

KEY TO INTERPRETING THE EXIT

Péter Halmai (ed.)

A brexit forgatókönyvei és hatásai

[Brexit scenarios and effects]

Budapest, 2020

Dialóg Campus Kiadó



The authors of the book discuss inevitable questions related to the events of the second part of the 2010s, which had a major impact on both this country and the European Union because of their global economic effects. The book is the result of research carried out at the Ludovika Workshop under the project 'Latest dimensions of the economic role of the modern state' led by Péter Halmai.¹ It consists of ten studies, which describe the road leading to the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, beginning with the presentation of the political background, going on to present the possible scenarios of Brexit, then providing an in-depth analysis of the expected economic impacts. Glancing at the table of contents, readers find that over half of the studies in the collection (six of them), which make up two-thirds of it, focus on economics. Therefore, its useful and interesting analyses and tidbits of information will make the book (primarily but not exclusively) welcome by readers interested in economics.

The latter can be of specific interest. In addition to analyses of the economic effects and lessons of Brexit, readers can get an insight into the precedents of the process, its (expected at the time the book was edited) political, social, and legal consequences to affect not only the British but also all countries of the Union (and their citizens). As to the individual studies, their size makes them easily digestible as they shed light on one or another clearly significant aspect of Brexit triggering readers' profound thoughts. The comprehensive study *Economics of Brexit* by Péter Halmai is different in size from the average. It is significant in the book offering a comprehensive economic analysis. In it, the author discusses five well-defined fundamental issues (real economic integration, hard versus soft Brexit,

¹ Further important results of the research were published in the following works: HALMAI (2017, 2018a, b, 2019a, b, 2020a, b, c, d, e, f, 2021a, b, c).

the impact of Brexit on the United Kingdom, the expected future of the Union and globalisation, and the political options of the British).

Starting to read the book, one immediately comes across an interesting and unusual solution as the editor opens the work with two forewords. The first one (pp. 9-10), is dated to spring of 2018 when the manuscripts were finalised, while the date of the second one (pp. 11-12) is January 2020, almost two years later.² In the second foreword, the editor explains why: considering the date when the process of publication commenced, the authors of the papers were given the option to update their studies as they found necessary. It is obvious that not all of them used the opportunity, so readers can infer that certain papers reflect the situation in spring of 2018 while others that of the end of 2019. Nevertheless, the editor's opinion is undoubtedly true, „the content of the studies remains topical” independent of the progression of the events.

The first paper of the collection is *New Europe after 29 March 2019? – a history of Brexit* by *Boglárka Koller*. The author presents and tries to prove with historical examples the special attitude of the British towards the European community right from the beginning, their „separatism,” to use the author's term. That attitude goes back to the time much before joining the European integration, beginning from an initial refusal, followed by positive response to the 1969 request for accession up to the referendum on Brexit and the series of uncertainties around the process. The author explains British separatism, or „taking a different road” by another author's term,³ from the special sovereignty concept of British society, which was quite tangible during the political wrestling associated with *David Cameron* preceding the Brexit referendum.

The author depicts how the Prime Minister at the time tried to boost (domestic) political capital for himself and his party, using the idea of sovereignty (of member states), which had been so important for the British to identify a core concept of their national identity. Intent on emphasising the idea of national decision making, Cameron presented his voters with examples, which triggered uncontrollable processes due to their emotionality (references to it can also be found in other studies in the collection). For instance, the message that British taxpayers' money is used to finance social services to workers from Eastern-Central Europe was suitable to plant the germs of future decision in the heads of British citizens, who were worried about their jobs, which worry was unfounded because of varied factors. Later, during the referendum campaign, voters' attention could no longer be diverted. (It is beautifully illustrated, since there were hardly any political powers

2 However, all predictions were redrawn by the Corona virus pandemic that appeared in Europe at the beginning of 2020 causing havoc not only in terms of its economic impact.

3 Cf. KONDOR (2021:150).

openly supporting Brexit during the referendum campaign, still, we all know the result.) The outcome of this risky strategy: supporters of Brexit obtained an (albeit small) majority at the referendum held on 23 June 2016.

