of the 1890 Brussels Convention had agreed not to sell new weapons invented in Europe to Africans. Resistance was very limited and ineffective, given the inferiority of military technologies and the disorganization among different tribes, which were often characterized by a stateless society. Adding up all the participants in civil resistance, only 0.5% of the population actively opposed colonial invasion¹³. Moreover, between 1885 and the beginning of World War I, the continent was struck by a series of biblical-sized natural calamities such as droughts, famines, and bovine plague. The few tribal populations that rebelled against colonial regimes were quickly and barbarously suppressed. Populations like the Herero and Nama in southwestern Africa were decimated by the German Empire, and the first concentration camps were operated, in which over 75,000 Herero lost their lives. But the wars in Africa were not only between colonizers and Africans, but as happened in 1899-1902 with the Anglo-Boer conflict, they were also

¹² CONRAD 1902, Marnham

¹³ READER 1997,p.501

between European states. Even though the Anglo-Boer War was supposed to involve only the English and Dutch colonists, tens of thousands of Africans were used in the wars alongside British and Dutch armies. The African people were effectively made slaves, robbed of their possessions, and deprived of every human right by European powers that exploited their superiority in technical-scientific fields to conquer their free lands, which were not free. It is true that colonization had divided many communities, sacrificing their freedom, but it has also contributed to set the peace on the continent. Almost all wars that broke out after the colonial period were fought within national borders and not between neighbouring states.¹⁴

1.6 The Victorian "Three C's"

Education is highly respected in Africa. In 1927, the British colonial administrator founded the Achimota College, the first secondary school in the Ivory Coast. The use of European textbooks led to ridiculous discrepancies between the contents of the teaching in schools and the daily reality of the students. In fact, African students, although few, studied notions and topics strictly related to European socioeconomic and political dynamics, which turned out to be ephemeral for Africans. The study of the morphology of the European continent was important, but never as important as the study of the African continent itself. Studies were focused only on Europe and never on Africa. However, this education provided by the British was beneficial to African inhabitants. In fact, at Achimota, in 1938, 37 students were prepared to obtain a diploma from the University of London.¹⁵ At Foru Bay College in Sierra Leone, two or three students a year obtained bachelor's degrees from Durham University. Moreover, education and travel abroad had taught the privileged to discuss high-level diplomatic, economic, and political issues. Access to education during the colonial period determined the ethnic composition of the groups of activists who subsequently claimed independence. The theme of education was very important to the British. In fact, Queen Victoria and the British government made a considerable effort to provide education to African populations so that they could actively participate in the future politics of the country in which they lived. The British conceived a specific figure in the field of education: the district commissioner. He had to come from one of the best English universities of the time (Oxford, Cambridge, or Trinity College) with the highest marks and possess multiple skills and virtues. Moreover, the district commissioner had to know the language of the local populations and subsequently pass an exam on the local penal code and, in fact, became the ruler of the district and acted as a judge. "The district

¹⁴ BALLANTYNE, p.96

¹⁵ READER 1997, p.516

commissioner was also responsible for the welfare of his Africans," wrote Lumley in his memoirs published posthumously in 1976¹⁶. However, this idea was just a result of the imperialistic view of exploiting the education channel in order to increase the motherland's population. In fact, as the Harrow headmistress writes: the headmaster of an English school must not forget, when he thinks about the future of his students, that they are destined to become citizens of the largest empire in the world... will inspire in them the faith in the divine mission of our country and our race."¹⁷

A second, but no less important, theme on which the British Empire focused was the conversion of local populations to Christianity. In fact, missionaries were celebrated by the homeland press for having concretely demonstrated how Christian teaching could serve to what the supporters of Victorian expansionist policy called "the three C's" of imperialism: *Christianity, Civilization, Commerce*.¹⁸ Missionaries considered education primarily a means of conversion, believing that African priests could spread the Christian faith more effectively than European missionaries. Ultimately, Christianity, civilization, and commerce were nothing more than the result of the education so wanted by the British.

The British explorations of the Livingston expedition, the subsequent conquests and the scramble of Africa through the Berlin Conference, the ways in which conquered lands were administered, and the subsequent economic indebtedness are just some of the characteristics of European colonialism. Although they may seem detached, both temporally and geographically, they are closely connected to each other and allow the reader to understand, although minimally, the topics discussed in the following two chapters.

¹⁶ LUMLEY, pp.10-11

¹⁷ Cit.in RANGER 2022, p.67

¹⁸ BALLANTYNE 2022, p.67

CHAPTER II

In this chapter, several historical events, themes, and case studies will be analysed as a prerequisite to understanding the core work illustrated in the next chapter. The following former British colonies will be examined as an analytical tool, due to their strong economic dependence on London: South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. These countries, in light of Brexit, will highlight the consequences of economic interdependence and trade with London.

However, before directly addressing the topic, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the main historical events that directly involved these countries from the Second World War to the early 1960s, a period in which countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria were able to complete their independence process from the now “former European colonial powers”.

2.1 Spoils of war

If with the advent of the Second World War, the attention on the African continent had momentarily taken a backseat, the same cannot be said for the participation of Africans in the war. In fact, African colonies had made a massive contribution of men to the war effort, with over 160,000 African soldiers recruited by the French in North Africa and West Africa. At the end of the war, it was discovered that more than 374,000 Africans from British colonies had participated in the fight, along with 21,000 whites from southern Africa¹⁹. The contribution of men given by the continent was significant, just as important as its mineral resources had proven to be for the allied victory. As the enemy prevented access to the regular sources of iron, tin, copper, and zinc, the allies turned to Africa. The development of the atomic bomb, for example, which abruptly ended the war with Japan, depended largely on the uranium extracted from Congo²⁰. Despite the colonies being plundered and exploited to the fullest by European powers during the war, paradoxically this process had positive effects. In fact, in Southern Africa, the manufacturing industry grew at a very high rate, and in South Africa, industrial enterprises developed just as rapidly, reaching a gross industrial output of over one billion dollars in 1945.²¹

¹⁹ READER 1997, p.545

²⁰ DUMMET , p.392

²¹ COQUERY 1993, p.292

Despite the Second World War took place between 1939 and 1945, it triggered a wave of revolution by many African states, starting in 1951 with the Gold Coast (Ghana today), which radically transformed the geopolitical landscape of the African continent within twenty years.

2.2 Atlantic pact 1941 and Brazzaville conference 1944

In 1941, during the darkest period of the war, when German forces had control over Europe and threatened to invade Great Britain, Winston Churchill crossed the Atlantic to ask for the American help. The secret meeting between the British Prime Minister and the US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt took place off Newfoundland, where the Atlantic Charter was formulated, along with the "Lend-Lease" agreement that would allow the US to provide arms and food to the British. In return, it is important to emphasize that Roosevelt insisted that one of the objectives of the post-war Atlantic Charter was the commitment to grant self-determination to all colonies. Clause 3 stated:

"They (the British and American governments) respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live, and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."²²

England, on the brink of bankruptcy and under the threat of Nazi invasion, was forced to accept any request from Washington. However, Churchill stated to the House of Commons that the Atlantic Charter concerned European states and nations and not the British colonies in Africa, which greatly angered African activists.²³ On the other side Roosevelt, stated within the clause 5 of the agreement that the United States of America should have "equal access to the trade and raw materials of the world,"²⁴ making clear Washington's real interests.

American hypocrisy reminds us once again that sometimes behind a noble cause advocated by the West, such as the right of choice of government for African populations, there is an own interest devoid of any positive value.

