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The Symbolic Capital of English HE institutions at the wake of Brexit “negotiations”. Institutional strategies to guard against “isolationism”.

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Are these not even
restored statues worth
£50Billion+?

We are facing a possible
choice of *conversions* of
capitals; more likely the HE
systems has to cope with
Brexit to reconfigure its
“silver” place in the world
competition.



Research design

- Funds: IoE “Seed Corn” to be seeded before end of July
- Object: Institutional responses of Brexit process at XXXXX and YYYYYY
- Unity of observations: Top and Middle managements to describe 2 institutional cases in England; other 2 in a EU Country
- Timing: collection before end of July
- Assumptions:
 - English HEIs vary by type also in Brexit
 - Institutions have strong autonomy and good resources to cope with Brexit
 - Symbolic Capital is extremely resilient and “feed-backing” (i.e. “*noblesse oblige*”)...
 - ... But here it is put at stake in a sort of historical watershed (i.e. prestige is not a raw jewel)

Specific Hypotheses

Sub-issues are:

1) The struggle for international students

Students' nationalities are not irrelevant

Students' SESs are relevant

The Monies from students are not all you need

What moves can assure the system to receive “worships” from the places that matter?

2) Replacement of (positive) imbalance funding from EU

With whom to collaborate?

To continue to fund other countries?

Paying or not the fee to join the EU club?

Which recalibration or mix of funding is better to be implemented to maintain one's prestige?

3) EU staff

Which segmentation will happen?

Poaching: who shall prevail and how?

Which trends will change in the next generation?

Is it possible to compel EU staff to come here or to remain here, also in a very “hard Brexit” / “no deal” scenario? How?

Preliminary results (... before even starting interviewing)

- Oxford branch is Paris was a Parisienne's idea: do they still believe in it? Under which new terms they will?
- *Lingue Franche* last centuries, but it is easy to deliver curricula in English...
- “Erasmus+” like can be devised; other story is its success
- A national Win-win strategies cannot be invented out of leaving a bigger regional win-win complex scheme
- Any diversion from Bologna Process could be not recognized by EU
- **Summing up: it is not only what UK can do for itself, it is also what EU is available to concede**
- I wouldn't even underestimate the cultural message this intelligentsia (Mrs. May's Government) is giving to the world

A tentative possible conclusion

A possible more general question for this paper is: under which circumstances a hard to be changed *symbolic capital* can actually change (for the worse, in this case), or remain vital in spite of hard circumstances.

- Is the 2016 Brexit referendum a watershed in the history of English HE?
- Is the marketisation of HE at a point of dead end?
- Institutional strategies or strategies by groups of homogeneous institutions may increase the stratification of English HE system?

This pilot “seed corn” project will simply (start) monitoring a couple of cases. The concrete paper will describe the English context in the move and *some respective institutional strategies*.

Some of Veblen; a quick appreciation of Sir John Soane

Although England is more famous for Gothic style, London is a version of neo-classical architecture (the US used to copy the Gothic one; it's always a matter of subsuming one's precedent "worshipped" maestro).

UCL is a Temple dedicated to Enlightenment as the main part of "Glorious London". It is one of the many symbols of English supremacy in HE in the world



The risk of “becoming Greek”

To lose Symbolic Capital is different (and “more”) from loss of Economic Capital. England is risking a lot, though having strong chances to cope successfully with this challenge.

In the worst of the scenarios, England (can’t say what Scotland and N.Irel. will be part of...) will slowly decay. It will be like how Greece is today in the remote future?

Probably in the best of the scenarios English HEIs will be able to cope with Brexit and many institutions will redefine their respective roles in stratified national and international contexts.