The author also analyses the evolution of processes from the aspect of the European Union. Reading how events unfolded, one might think that the outcome of the referendum was a surprise not only for the British but also for the heads of EU institutions. The new situation, unknown and unbelievable earlier, caused a shock-like effect „on the other side.” Although many fundamental principles were laid down for the British where EU officials could not yield as they had to protect the integrity of the Union (for instance, the inseparability of the four basic freedoms), the exit process raised many questions and was fraught with dangers. The latter included the issue of the potential restoration of border control between Ireland and Northern Ireland, which – side by side with economic issues – could easily have led to grave social, religious and political turmoil given the past and history of the population living there.

The examples briefly mentioned above illustrate the anomalies of Brexit. The negotiating parties had to keep in mind extremely diverse issues including political, social, cultural and, finally, economic controversies to achieve a peaceful and convincing settlement of the situation. In any case, the European Union could not be overly cautious: Brexit could set in motion an avalanche that would not only threaten belief in deepening integration but the future of the Union as well.

The study *Arguments and counterarguments in the Brexit campaign – what do they say of the European Union?* by Krisztina Arató focuses on a small but important segment of Brexit. The author discusses a brief period of the events from a specific aspect: she analyses the explanations behind the arguments to support „stay” or „leave”. Her paper is not part of the series of economics studies representing the majority in the book, it actually belongs to the field of political sciences. The central idea of the paper is about understanding and explaining the impact of political myths on political systems, which can offer a snapshot that is only valid at a given moment of time because of continuous development and change.

The author argues that other explanations exist side by side with the myths generated about the institutional structure of the European Union. These „counter-myths” can be interpreted as significant elements of political communication having the same impact on decisions as myths do. In her paper, the author discusses and explains three myths and counter-myths, such as peace, rationality, economic cooperation, and success as opposed to the lack of democracy, threats to national sovereignty and lack of willingness to act. An important finding of the study relying on the relevant academic literature is that it is easy to analyse myths (and counter-myths), however, drawing any specific (verifiable) conclusions from them is a more complex task.

Next, the author scrutinises the specific arguments and counterarguments used in the Brexit campaign she has collected from the lists of campaign messages – no doubt with arduous work. Not disputing the author's thoroughness, the question arises how much the „collection” is a comprehensive and relevant picture of the messages voiced during the campaign.

Among others, she points out that the potential loss of sovereignty (as a counter-myth) was a decisive component of the campaign, which underpins the attitude characterising British society (namely, strong commitment to national sovereignty). The author also points out that stories about the operation of different political systems can be found related to the institutional system of the European Union and that Euroscepticism has contributed both to myths and counter-myths. To sum up, the author calls attention to the phenomenon that messages with no reality content seem to appear in political discourse more frequently. In addition to Brexit, the presidential election ending in *Donald Trump's* victory in 2016 is another good example.

The study *Brexit and the competition of British parties* by Márton Kaszap also belongs to political sciences. Analysing the cause-and-effect relationship between the evolution of the competition of the parties and the outcome of the referendum, he tries to decide how far one should look back into the past to draw reliable lessons regarding the mutual effect of two events or processes upon each other. Regarding the setting of the starting point, he concludes the 2010 election campaign, i.e., the ill-suited political campaign messages used at that time were, as it turned out later, the root cause of developments determining the fate of the United Kingdom and the current 27 EU member states. As a consequence of unpopularity, Lynton Crosby Australian campaign strategist and his team supporting David Cameron booked short term success, which proved to be a failure eventually if it is examined from a wider perspective considering global consequences.

In his study the author evaluates the campaign strategies beginning with David Cameron's well-known 2013 Bloomberg address, the 2015 Parliamentary elections, the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2017 early elections, as well as their effect on the party system. Readers can get an in-depth analysis on the features of British party politics, the parties and the election system, voters' „migrations” and issues of interpretation affecting voters' decisions. Based on an undoubtedly brief period of a few years only, if one analyses political processes, quite interesting phenomena can be observed: millions of voters appeared in and then disappeared from certain political camps. The radically right-wing UKIP performed well at the referendum supporting „leave,” but it has practically lost all hope to play an influential part in political life. No matter how political processes are examined, the conclusion is that the political successes of the period have been short-lived, and all actors paid a high price for their political manoeuvres.

To conclude, the author points out the roots of the „domino effect” in domestic policy, saying „there is domestic policy in the background of the Brexit domino as well,” in which the dominoes still standing at the time of exit will lose their positions. An open question is which moment was decisive from the aspect of the Brexit process. The author’s opinion supported with sound arguments is that the appearance of Crosby and his team was the decisive moment. Still, he admits, it is not the only objective truth, and other analysts might come to a different conclusion.