The colonial powers knew that their African empires were close to an end. The two superpowers that emerged from the war, the United States to the west and the Soviet Union to the east, were both determined to end colonialism in Africa, albeit from diametrically opposed ideologies. The French, who did not look favourably upon post-war American ambitions, in 1944, organized a conference on French Africa, concerning the plan for post-war political relations, in Brazzaville, the current

²² SHILLINGTON 1989,p.372

²³ LYNCH 1982, p.74

²⁴ ROBINSON 1982, p.34

capital of the Republic of Congo. The conclusion of the conference established the rejection of any form of independence and, in addition, to further bind the French colonies to the motherland, exacerbated by the Atlantic Pact, it was decided that some representatives of the colonies would be elected to the French legislative assemblies.²⁵ Below are the words spoken by General De Gaulle to the President of the United States in response to the Atlantic Charter:

"France cannot regain the political power exercised at the international level, if it is excluded from the organization of the great powers and their decisions (Atlantic Pact)."²⁶

If behind American hypocrisy there was an irresistible desire to be at the same position with other states for a possible second "Scramble for Africa," the French attitude implied the intent to "buy" the Africans by promising them greater political inclusion, until they achieved a political status equal to that of the motherland. A back-and-forth between Washington and Paris, a real chess game, driven by economic and geopolitical interests covered up by solidary, progressive, and charitable ideologies.



Roosevelt, De Gaulle, Churchill in Casablanca, Morocco.

The 1941 Atlantic Pact between England and the United States, the 1944 Brazzaville Conference, contributed to spread those anti-colonialist ideals sufficiently that within a few years gave rise to those revolts that led several African states to be independent.

²⁵ CONQUERY 1993, p.294

²⁶ GIFFORD 1982, p.34

2.3 Manchester Pan-Africanism congress

The self-independence of the British colonies was not considered a pressing issue to be resolved immediately from London. In fact, the common opinion within the Colonial Office was that the main African territories would need another seventy or eighty years of British rule before deserving self-governance.²⁷ The Americans, whose views on the self-determination of peoples clashed with their desire to control strategic bases in the Pacific, were even more pessimistic. It is enough to consider that the Americans believed it would take at least one hundred years before self-government could be discussed²⁸. The general opinion of the West regarding African independence was dangerously opposed to the anti-colonialist sentiments of African activists, who, stimulated by the war, wanted much more and in a shorter time frame²⁹. In 1945, the Sixth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester, England. For the first time, there were few Afro-Americans and a strong presence of young African leaders (clear consequences of the Twentieth century's Pan-Africanism)³⁰. I briefly report the resolutions approved at the congress:

"The delegates believe in peace (...) We are determined to be free (...) We want the right to earn a decent living (...) We demand the autonomy and independence of black Africa (...) We will fight in every possible way for freedom, democracy, and social improvement."³¹

These resolutions approved at the Manchester congress were an open challenge to colonial powers and spread a weak but hopeful wind of change.

2.4 End of the Indirect rule

The French had considered maintaining control of their colonies by offering Africans only an apparent role in the affairs of the "greater France". The British, on the other hand, believed that although the demand for self-government by the African population was still limited, the rise of nationalism would be inevitable. Therefore, since 1946, they initiated plans to give Africans greater control over their affairs. In 1947, the London government commission proposed a program of preparation for self-government, so that the transfer of power could take place "with minimal

²⁷ MEREDITH, p.38

²⁸ IDEM, p.39

²⁹ READER 1997, p.548

³⁰ IDEM, p.549

³¹ LEGUM, p.137

friction and the highest degree of efficiency possible". However, some riots that occurred in Accra in 1948 persuaded the Colonial Office to accelerate the introduction of direct elections and a para-ministerial system in the Gold Coast. In 1951, elections in the Gold Coast were won by a local politician who had to form a new government, achieving the desired timescale for independence in just fifteen years, but without a political class capable of leading the nation. The hasty transfer of power on the Gold Coast raised expectations throughout Africa. According to London, the handover would take place gradually, according to the conditions of each colony, beginning with the democratization of local government and the consequent end of the Indirect Rule (Chapter I). Unfortunately, although predictable, the transfer of power was not easy and painless, and therefore the British government concluded that it was better to grant power too early than too late. It is worth remembering that a large part of the economic and social backwardness in 21st-century Africa is due to the export and consequent depletion of natural resources in the first phase of colonialism (Chapter I), but above all to it is due to the lack of economic, political, and social support from European powers towards African states in the transition from being a victim of colonial rule to the much-desired independence.

In the following paragraphs, the process of conversion from colonized states to independent nations will be discussed for the following African countries: South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya.

2.5 South Africa

The economic, political, and social relationships that have existed between South Africa, formerly the Union of South Africa until 1961, and the United Kingdom are of utmost importance in understanding the economic and political consequences of Brexit. Following the Anglo-Boer War, the complicity between the two countries was born in 1909 when the African territory was formally established as a unitary "dominion" within the Commonwealth, taking the name of the Union of South Africa. Regarding the history of South Africa, being a very extensive and complex topic, I will only report the most important historical events between South Africa and the United Kingdom from the past century until today.

To begin untangling what can be defined as a South African maze, one must be aware of who the a) Boer people were, the architects of b) apartheid, which caused the Union of South Africa to leave the c) Commonwealth in 1961.

A) Boer

The Boer people have been, if not the most important, the cause of conflict between the local South African population and the English. In fact, there has never been good blood between the two white populations, just think of the two Boer wars of the early 1900s, and even more so between the Boers and the local black populations. During the Second World War, the conflicts between the United Kingdom and Boer populations resurfaced; the latter, represented by some currents of the National Party such as the Ossewabrandwag, openly sympathized with Nazi Germany³². In 1948, the National Party won the elections and began to implement a policy of racial segregation in the country, which was called apartheid.

In fact, the advocates of racial segregation of blacks were not the English, but the Boer prime ministers who succeeded each other from 1948 and in particular from Hendrik Verwoerd, who was in office from 1955 to 1966³³. As the latter explained, the predominant role of white Africans of European origin in the political processes that would lead to the autonomy of the different ethnic groups was justified by historical circumstances, namely the fundamental role that the Boers had played in the birth of South Africa³⁴. Consequently, the Boer people considered themselves the rightful owners of the African territories near South Africa and driven by feelings of revenge and a pro-Nazi ideology, they gave rise to what became known in history as apartheid.

B) Apartheid:

The implementation of an increasingly openly racist policy caused serious internal conflicts and alienated the country from the support of the international community. Starting from 1961, an economic sanctions campaign against South Africa had already begun, and on May 31 of the same year, the Union of South Africa obtained full independence from the United Kingdom and became a republic through a referendum; due to the unsustainable segregationist policy, South Africa was later expelled from the Commonwealth³⁵. In 1973, the United Nations declared apartheid a crime against humanity and the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations on South Africa was warmly supported by the then British government, chaired by Wilson. ³⁶Heath, his successor from the Conservative Party, tried with a reinterpretation move of the resolution to resume the profitable arms trade with South Africa under full apartheid regime.

³² READER 1997, p. 552

³³ IDEM, p.554

³⁵ Ki-Zerbo 1979, p.725

³⁶ Idem,p.728

C) Commonwealth:

The term "Commonwealth" was born in 1926 with the Balfour Declaration, which recognized the independence of English colonies and dominions, agreeing to be "equal in status to each other and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and that no one member should have any superior status or position of any kind in any other member state's internal or external affairs."³⁷ This relationship was formalized with the Statute of Westminster in 1931, giving birth to what is recognized as the modern Commonwealth, an association in which states with diverse economic conditions can interact with each other more closely and on an equal basis. The main activities of the Commonwealth are designed to create an atmosphere of economic cooperation among member states, as well as to promote democracy, human rights, and fair governance in these nations.³⁸ South Africa was part of the Commonwealth until May 31, 1961, when due to the relentless implementation of apartheid by the new South African republic and its Boer prime ministers, it was officially removed. South Africa was only readmitted to the Commonwealth in 1994 under the new administration of Nelson Mandela. South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth and re-entry in the 1990s undoubtedly deteriorated the economic relations that were maintained in the 1970s and 1980s.