In *Legal mazes of Brexit* János Bóka approaches the topic from another, non-economic aspect. The provisions of Article 50 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) have regulated the option of withdrawal from the Union since the amendment of the Lisbon Treaty. Different opinions and views surround the interpretation of the legal provisions relating to withdrawal, which believe withdrawal can take place under different conditions with respect to certain details. However, considering Article 50 of TFEU, it is clear a unilateral withdrawal by member states rooted in the core of their sovereignty must be made possible, as the Union is not a federal state; any other way of withdrawal is excluded.

The grave legal dispute around the issue is completely understandable. The institutions of the Union had to face such a procedure for the first time in their history, so voices only present in legal commentaries earlier have received, *mutatis mutandis*, increasing attention when the result of the British referendum became known. Analysing the legal aspects of the exit procedure, the author points out certain anomalies, such as the obligation to justify withdrawal (which is contrary to its *ultima ratio* principle). The option of a unilateral withdrawal of the exit declaration has also given rise to heated academic debates (finally ended with the decision of the Luxembourg Court). Another issue has been whether the Parliament or the Government must be the source of a decision of withdrawal; in this case the opinions have been quite uniform, i.e., making the necessary decision is in the scope of the former.

Similarly critical issues of legal theory have arisen as to the nature of the withdrawal agreement. The document is concluded between the Union and the member state exiting; the (staying) member states do not have to ratify it. Further, it is not deemed part of primary Union law, therefore, it can be contested before the Court of the European Union (in this regard, unmanageable situations may arise). Legal uncertainty is further increased because of the unambiguous nature of the connections between the Union and the exiting member state. The United Kingdom will have to „replace” earlier EU legal provisions that have already expired with internal legislation, which causes theoretical and legal technical issues to surface.

At the end, the study deals with the participation of the United Kingdom in the work of the EU institutions, which can cause problems. The situation taking shape is Janus-faced: the British cannot take part in making the decisions directly affecting their future (i.e., those related to the withdrawal), but they can be there when decisions are made determining the fate of the Union eventually, as the author points out. However, the British did not make use of all options allowed them by law, so, for instance, they did not nominate a commissioner for the European Commission headed by *Ursula von der Leyen*. The study is primarily focused on the legal aspects of Brexit, but it also points out (correctly) that the parties' ability to assert their interests in the political dimension is equally significant in exerting influence on the relevant processes, and „lawyering” is to be done after core strategic decisions have been made.

Péter Halmai is the author of the first lengthy and thorough study of the book (*Economics of Brexit*, 83–208). He discusses the economic aspects of Brexit broken up into five main topics.⁴ The author points out the main issue of Brexit is the relationship of the United Kingdom with the internal markets built on the four fundamental freedoms. (It is important, and the author cites the Union's paradigmatic view expressed already at the start of negotiations according to which the four fundamental freedoms must be treated as inseparable, and the British would not be allowed to choose, i.e., no cherry-picking.) He advises the supporters of (hard) Brexit formulated their arguments related to four topics: *a*) elimination of superfluous regulations, *b*) option to conclude commercial agreements, *c*) prevent the inflow of job seekers from other member states (mainly from Eastern-Central Europe), and *d*) the United Kingdom should cease to be a net contributor to the Union budget. The most complicated issue of the negotiations – no surprise – was caused by the British trying to conduct withdrawal along a scenario most favourable for them: they wanted to keep advantageous positions originating in EU membership, such as access to the Union's markets of goods, services, money, and capital while effectively blocking their internal market to foreign workers.

It is proved in the study that EU membership was advantageous for the British in three areas, i.e., in trade, foreign investments, and the finance sector.⁵ Speaking of trade, it is obvious that trade is extremely important for both parties (the EU and the UK), but the British need the Union markets more than vice versa. Related to its EU membership, the UK was one of the most important European targets for

4 The author has analysed Brexit in several works, cf., HALMAI (2018b, 2020 c, e).

5 All factors contributed to the much higher growth rate achieved by the British economy, particularly from 1981 to 2007, than the Continental core countries of the European integration. In the study the issue of convergence is not discussed, but the author's works on the topic are of primary importance. Cf. e.g. HALMAI-VÁSÁRY (2010a, 2012), HALMAI (2009, 2019a, 2019b, 2021b).

direct foreign investments even if their level was uneven over the last one or two decades. As for the sector of financial services, the UK made significant profit there, just think of the boom of London as the financial hub of the EU while it was a member.