2.6 Nigeria

The relations between Nigeria and Britain have always been quite complex. The origins of tensions with London can be traced back to the emergence of an anti-colonial Nigerian nationalist party called "Youth Nigeria" in 1934, and its expansion with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The anti-colonial movement grew over time and local political leaders used parties and the media to mobilize millions of Nigerians against the continuation of British rule. The British, seeing the precarious political situation, responded to this activity by attempting to create a more representative colonial system through the "Lyttleton Constitution."

³⁷ British academy definition

³⁸ READER, p.574

Lyttleton Constitution 1954

To address the issue of representation, the Macpherson Constitution was enacted in 1951, which provided for a central House of Representatives in Nigeria. However, the tensions between the central and regional legislatures, related to the question of where the supreme authority of the party resided, only led to a general deterioration. In response to the Macpherson Constitution and the requests of local authorities, a new form of administration and government was created in the Nigerian territory, which went down in history as the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. This last one created a completely federal system, comprising the three geographical regions of Nigeria, Southern Cameroons, and the Federal Territory of Lagos. Each region had a governor, a premier, a cabinet, a legislature, and a civil service, with the significantly weaker federal government represented in Lagos by a governor-general, a bureaucracy, a House of Representatives, and a Senate³⁹. Internal self-government was granted to the Western and Eastern regions in 1957. The most populous nation in Africa gained independence from the British crown on October 1, 1960, but this liberation did not have positive outcomes.

Belligerent post-independence

In 1966, Nigeria, the African country that seemed most prepared for independence and to break away from London, was hit by the first of five military coups that would shake it up in the span of 20 years. With the continent's largest population, experienced politicians, and efficient bureaucracy, the country seemed destined to lead the way in economic progress⁴⁰. Behind the scenes, however, the picture was not so good. Politicians were engaged in a frantic race for power and profit. Nigerian leaders built solid clientelist empires. Nigerian politics quickly degenerated into a savage struggle to grab public investments. All these factors led to the first coup d'état in 1966 and the first military government headed by General Guiyi Ironissi was established. Under military rule, Nigeria's political landscape was transformed by the interactions of two factors: the proliferation of corruption and the wealth, derived from oil, that flowed into government pockets. Nigeria had a non-military government from 1979 to 1983, when the army regained power. Only in 1999 was the military government dismantled, and for the first time in Nigeria's history, general elections were held.

³⁹ KI-ZERBO 1979, p. 727

⁴⁰ READER 1993,p.498

2.7 Kenya

As the final case study of the second chapter, Kenya will be taken as the subject of analysis. In a historical context of the mid-1900s characterized by the birth of independence movements throughout the African territory, Great Britain did not bother to accelerate the political liberation process of Kenya, on the contrary, it obstructed it⁴¹. Some British politicians even called for the strengthening of white domination to better control the territory, which led to one of the bloodiest and most violent wars between the local African population and the white settlers of the last century. In fact, around 1947, a part of the Kenyan population decided that it was time to put an end to British rule and organized a resistance movement called Mau Mau. The peak of the resistance occurred in 1951 with one of the most violent massacres of white settlers, which provoked the direct response of the colonial government.

Mau Mau war 1953-54

After the failed bombing in the forests of the Kenyan plateau by the British and the incessant guerrilla warfare of the Mau Mau, in 1954 the British settlers decided to put an end to the African resistance. In fact, in Nairobi in 1954, the "Anvil" operation began, which radically changed the relationship between settlers and Kenyan Africans. The British police crossed Nairobi in a brutal way, detaining anyone they deemed suspicious. Tens of thousands of Kenyans were arrested and taken to concentration camps without any justification.⁴² By the end of 1954, one million Kenyans had been evicted from their family homes and housed in villages that were nothing more than scattered camps in disease-prone forests.

The Mau Mau uprising had a significant financial impact on the British government's pockets. In fact, the British were forced to spend a huge amount of money to fight the rebels, and with the post-war British economy not doing well, this expenditure undoubtedly weakened the British will to continue to maintain their colonial ambitions in Kenya.⁴³

As for the Kenyan population, despite the defeat of the Mau Mau, the rebellion had set Kenya on an inevitable path towards independence, which was officially proclaimed at the Lancaster Conference.

⁴¹ BALLANTYNE 2016, P.140

⁴² BALLANTYNE 2018, p.121

Lancaster House Conference:

At the beginning of 1960, a political conference brought together the leaders of Kenya at the magnificent Lancaster House in London. The African participants managed to obtain a majority in both the legislative and executive fields, making it so that no European could be elected without the support of an African minority. There were three conferences at Lancaster House from 1960 to 1963, when the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party formally proclaimed Kenya's independence. The first was in 1960, chaired by the director of the colonial office, E. Iain Macleod, but it concluded with a "provisional constitution." The second was held in 1962 and led to a draft of self-government, but only in 1963, with the third and final London conference, after 30 years of dominance, was Kenya declared an independent state.

2.8 Considerations

If the first part of the second chapter contributed to a better understanding of the historical framework of political-economic relations among the major global players of the 20th century, the second part, thanks to case studies of South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, allows the reader to have a more detailed understanding of the internal dynamics of some former British colonies. We are finally moving on to the last chapter of the thesis where the British ex-colonies mentioned in this chapter will be revisited, and in light of Brexit, will highlight the consequences of economic interdependence and related trade with London.

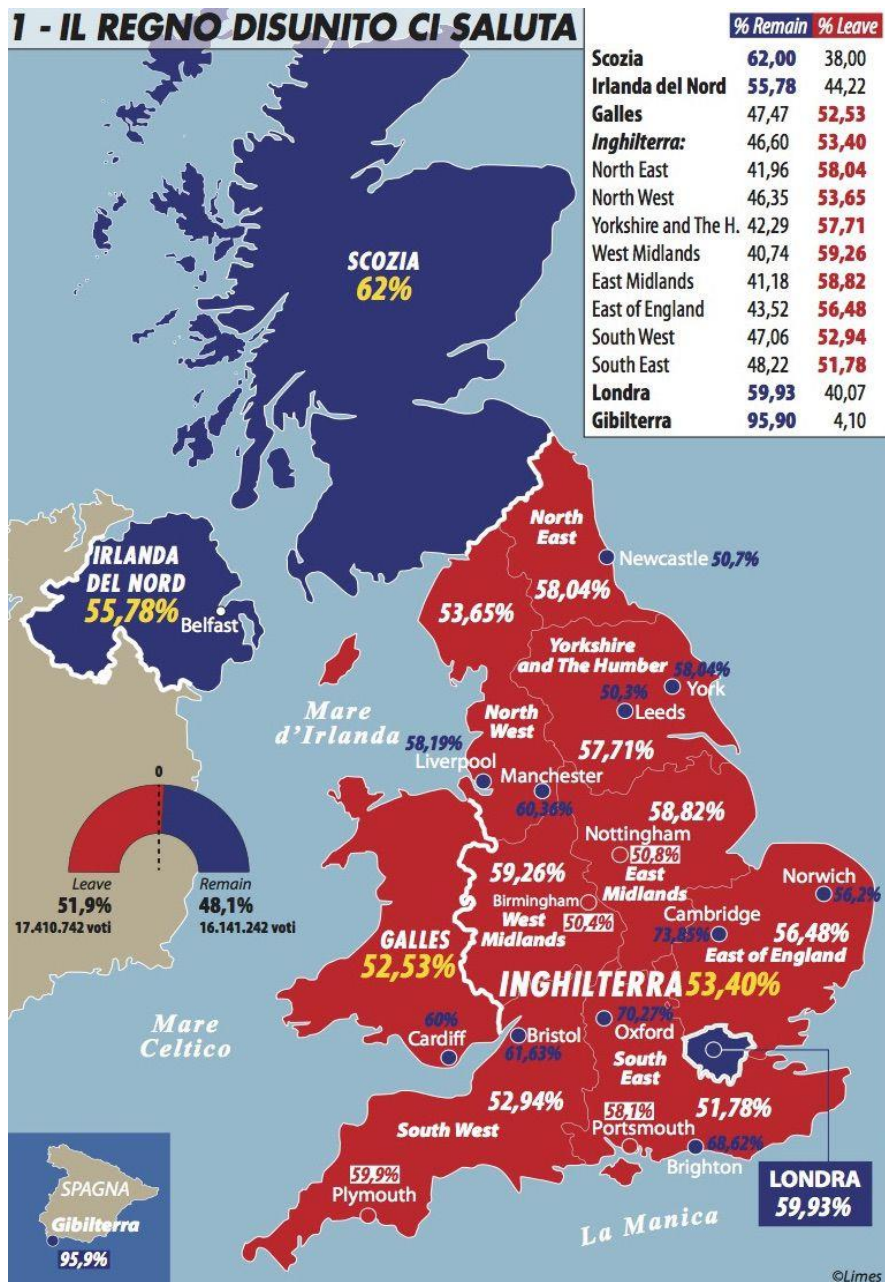
CHAPTER III

Transitioning from the history of British colonies in Africa, as described in the previous chapter, to the political-economic decisions of the 21st century such as Brexit, may initially appear to be traversing separate paths. However, as will be revealed in this final chapter, these two subjects run on firmly parallel tracks. Through the examination of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, this chapter will analyse how Brexit has transformed the economic relationships between the former British colonies presented in the previous chapter (South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya) and London.

3.1 What is Brexit?

Brexit, therefore. It is one of the most frequently pronounced and written words in recent years in the European public debate. Resulting from a linguistic construct, it was a process far from fictional, but rather highly concrete and tangible in its assumptions and effects. In essence, Brexit can be broadly summarized as the referendum held throughout the United Kingdom on June 23, 2016, which called upon its citizens to vote in favour of or against the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. In the referendum, a turnout of 72% was recorded out of a total of 46,501,241 British voters. The "*leave*" campaign emerged victorious with 51.9% against the 48.1% in favour of "*remain*." As this was a referendum that encompassed all citizens of the United Kingdom, it is necessary to highlight which constituent nations voted in favour and which voted against. The *leave* campaign triumphed in England with 53.4% and in Wales with 52.5%, while both Scotland and Northern Ireland inclined towards remaining in the European Union, with respective "*remain*" percentages of 62% and 55%. It is important to underline that in the capital, nearly 60% of Londoners voted in favour of remaining within the European Union.

Further analysing the Brexit scenario, it is relevant to observe the composition of voters who favoured remaining and those who wished to withdraw. They can be divided into two major blocs: the first in favour of the EU, consisting of young and highly educated individuals residing primarily in major cities, particularly London. The second bloc, on the other hand, against the EU, comprised of older and less educated individuals. 68% of graduates and 71% of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 voted to remain in the EU, while 64% of those over 65 and 70% of those with at most a high school diploma voted in favour of Brexit.



Brexit vote map⁴⁴

Indeed, the fateful referendum between "leave" and "remain" is merely the most tangible and understandable act of what, according to Professor Claudio Martinelli, can be described as a "constitutional moment"⁴⁵, which, as we will see later, is part of a broader and more complex system of relations with European institutions. In fact, Brexit is just one of the many constitutional

⁴⁴ LIMES, *Brexit*

⁴⁵ MARTINELLI 2023, *L'impatto della Brexit sul modello Westminster*

referendums advocated by the United Kingdom that have characterized the country's more recent history.

In fact, the Brexit is just one of many constitutional referendums pleaded by the United Kingdom that have characterized the most recent History of the British country. Consider, for instance, that the first true Brexit took place on April 9, 1975, when, only two years after joining the European Union, the UK renegotiated its continued membership within the former European Economic Community (EEC). At that time, the following question was put to the voters of the era: "Do you think the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community?"⁴⁶. After a long political and institutional process, on June 5, 1975, the electorate expressed its support for the question, with a majority of 65.7% of the votes. The following day, the London newspaper "*The Guardian*" described the pro-European vote as "full-hearted, wholehearted, and cheerful-hearted."⁴⁷ Despite these flattering pro-European words, the relationship with the European Union gradually and relentlessly deteriorated until a clear rupture occurred with the 2016 referendum.

However, what should have alarmed Europeanists, or more generally, Europe, was the fact that the United Kingdom, in a certain sense, has always been "attached" of calling its people to vote, particularly on issues such as independence and the annexation of new territories in the presence of Her Majesty. In fact, even before the 2016 Brexit, two referendums had already been held, valid for the entire electorate of the United Kingdom: the 1975 referendum and the one held by the House of Commons. Additionally, numerous consultations have taken place concerning individual countries within the United Kingdom, including two on the status of Northern Ireland (1973 and 1998), two on the start of the devolution process in Scotland (1977, 1979), and similar referendums in Wales during the same years, leading up to the famous Scottish independence referendum in 2014.

From this, it can be deduced that referendums have shaped the history of the British constitution, which, unlike that of modern states, it is important to remember, is not constituted by a single constitutional document. Instead, it is composed of a collection of statutes (e.g., Magna Carta or the Act of Settlement), treaties, and legal decisions, many of which are unwritten and uncodified, explaining why we refer to it as an "uncoded or unwritten constitution." It is precisely from this premise that all the referendums, including Brexit, have taken place.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ MARTINELLI 2023,p.8

⁴⁷ J.O FROSINI,2012,pp.155-173

⁴⁸ V.J Seidler, 2018, *Making sense of Brexit*

However, the latter diverges from all previous referendums as it is the only plebiscite that has led to two significant consequences:

The first consists of the fact that, for the first time, a popular vote has brought about a departure from the status quo. Until 2016, many laws remained merely on paper, awaiting popular approval to be implemented. This novelty inevitably sparked a debate on the British parliamentary sovereignty in recent years.

The second consequence refers to the analysis of the legal nature of Brexit: "advisory or mandatory"? This question was brought before the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, which, despite having had several opportunities to address Brexit-related issues, has always been cautious about directly and explicitly delving into the heart of the matter. In fact, in paragraph 7 of the "Miller sentence," the UK Supreme Court states: "Technically, the result was not legally binding: but the government has pledged to honour the result and it has since been treated as politically and democratically binding." Thus, the UK Supreme Court defines the legal nature of Brexit with one of the most famous legal oxymorons of the 21st century: "democratically binding."⁴⁹

3.2 Who wanted the referendum to happen?

If we have to name the architect of the 2016 Brexit, it was Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, who led the government from 2010 to 2016. David Cameron wanted and promoted the 2016 referendum in favour of remaining in the EU as a political tool to consolidate his power and strengthen consensus within the executive, regardless of the potential implications that the result could have in case of defeat. Within a few weeks of the outcome, Cameron resigned, leaving the helm of the government to an even briefer and unsuccessful executive led by Theresa May.

Following Boris Johnson's entry, his successor and future Brexit negotiator, even Theresa May left the government, withdrawing from the political scene. It was in this atmosphere of instability and confusion that Boris Johnson's new campaign sought to highlight how many of the problems in resolving the Brexit affair were linked to the indecisiveness of the executive, which often faced defeat in Parliament for every decision.⁵⁰

I will briefly summarize the actions of Prime Minister Boris Johnson leading up to Brexit: appointed Prime Minister in 2019, he opposed the Parliament, leading to new elections and winning them. Subsequently, he managed to secure the approval for a definitive agreement for the UK's exit

⁴⁹ MARTINELLI,2019. Downing Street vs Westminster, pp.1-26

⁵⁰ MARTINELLI,2023. p.35

from the European Union on January 31, 2020. Boris Johnson's resolute and decisive attitude during his tenure, characterized by immediate conflicts with Parliament over the issue of a no-deal Brexit (i.e., the UK's exit without any agreement with the European Union), made possible what is now known as Brexit.