While evaluating the possible scenarios of Brexit (hard or soft), the author discusses potential scenarios,⁶ for instance, a status like that of the EEC countries, the Swiss solution, free trade agreement or a customs union including their potential advantages and disadvantages both from the aspects of the British and the EU. The issue of the Ireland Northern Ireland border is of particular importance as it causes major political, social, and cultural concerns in addition to economic problems. Solving it is much more than simply drawing the boundary between the parties. They must tread with caution to prevent disputes or ethnic strife (potentially leading to violence). Accordingly, there was no real disagreement about that.

The paper offers an in-depth analysis of the economic impact of Brexit. The author points out a difficulty: the lack of any similar cases in the past increases the number of questions for analysts. Being aware of those challenges, he provides a systematic methodology for research. He presents three potential methodological approaches (ex post and ex ante). Not independently of the author's wide range of works on growth theory,⁷ he focuses on revealing the impacts on GDP. The analysis also covers other primary issues including fiscal effects, migration, the income of households, trends in consumer prices and inequalities, or economic impacts on other countries, just to mention a few. The consequences of migration and trends in labour supply, or the loss of the influx of knowledge as regards technological progress are discussed in detail. The significance and consequences of uncertainty and risk avoidance in the short run are underlined. On the other hand, the author proves the loss of disintegration is eventually unavoidable.

As the reasons behind the Brexit referendum are analysed, one can read about the statements made during the campaign, and the promises to satisfy desires. In that regard it seems plausible that the communication of mistaken (untrue) pieces of information may have had a major impact on the outcome of the referendum. If it is true, the author believes Brexit will not temper voters' discontent. The „leave” vote adopted by the majority is even more surprising as the expected economic effects were indicated by experts in advance. Still, the outcome can be supported with rational arguments. In conclusion, the author predicts long term unfavour-

6 The issues of differentiated integration, which is not discussed in the book, may arise in relation to the scenarios. On differentiated integration, cf., in detail Halmai (2019c).

7 On growth theory and the growth impact of integration, cf. ELEKES–HALMAI (2013a, b, 2019), HALMAI (2011, 2014, 2015, 2018a), HALMAI–VÁSÁRY (2010b, 2011).

able outlook with reference to uncertain factors. The separation is expected to be tougher on the British, in terms of the economy, than on the other member states staying in the Union. So, further research will be necessary to gain an in-depth, thorough analysis of all relevant circumstances of the topic. On the other hand, one should underline the main conclusion of the study: disintegration necessarily leads to major long-term loss in a system of deep integration. The output (GDP) level forecast for after Brexit is approximately 10% lower in mid-term compared to the „stay” scenario. Such long-term moderate performance of the national economy can be deemed the „Brexit tax,” the author says. The impact per British households is over GBP 6,000 p.a. Brexiter politicians failed to inform their voters of that. In addition, adverse effects did not start at the time of Brexit. They have been effectively affecting the United Kingdom as well as the European Union in terms of politics, the society, and the economy – albeit to a lower extent – ever since the referendum.

In *International trade / what can be expected in the field of financial services* by *Andrea Elekes* (209–226), the author discusses the (expected) impact of Brexit on the finance sector, emphasising it is a complex area subject to external conditions. Such are the global monetary crisis, the regulatory processes affecting the banking sector or the issue of digitisation. The indispensable role London had in the finance sector will obviously cause difficulties that cannot be overcome easily. Many important and large companies had chosen London as their European centre, as Elekes points out, for two reasons: because of “passporting” and easy access to a qualified workforce.

Since an accurate scenario for Brexit is lacking, certain factors of uncertainty have appeared (the author discussed some scenarios in that regard.) However, Elekes is convinced both passporting and mutual recognition will be affected (to a certain extent). As regards the potential impacts of Brexit on competitiveness, she analysed three relevant questions: the difficulties due to relocation generated by decisions linked to changes of the business environment, the position of job seekers in the United Kingdom, and the problems related to the access of British companies to the financial infrastructure of the remaining twenty-seven member states of the Union.