Britain's PM David Cameron, right, and London Mayor Boris Johnson, April 22, 2015.

3.3 Why move away from the European Union so abruptly?

The victory of the "remain" campaign within the EEC in 1975 temporarily settled the question of the UK's membership in the European Community, but it did not extinguish the deep-rooted concerns that have always existed within British society towards a larger and loosely defined organization of continental dimensions like the European Union. There are multiple causes for the UK's decision to leave the European Union, and therefore, I will outline two key themes in the following paragraph that sufficiently summarize the triggers for Brexit: sovereignty and immigration.

Sovereignty

The United Kingdom's accession to the European Union and the gradual and irreversible transfer of powers to Brussels have never been viewed favourably by Westminster and have undoubtedly reinvigorated the Brexit process. Although the monarchy has never publicly expressed its position on this matter, as it is a decision of the people, the British government and the Conservative Party have certainly not strengthened their relations with the EU. With openly anti-European ideas and

the intention to restore England to the highest position among European nations, the Conservative Party has directly, through legislation, and indirectly, through its populism, reinforced the anti-European sentiment. This sentiment undoubtedly exists, but it is undeniable that the gradual and ongoing "loss" of national sovereignty has taken place over the years. It is not coincidental that this populist and nationalist political rhetoric has been embraced by the pro-Brexit politician Nigel Farage since the mid-1990s. It remains difficult to understand why the issue of sovereignty loss, a slow and constant process, has suddenly become a priority on the voters' agenda.

Immigration

The second key reason, now widely shared by Parliament, is that voters wanted to control the English borders, or in other words, reduce immigration. European immigration to the United Kingdom reached its peak in recent years, particularly in the last three years coinciding with the expansion of the European Union. Alongside the anti-immigration sentiment, it is important to highlight the prejudice that the influx of foreigners would take away job opportunities from British citizens, decrease wages, and strain public services, such as the National Health Service (NHS). This preconception has particularly resonated with Labour sympathizers and low to middle-income families in England and Wales, who voted in favor of "leave" in the referendum.

3.4 Consideration

The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union was certainly not a sudden decision, but the idea of leaving had always been considered borderline by British politicians. However, the well-established British Euroscepticism, coupled with lingering economic austerity following the 2008 financial crisis, a series of political circumstances and dynamics mixed with a reckless desire to regain global attention, led to that fateful day on June 23, 2016, when 51.9% of the British people voted to leave the European Union. Despite many economists supporting the UK's exit from the EU, there were also experts who defended the "remain" side, citing near-unanimous considerations of its consequences: recession, inflation, weaker currency, increased unemployment, and negative impact on British businesses. Yes, it is undeniable that with Brexit, the UK is now exempt from paying its "membership fee" to the EU, (the contribution to the EU budget), but it is equally true that it is giving up the single market and customs union of the European Union, of which it was a leader.⁵¹

⁵¹ FOLFAS 2017, p.348

In conclusion, I would like to quote the well-known statement by J.A.G. Griffith, referring to Brexit: "the British constitution is no more no less than what happens."⁵²

After providing a brief overview of what Brexit is and its major causes and implications, without delving into further details on the matter, we will now proceed to address the core of this paper, where the former British colonies presented in Chapter II will be revisited, highlighting the consequences of economic interdependence and related trade with London before and after Brexit.

3.5 How does the Motherland handle the former African colonies?

First and foremost, it can be said that the British government, in its frantic attempt to open up new post-Brexit scenarios, risks moving in a short-sighted manner, starting with the choices it is making regarding investment and development cooperation. In this context, the UK-Africa Investment Summit took place in London on January 20, 2020. Seeking to make up for lost time and not be overtaken by other global powers, such as China, the British government announced investments and initiatives totalling £1.5 billion, including £350 million for infrastructure, in the African continent.

However, there is a lack of foresight in London's behaviour that stands out. While on the one hand, it reiterated its commitment and interest in the African continent, on the other hand, only 21 out of the 54 countries on the continent were invited to the summit: less than half. Not surprisingly, the government has only closed trade agreements with 12 countries and with the regions of East and South Africa.⁵³

In an open letter, 12 civil society organizations criticized the government for focusing solely on British business interests rather than African development, especially by funding private hospitals and schools instead of public services accessible to all. Another aspect that has sparked debate is related to investments in non-renewable energy. While the government stated at the summit that it would not invest in coal, investments in gas and oil took centre stage, contradicting other commitments in the fight against climate change.

⁵² J.A.G GRIFFITH, *the political constitution in the Modern law review*,1979

⁵³ *Global Justice now 2021*, UK-Africa investment 2020 summit

The logic behind these actions is unclear and risks reinvigorating investments only where channels are already established, as is the case with South Africa. In particular, South Africa, being the UK's top economic partner in Africa, is analysed in terms of its economic relations with London.

3.6 South Africa

The economy of South Africa is the second largest in Africa after Nigeria and plays a prominent role in British foreign markets. Two new trade agreements marked the first transactions of the year for South Africa on January 10, 2021, coinciding with the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the UK's definitive exit from the European Union's single market and customs regime⁵⁴. Despite Brexit and the pandemic, the trade relations established with South Africa are excellent and could intensify in the coming years due to cooperation within the Commonwealth.

Until the UK decided to leave the European Union, it traded with South Africa under an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Europe and certain member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The EU-SADC agreement came into effect on October 10, 2016 (post-Brexit vote), allowing European states to eliminate or reduce customs duties on South African exports, except for aluminium and various agricultural products.

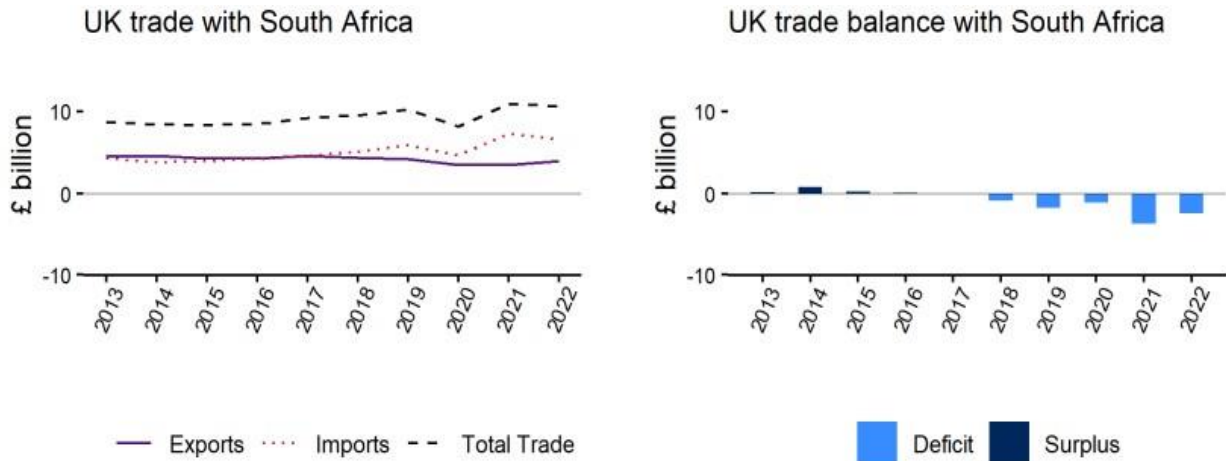
Countries integrated into the SACUM agreement⁵⁵ have the right to access the UK markets without tariffs and quotas. Given the developed nature of South Africa's economy, the country receives less favourable treatment for some of its agriculture, fish, and aluminium-related exports. However, a trade arrangement has been agreed upon that allows SACU countries and the UK to trade and export in both markets. The strength of this synergy has gained new vigour after the agreement reached between the European Union and the UK. According to economic analysts' calculations, eleven nations in the African continent, led by South Africa, are projected to increase their exports by a total of \$3.66 billion within 2025.

⁵⁴ LETIZIA, 2021. *Commercio UK-Sud Africa: dopo la Brexit si punta nel Commonwealth*

⁵⁵ Common Customs Area among the Republic of Botswana, the kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Namibia, South Africa and Kingdom of Swaziland.

3.7 Trade and Investment

The charts below present a time series for trade between UK and South Africa for each year between 2013 and 2022.



The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ billion:

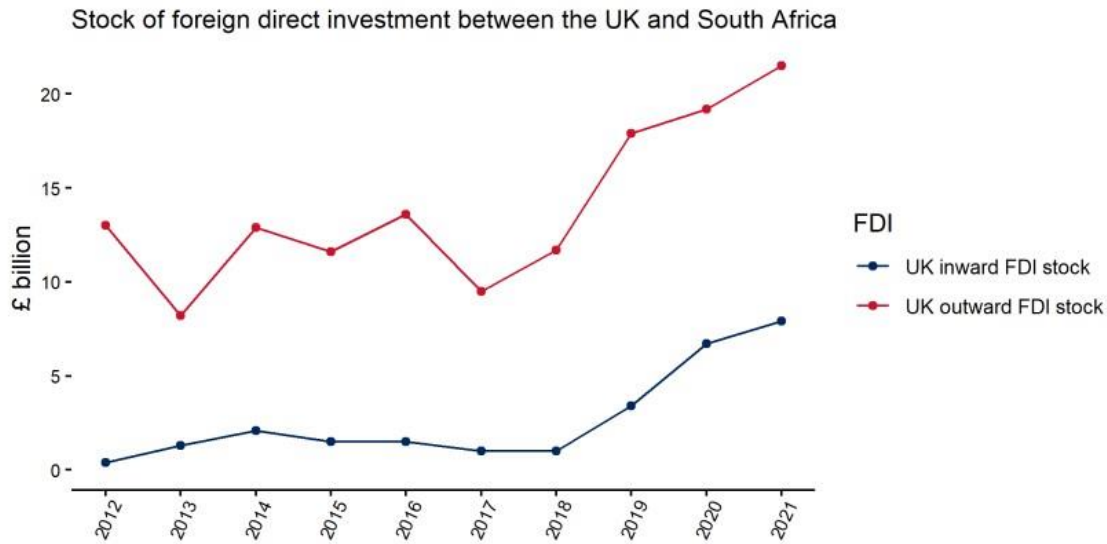
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Value of total trade	8.7	8.4	8.3	8.5	9.2	9.5	10.2	8.2	10.9	10.6
Value of exports	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.2	3.5	3.5	4.0
Value of imports	4.3	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.6	5.1	5.9	4.7	7.3	6.6
Trade balance	+0.2	+0.8	+0.3	+0.1	+0.0	-0.8	-1.7	-1.1	-3.8	-2.6

As can be seen from the tables above⁵⁶, trade between South Africa and the United Kingdom has, apart from 2020, steadily increased despite the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. Trade declined only in 2020, and this decline can be blamed, no doubt, on the outbreak of the pandemic. If until 2017 the value of exports exceeded that of South African imports, starting in 2016 the trend changed seeing a gradual increase in the value of South African imports. If in 2016, the year of the fateful Brexit referendum, the total value of trade between the two countries amounted to 8.7 billion, by 2022 it reached 10.6 billion with an increase of almost 20 percent. As a result, it can be said, that as far as the UK's trade with South Africa is concerned, Brexit has not hindered the economic dialogue so predicted by many economists in the slightest, but rather strengthened it.

⁵⁶ UK department for business and trade factsheet: UK-South Africa 2023

3.8 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

The chart below shows FDI between the UK and South Africa between 2012 and 2021:



Source: ONS, 2021 FDI main release. Data are on a directional basis, data suppression can cause breaks in the trends.

The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ billion:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
UK outward FDI stock	13.0	8.2	12.9	11.6	13.6	9.5	11.7	17.9	19.2	21.5
UK inward FDI stock	0.4	1.3	2.1	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	3.4	6.7	7.9

But not only economic exchanges have benefited from Brexit! In fact, foreign direct investment (FDI) has benefited as well. As can be seen from the table above⁵⁷, since 2017 the UK has consistently invested more in South Africa, and both the latter vis-à-vis London. Impressive is the increase in UK inward FDI Stock, which saw a 690% increase during the 2017-2021 period, from £1.5bl to £7.9bl, respectively.

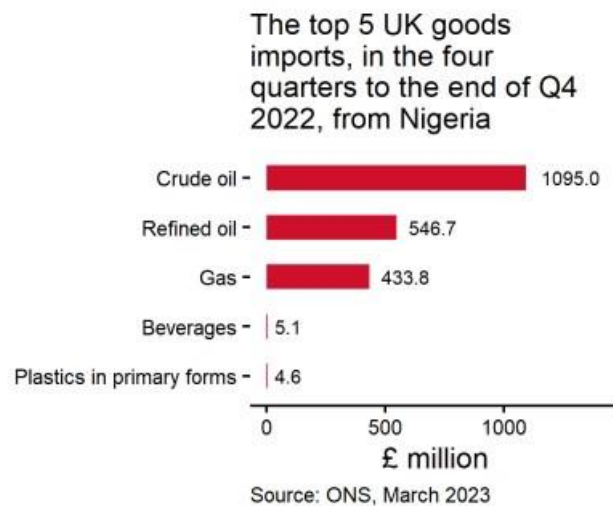
As a result, both trade and FDI have increased steadily in the post-Brexit period, thus disproving the negative predictions mentioned in section 3.4.

⁵⁷ UK department for business and trade factsheet: UK-South Africa 2023

3.9 Nigeria

Nigeria has the largest economy and the largest population in Africa. Its markets, human capital, and natural resources have immense potential, and Westminster has been aware of this for many years. Nigeria trades with the United Kingdom are well established since colonial times.

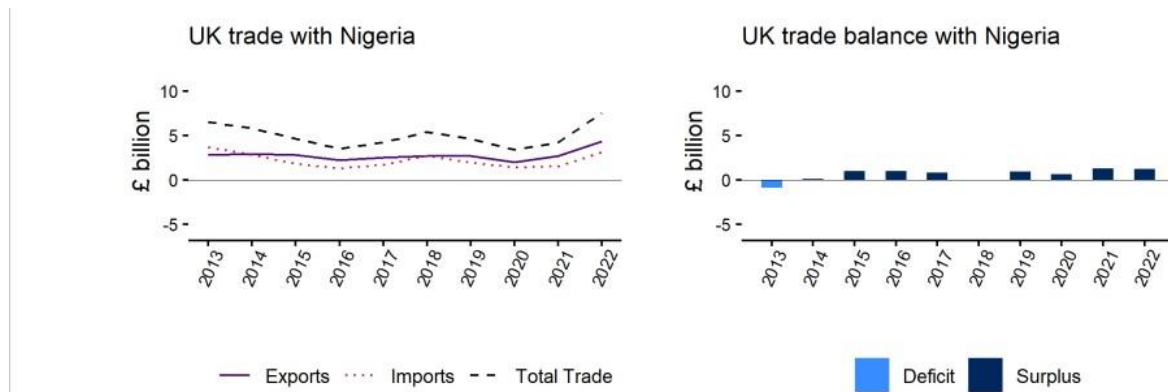
Nigeria has the world's 10th largest proven oil reserves and 9th largest proven gas reserves; it has large seaports connected to global trade routes making Nigeria an excellent country to make investments in. It is geographically well-placed as the economic hub for West Africa. Nigeria is still Africa's largest economy, despite going into recession in 2020 because of the COVID-19 epidemic, the drop in oil prices that followed, and the rise in risk aversion in global capital markets. It is crucial to highlight that petroleum and items related to hydrocarbons make up the majority of UK imports from Nigeria.