In her closing remarks, the author highlighted two important circumstances that can exert an adverse effect on the position of financial service providers: the fixed deadline of Brexit and the series of uncertainty factors. Brexit will bring about changes in different areas, which predicts the need for alignment skills and commitments. In any case, the use of innovative solutions and the option of novelties offered by digitisation cannot be considered a problem, but uncertainty as a factor is obviously on the horizon.

In his study *Exchange rate impact of Brexit from the aspect of Hungarian workers* (227–242), Gábor Kutasi is interested in the plans of immigrant Hungarian employees to stay in the UK following GBP exchange rate changes. His starting point is not an unfounded suggestion: as he mentions in the introductory section, the exchange rate of GBP fluctuated by 15% when the Brexit process was launched, which clearly had major financial and economic impacts on everybody including Hungarians working in the UK. The study is based on the notion that there was a high number of workers immigrating to the United Kingdom, and while their salary demands were lower than those of the British average, their contribution resulted in improved productivity in the British economy. It should be noted that while there were strong voices during the 2016 Brexit referendum arguing for the expulsion of Eastern-Central European workers from the British market, it could be clearly seen after the exit processes had started that those workers were indispensable for the British economy.

While discussing questions of economic theory, the author analyses the background and motives of emigration for employment. Its primary driver is profit maximisation resulting – if one is lucky – in higher savings. A part of the income is obviously spent on the spot, so further positive effects are there for the receiving country. The point where potential exchange rate fluctuations can be observed is the value of the workers' income sent back home. That is why exchange rate fluctuations can have a major impact on whether immigrant workers want to stay or to return to their home countries. If the purchasing power of the income they send back home increases, the chances of their changing their residence is lower than in the opposite case.

Empirical figures during the analysis of the impact of the above theoretical issues on the Hungarian labour market proved that, for instance, more Poles than Hungarians left the United Kingdom in the period analysed (11.2% versus 1%). Kutasi tries to answer two questions: do exchange rate fluctuations have an impact on Hungarians' willingness to take jobs in the United Kingdom, and if the answer is they do, are those workers going to return to the Hungarian labour market? Empirical data point out workers will leave the British economy if exchange rate fluctuations come as a blow to their purses, but – contrary to expectations – they will not return home; they will try to make use of free movement and employment within the Union by migrating to other Union member states offering them better financial prospects because of their better economic potentials. The author concludes Brexit cannot be expected to ease the shortage of qualified workforce in Hungary.

Following Brexit, the United Kingdom had to leave the common market, the customs union, and the common trade policy of the EU. The related issues are discussed in *Brexit and the World Trade Organisation* by Erik Szarvas (243–272).

Although there were many questions about the conditions and exact scenarios of Brexit because of uncertainties voiced many times (many of which have been clarified since the book was finished), it was quite clear right from the beginning the United Kingdom would cease to be a contracting party in trade agreements concluded by the Union. The author thinks the establishment of an independent trade policy and the related infrastructure will present major challenges for the British eventually.

As for an independent trade policy, new (bilateral) agreements need to be made. However, as the principal issue, the author focuses on the consequences of Brexit related to the commitments of the United Kingdom in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). There is common opinion in one regard: the WTO-related rights and obligations of the British will not change until the moment of Brexit. However, as regards the next period, there are highly different views about the future relationship between the UK and the WTO. Reviewing the relevant agreements (such as the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation, the GATT, and GATS Agreements), one can state the United Kingdom is a member state of the WTO in its own right. Further, it will have to observe the provisions of multilateral trade agreements related to the rights and obligations following Brexit.

Therefore, the author concludes that although there will be no need to „re-join” the WTO, the UK will have to recognise its market access obligations in its own schedules. So, the procedure is subject to identifying the actual content of the schedules by the United Kingdom. Unless the UK wants to modify its earlier obligations, negotiations will be about technical steps. Really fundamental questions will arise regarding the twenty-seven countries staying rather than the single one leaving. The author ends his paper by individually analysing the trade of goods and services, government procurements, trade of civil aircrafts and settlement of disputes going into detail on plausible scenarios, the timetable of negotiations for the British and their potential outcome.

The study *Potential impact of Brexit on the EU budget* by Tamás Szemlér (273–286) discusses a central question of EU operations, i.e., budget-related anomalies including the position of the United Kingdom. It may sound as a platitude, but it is true both the leaving country and the EU institutions must face uncertainties when Brexit becomes reality. The UK is a net contributor to the EU budget. In addition to purely economic considerations, this fact had its political connotations often appearing in public discourse; it was an important argument in the pre-Brexit period for the political forces supporting leave.