In fact, as well described in the graph⁵⁸, almost 77% of UK goods and imports in the four quarters of 2022 from Nigeria could be associated with crude oil and refined oil. The remaining 22% are still related to the extraction of natural sources as gas and only the remaining 1% can be attributed to the other sectors. These data can be translated into an economic importation based fundamentally on natural resources and consequently without enriching, through imports of local small-medium businesses, the Nigerian middle class.

⁵⁸ UK department for business and trade factsheet: UK- Nigeria 2023

Trades



From what can be ascertained from the above chart⁵⁹, the total trade over almost 10 years has been steady. Apart from the year 2019 with a significant drop in imports, from \$100bl to \$77.2bl, the economic relationship between the two states, despite being mainly based on natural resources, has been good and steady.

⁵⁹ UK department for business and trade factsheet: UK- Nigeria 2023

Foreign Direct Investment

The following data are reported by Nigeria and are for reference only. Whenever possible use data from UK sources for trade and investment. All data below are presented in \$USD in billions.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TRADE								
Nominal exports	84.6	49.0	38.4	50.8	66.0	69.9	39.9	50.9
Nominal imports	86.4	71.9	47.0	50.9	71.6	100.8	72.2	65.3
Nominal trade balance	-1.9	-22.9	-8.6	-0.1	-5.6	-30.9	-32.2	-14.3
INVESTMENT								
Inward FDI stock	142.8	142.8	90.0	89.1	95.5	99.7	87.0	91.9
Outward FDI stock	13.1	11.6	7.8	8.0	8.6	8.9	12.3	13.5

If trades between the two states have been nearly good, the same cannot be said for investments. In fact, inward foreign direct investment has dropped dramatically, from 142 billion in 2014 to 91.9 in 2021. And as for outward FDI stock, during the 2015-2020 period, precisely during the period of Brexit negotiations they declined.

As a result, we can say that during the period related to Brexit negotiations trades were not affected much, instead investments dropped dramatically both in Nigerian territory by London and in the United Kingdom by the Nigerian economy.

4.0 Kenya

The UK is one of the largest foreign investors in Kenya having a bilateral trade totals over £1.3 billion. Kenya is a member of East African Community (EAC) and it has the largest gross domestic product economy in southeast and central Africa. The UK has signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Republic of Kenya, which is into force since 2020. It follows that the UK commits to providing immediate duty-free, quota-free access to goods exported from Kenya and in exchange, Kenya commits to gradual tariff liberalisation of goods although some domestically sensitive products in Kenya are excluded from tariff liberalisation.⁶⁰

Trades

Even though it cannot be compared to the same amount of trade value of the two countries previously mentioned (South Africa and Nigeria), the UK and Kenya's economic relations nevertheless have a substantial impact on each country's foreign economy.

The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ million:

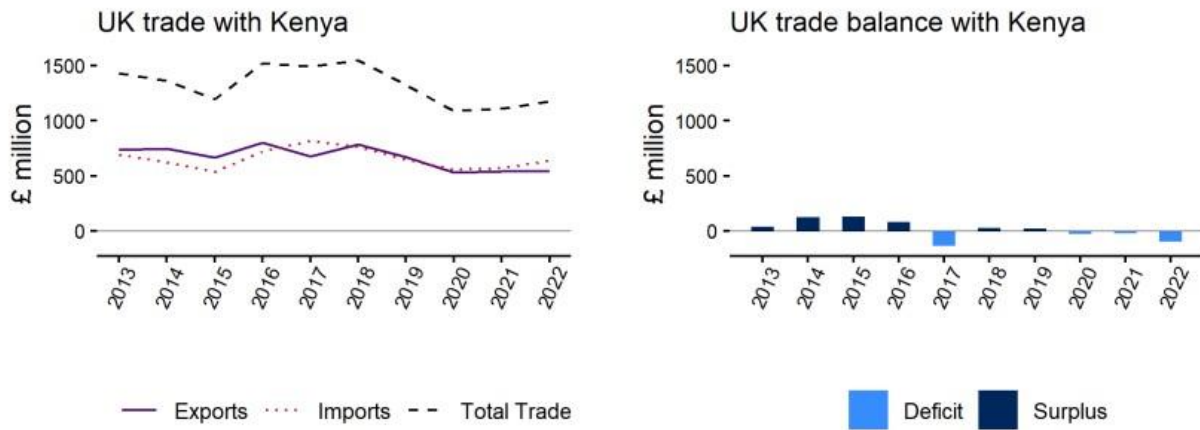
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Value of total trade	1429	1365	1199	1522	1493	1549	1324	1086	1109	1177
Value of exports	734	745	665	802	678	787	673	530	543	540
Value of imports	695	620	534	720	815	762	651	556	566	637
Trade balance	+39	+125	+131	+82	-137	+25	+22	-26	-23	-97

In fact, the value of total trades for the year 2022 among these two countries reached only £1.1 bl and over the last 10 years it has never exceed £2bl. As can be seen from the table⁶¹, the total value of trade between has been fluctuating since 2013. While trades were roughly constant up until 2018, the year in which the largest peak of total trade values (1.5 bl) was recorded, there has since been a significant slow fall in trades, which ended with the most recent value of 2022, which is equivalent to £1.1 bl.

⁶⁰ British high commission in Kenya news page 2021

⁶¹ UK department for business and trade factsheet: UK- Kenya 2023

The charts below present a time series for trade between the UK and Kenya for each year between 2013 and 2022:



Source: ONS, UK trade in goods and services, Q4 2022

This decrease in economic trade between the two countries occurred since 2018, 2 years after the fateful Brexit referendum and as a result it can be assumed, not having enough sources, that the decrease in economic trade must be attributed to causes external to Brexit. To reinforce this hypothesis, it might be important to point out that the 60% of UK good imports from Kenya are foods such as coffee, tea and cocoa which can vary significantly net of climatic factors and famines that have been plaguing Kenya in recent years.⁶²

⁶² MASTRODONATO, Lifegate 2021

4.1 Conclusion

This thesis starts from making evident that the connections between the United Kingdom and its former colonies in Africa were only a matter of interest. In Chapter I, the colonialism era between the 19th and 20th centuries by the major European countries has been examined, with a particular emphasis on the British Empire under Queen Victoria and its conquest in the uncharted territory. It has been possible to grasp the principles of the economic dependency that many African states have on what is now the United Kingdom and understand how this extremely strong dependence came about.

Some good historical examples to help clarify the political and economic relations between UK and its ex-colonies have been well illustrated in Chapter II (i.e., Atlantic Pact, Brazzaville Conference). Also in the same chapter, it was understood how the United Kingdom behaved in the face of the processes of dependence of its colonies that characterized the 1950s-60s. Next, the following former British Colonies-South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya-have been taken as tools for analysis their process of independence from London.

By analyzing Brexit in the first part of Chapter III, it has been possible to understand how complex and deep the issue is, and behind the name there is a long history of political and economic ties with European and non-European countries. In the second part of the chapter, the effects of Brexit on the three former British colonies used as case studies—South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya—over a study period of ten years (2012–2022), have shown the different outcomes of it, considering what has been illustrated about the economic consequences in the previous chapters. In fact, while trade and direct foreign investment have grown in South Africa's economy since the 2016 Brexit, the same cannot be said for Nigeria and Kenya. Nigeria's commerce with the UK has grown since 2016, but foreign direct investment has sharply decreased since then, falling by approximately 30% of total inflows. Kenya has seen a decline in commerce with the UK, albeit it cannot be entirely linked to the Brexit given that it began in 2018 and there are other more plausible explanations for the decrease in economic trade.