The author scrutinises the British position on budget contribution beginning from the UK’s access to the Union emphasising it had been unbalanced right from the start. The situation prevailing from 1973 to 1984 was only changed by the Fontainebleau decisions. Thanks to the so termed British relief scheme, net contribu-

tion was reduced by two thirds. In addition, the study describes the process in the 1990s that affected the EU budget because of relief granted to five other major net contributor member states. The essential question is how Brexit affects the future of the EU budget already in the crossfire of political debates.

A trivial impact is the size of contributions will be reduced unless the staying member states make up for the loss having arisen because of Brexit. According to a potential alternative, missing sources could be supplied via trade tariffs collected from the leaving member state. Obviously, it would also be payable on goods from the EU to the UK, which might still reduce the revenues of the common budget in the end. In addition, the system of reliefs implemented due to the British may need to be reconsidered. However, there is a small ray of hope in the conclusion of the study although economic growth in the EU is expected to slow down. Namely, Brexit may trigger renewal processes that have been on the agenda for decades but have not materialised in the form of basic and long-term solutions to date. The author also emphasises in conclusion that Brexit may offer a possibility of a long-awaited reform process, but it cannot be regarded as its cause nor is there any guarantee for a successful outcome.

The last study in the book is *Impact of Brexit on exports from Hungarian and British aspects* by Gábor Kutasi and Gábor Regős (287–302). Based on proper theoretical-methodological grounds, the authors try to quantify the effects of Brexit on the British and the Hungarian economy. They use the computable general equilibrium model (CGE) and the gravitational model built on it to verify their hypotheses. Following the clarification of methodology, they emphasise the actual scenario of (hard or soft) Brexit is another uncertainty factor determining potential effects, so it must be separately considered side by side with other unknown circumstances.

As to the impact of Brexit on Hungarian exports, the authors discuss services and products separately. (The main findings of the study focus on the direct effects of Brexit, but the authors indicate that indirect effects can also modify forecasts, for instance, through effects on other member states having close trade relations with Hungary.) In the year of Brexit, the United Kingdom ranked nine in order of importance as export destination for the Hungarian economy, on the other hand, its rate and size had been fluctuating over the past one and half decades. The export of services had been, on the contrary, constantly growing, so the UK had become the third most important export partner for this country by 2016.

In conclusion, the authors advise a significant decline can be predicted both for the exports of products and services under a hard Brexit; anyway, the outcome can be similar under a soft Brexit as well. However, the exports of services can even increase under a soft Brexit. Still, the authors remark the findings must be

regarded with caution; certain external factors, such as the small number of EFTA member states for one, may easily distort the figures.

To briefly sum up the studies in the collection, the feeling of *uncertainty* is one that often arises in the reader. It is probably because of the situation: the authors were trying to build models for the events of coming months or years after the first events in a series which had not been experienced earlier, as the United Kingdom was the first in history to decide leaving the community since European integration processes started. Because of that and because of the want of detail in Article 50 of TFEU, questions and optional scenarios have arisen regarding Brexit as a legal procedure, not to mention the potential risks threatening one (the UK) or the other party (the EU) or, in a wider context, the whole of the global economy. Certain aspects could clearly be foreseen, for instance, the population of the European Union will be lower, and internal political dynamics will change after the British leave. Similarly, adverse effects on the British economy cannot be surprising at least in the short run. (Although Brexiter politicians tried to deny that for quite a long time.)

To sum up, the book is extremely informative; it reveals connexions which have been confirmed by the recent past. The studies are valuable as they present the topics discussed in a wide context. The book cover already illustrates the main objective, i.e., a summary of potential Brexit scenarios and their effects. The main issue, of course, was „deal” or „no deal,” i.e., will the membership of the UK in the EU end with or without an agreement. The authors present in detail the potential scenarios of a „deal” or „no deal” Brexit. On the other hand, the work underlines that countering the damages caused by Brexit is almost impossible. They can only be mitigated. An important prerequisite was an issue that was open to the last minute (still open when the book was published): whether a trade agreement would be concluded with the European Union. So, the book offers a key to understanding Brexit in context. It can be safely offered to interested readers, use the key without fear.

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