Overall, the economic situation with the UK and its former colonies has not changed significantly as a result of Brexit; however, it has been demonstrated that where there were already strong economic channels, characterized by the strong influence of oil and gas(i.e. Nigeria), the economic relations got even stronger, on the other hand where the UK market had a smaller trades potential(i.e. Kenya), in period of uncertainty as Brexit, the economic relations were left in second position leading to a slow loosen up of economic interest by the UK.

To conclude, my study on this topic was born out of simple curiosity to better understand the Brexit case, which allowed me to understand and take note that unfortunately, contemporary history is built on a dense web of political and economic interests that each state tries to bring closer to itself. It is in order not to break this “web” that treaties, agreements, and summits are constantly made giving an idea of international cooperation and solidarity, which sadly, most of the time obscures the real and unpleasant truth behind them.

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RIASSUNTO

L'elaborato di tesi qui presente verge sull'analisi dell'uscita del Regno Unito dall'Unione Europea e in particolar modo su come siano cambiati i rapporti politici ed economici tra il Regno Unito e le ex colonie africane britanniche.

Capitolo I

Nel Capitolo I viene esaminata l'epoca del colonialismo tra il XIX e il XX secolo da parte dei principali Paesi europei, con particolare attenzione all'Impero britannico sotto Vittoria Elisabetta e alla sua conquista di territori africani inesplorati. Il capitolo comincia con una breve spiegazione tra le diverse forme di dominio attuate dalle maggiori potenze europee del XX secolo, in particolare modo mettendo in risalto le differenze tra *l'Indirect Rule* britannico e *l'assimilation coloniale* francese. Successivamente nel paragrafo 1.2 viene esposta la conquista del Congo da parte del Re Belga Leopoldo II, il quale aprì le porte a quel processo di colonizzazione poi prese nome alla storia come "spartizione dell'Africa". Nel seguente paragrafo la conferenza di Berlino del 1884 è oggetto di analisi, vi presero parte ben tredici nazioni per chiarire quali fossero i criteri e i confini di quella corsa colonialista che nel giro di 20 portò all'espansione violenta dei regimi imperiali su tutto il territorio africano. Infatti, la frenetica voglia di conquistare terre ricche di materiali preziosi e la inesorabile volontà di imporsi sulla scena globale come standard da seguire fece sì che negli anni Trenta del XX secolo pressoché l'ottantacinque per cento del globo terrestre rientrava in un sistema imperiale. La conferenza di Berlino diede vita a molteplici nuovi stati, ognuno dei quali sotto il controllo delle maggiori potenze europee. Il paragrafo continua con l'analisi della frammentazione dei numerosi nuovi stati nati dalla conferenza di Berlino e di come fossero stati creati con indifferenza e superficialità nei confronti della popolazione africana locale. Vengono esposti come *case studies* il confine fra la Tanzania e il Kenya e la frontiera tra il Senegal e il Gambia. Nel paragrafo successivo (1.4) vengono brevemente accennati i motivi dell'indebitamento economico che le colonie contraevano con le rispettive potenze dominatrice. La resistenza alle potenze europee da parte delle popolazioni locali è un altro importante argomento, trattato nel primo capitolo, nonostante essa fosse molto limitata. Infatti, sommando tutti i partecipanti ai fenomeni di resistenza civile solo lo 0,5% di abitanti si oppose attivamente all'invasione coloniale. L'ultimo paragrafo del primo capitolo si apre con la tematica educazione nelle terre africane e quanto essa fosse, purtroppo, lasciata a sé stessa. Il capitolo si conclude con un breve richiamo al processo di evangelizzazione delle comunità africane e alla spiegazione della politica espansionistica vittoriana che rimase alla storia come le tre C dell'Imperialismo: Cristianesimo, Civiltà, Commercio.

Capitolo II

Il secondo capitolo inizia con un breve excursus sui principali avvenimenti storici e delle vicende che hanno coinvolto i maggiori *players* internazionali dal secondo conflitto mondiale fino ai primi 60'. Dopo aver fornito una breve panoramica sull'impiego, anzi sfruttamento, delle popolazioni africane nella Prima guerra mondiale, vengono esposti due avvenimenti storici di notevole rilevanza internazionale: il patto atlantico del 1941 e la conferenza di Brazzaville del 1944. Quest'ultimi metteranno in risalto la vera cruda natura dei patti interstatali fatti durante la Seconda guerra mondiale. Sempre di carattere storico viene citato, nel seguente paragrafo, il sesto congresso panafricano tenutosi a Manchester nel 1945.

Nel paragrafo (2.4) viene offerto uno scenario sul trasferimento dei poteri da Westminster ai governi locali africani e la conseguente indipendenza nelle principali colonie britanniche africane: South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya. Infatti, proprio il processo di conversione da stati colonizzati a indipendenti sarà il *centro* della seconda parte del secondo capitolo.

La prima nazione analizzata è il Sudafrica. Dopo una descrizione generale della storia dell'Unione Sud Africana, vengono analizzati tre argomenti chiave della sua storia : il popolo boero, l'apartheid e il Commonwealth.

La seconda nazione analizzata è la Nigeria. Nella prima parte del paragrafo vengono esposte le conseguenze della Lyttleton Constitution del 1954, ovvero della spartizione del territorio nigeriano in un sistema federale composto da tre regioni geografiche: i territori del nord, il Camerun meridionale e il territorio federale di Lagos. Nella seconda parte sarà oggetto di analisi l'agognata indipendenza da parte del popolo nigeriano.

La terza e ultima nazione è il Kenya. Le turbolente relazioni politico-economiche tra il Kenya e il Regno Unito a partire dal 1947 risultano essere di fondamentale importanza per i movimenti secessionistici dei primi anni 50'. Il movimento di resistenza "Mau Mau" e la rispettiva guerra contro i coloni bianchi viene descritta rendendo così possibile una lettura storica della nazione. Proprio la ribellione "Mau Mau" portò all'indipendenza del Kenya, proclamata ufficialmente alla Lancaster House di Londra, nel 1963.

Il capitolo si conclude con una breve considerazione generale degli avvenimenti e tematiche trattatesi nel suddetto capitolo

Capitolo III

Il terzo capitolo della tesi si suddivide in due parti: la prima riguarda lo studio dell'uscita del Regno Unito dall'Unione Europea e la seconda considera come la Brexit abbia alterato i rapporti politico-economici con le proprie ex colonie britanniche in Africa.

Si comincia, dunque, con l'analisi del referendum costituzionale del 23 giugno 2016 tenutosi su tutto il territorio del Regno Unito che chiamò al voto i cittadini britannici per votare a favore o contro l'uscita di questo dall'Unione Europea. Chi abbia voluto Brexit, chi l'abbia votata e quali fossero i motivi del divorzio con il Regno Unito anticipano la serie di argomenti trattati nei successivi paragrafi. Sempre in questa sede si analizzano gli svariati referendum costituzionali britannici e la natura giuridica della Brexit. Infine, vengono tratte delle considerazioni generali sull'uscita del Regno Unito dall'Unione europea in modo tale da poter avere una più chiara visione generale sul caso Brexit.

La seconda parte del terzo capitolo riprende le colonie precedentemente descritte nel capitolo II (Sudafrica, Nigeria e Kenya) e le analizza alla luce della Brexit. Grazie al reportage sui commerci esteri del Regno Unito presenti sul sito ufficiale del governo britannico, è stato possibile con l'aiuto di tabelle e grafici analizzare l'andamento delle *trades* e *investments* nelle rispettive nazioni. Il terzo capitolo prosegue poi con una riflessione generale su come i rapporti politici tra gli stati, a partire dal primo dopoguerra, si fossero basati esclusivamente su interessi economici e termina prendendo in analisi i rapporti tra il Regno Unito con proprie ex colonie africane dopo l'avvento della Brexit.