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Bakalářská práce

The Reign and Reception of Queen
Elizabeth II: A Post-Diamond-Jubilee
Retrospect

Vláda a veřejné vnímání královny
Alžběty II. v retrospekci po diamantovém
výročí vlády

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Abstract

The bachelor thesis analyses the reign of Queen Elizabeth II from the perspective of public opinion in Great Britain. It identifies and assesses critical milestones during Queen Elizabeth II's reign and their impact on her public image and reception. The thesis focuses on the critical milestones from the tragic death of Princess Diana till the last affairs in 2020. The research includes a survey carried out in the United Kingdom, where chosen respondents answered a few questions about how they see the Queen nowadays.

Key words: Elizabeth II, reign, Jubilee, British monarchy, public opinion, image

Anotace

Bakalářská práce analyzuje vládu královny Alžběty II. z pohledu veřejného vnímání britské veřejnosti. V bakalářské práci jsou zmíněny a vytyčeny důležité události z vlády královny Alžběty II a jejich následný dopad na veřejné vnímání královny. Vybrané důležité události jsou soustředěny do moderních dějin královské rodiny – od tragické smrti princezny Diany až po události v královské rodině v roce 2020. Praktická část zahrnuje i výzkum provedený ve Spojeném království, kde vybraní respondenti zodpověděli několik otázek ohledně jejich současného vnímání královny.

Klíčová slova: Alžběta II, vláda, výročí vlády, britská monarchie, veřejný názor, vyobrazení

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1 Introduction

The thesis will concentrate on the reception of Queen Elizabeth II during her reign. At the beginning, there is information about the early life of Elizabeth II. – her childhood, education, etc. Then the symbolic role and the powers of the Queen are explained and her accession to the throne with mentioning how the public received her as their Queen at that time.

The important milestones of her reign chosen for this thesis come from the more recent years of her reign. It begins with the tragic death of Princess Diana, which shattered the public opinion. It continues with the remarkable visit to Ireland in 2011, then with the Scottish Referendum and Brexit, which shows the Queen in relation to political matters. In 2020, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan decided to withdraw from the Royal Family, which reminded of another important role of the Queen – to hold the family together. Lastly, the thesis concentrates on some tragic events that happened in the society, and the Queen’s role during such incidents.

The thesis also describes the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012, which were a great success at that time. It commemorated and celebrated the long reign of the Queen, offered a look back and it connected the past, present and the future.

At the end of this bachelor thesis, there is a research carried out in the United Kingdom. Chosen respondents were asked to answer several questions about their view of the Queen in these days.

2 The Early Life and Characterization of Elizabeth II

2.1 Early Life of Queen Elizabeth II

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second: Queen of the United Kingdom and of her other 15 Realms is only the fourth monarch of the Windsor dynasty (Marr, 2012). In 1917, the Royal Family changed their name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha because of its German connections and the anti-German mood in the society during that time. It was said that other European aristocratic houses found this change of the dynasty name to a more English one ridiculous. However, it may have helped to calm down the mood among UK citizens (Harris, 2016, p. 25).

Queen Elizabeth II was born at 2.40 a. m. on 21 April 1926 as the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York (Marr, 2012, p. 78). Four years later, in 1930, her sister Margaret Rose was born (Erickson, 2004, p. 24). The Queen was raised during difficult historical times. There was an economic crisis and Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933. Young Lilibet (as her family used to call her) was in the public sight from a very young age; her photographs appeared in the newspapers from time to time, not only in the United Kingdom (Erickson, 2004, p. 23). However, nobody had probably expected that she would become queen one day, because her father was the second in line to claim the throne. It was expected that his brother will marry and bring other heirs of the throne.

As for her education, thanks to her French governesses, the Queen learned how to speak French, which came in handy later in her life as the Queen (Harris, 2016, p. 18). However, the Duchess of York emphasized the skill of taking care of their future households when raising her daughters (Erickson, 2004, p. 26). We are still talking about the times when this was the main purpose of women in society, and therefore, women's education was not so important. When the Queen was seven years old, the governess named Marion Crawford came to nurture and educate her. Marion Crawford was born in Scotland, and it is said that she emphasized well-behaving and strong morality in nurturing the Queen (Erickson, 2004, p. 25). These values can be seen in the Queen's behaviour till nowadays.

The Queen did not attend school but was educated at home, as explained above. The first Royal children who attended school were Prince Charles and Princess Anne,

Queen Elizabeth II's children (Parker, 1991, p. 8). As Harris (2016, p. 26) describes, the Queen was educated only seven hours per week, but when she was thirteen years old, she was sent to Eton College, where Henry Marten, the Provost of Eton, educated her in his office. This college was a place where future Prime Ministers were usually educated, and the Queen learned the necessary information about history and the constitution.

In 1936 her uncle Edward VIII. became the King (Erickson, 2004, p. 39). It had been expected that the King would marry and have children who would be successors to the throne. However, King Edward VIII decided to abdicate because of his relationship with a divorced American woman. Divorce was still seen as a sin in those days, and a divorced person could not get married again, according to the Church (Harris, 2016, p. 18). It was unthinkable that the King would marry a divorced woman, and other successors would come from this marriage.

Elizabeth's father became King George VI, and Elizabeth was then the second in the accession line, which changed their lives immensely. After the coronation of her father, Elizabeth became more active in public duties. She visited many openings of buildings or organizations, and she visited many young people or children during her official visits. Because she had loved horses from an early age, she also visited many horse exhibitions (Erickson, 2004, p. 49).

Elizabeth was also very active during the Second World War. She entered the reserved army, and she passed her driving licence test (Harris, 2016, p. 23). In 1942 Elizabeth became the colonel of the National Guard. She was very active in charity work, and in 1945 she became the second commissioned officer and learned to drive a van, a bus and an ambulance. She also took part in the course on technical problems in mechanical transport (Erickson, 2004, p. 11-12). When she was 21 years old, she went to South Africa with her parents and her sister, and that was when her famous speech delivered to the Commonwealth took place. She expressed her intentions for the future and betrothed herself to the Commonwealth (Erickson, 2004, p. 14).

The Queen's wedding took place in 1947, and it was "made certain to be the major national event most of the country wanted" (Marr, 2012, p. 113). Her husband, Prince Philip, was a naval officer and her cousin. They have common

great-great-grandparents – Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (Harris, 2016, p. 25). Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip have four children – Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward. Prince Charles and Princess Anne were born before Elizabeth claimed the throne.

During their holiday in Kenya, Elizabeth's father, King George VI, died. On 6 February 1952, Elizabeth became the Queen (Parker, 1991, p. 23). The death of her father was a significant loss for the nation. Parker (1991, p. 31) explains that the UK citizens admired him for his devotion to the service as the King and his simplicity. King George VI was not raised for being a king. It was unexpected for him, which is why he might have seemed closer to the citizens – for being just an ordinary man. Queen Elizabeth II was also the first queen of the United Kingdom who claimed the throne after the death of one of her parents (Parker, 1991, p. 24).

2.2 The Queen's Role

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and has no founding document or written constitution (Marr, 2012, p. 8). Such form means that it is a democratic state with a hereditary crowned head of state who “reigns but does not rule” (Balmer, 2009, p. 671). Queen Elizabeth II is the longest-serving monarch in British history (since 1952). She has even outlasted Queen Victoria (Marr, 2012, p. 6).

Balmer (2011, p. 533-536) defines 6 Rs of monarchies as corporate heritage brands: Royal, Regal, Relevance, Respect, Responsiveness and Regulation. *Royal* is their status and identity in the nation. *Regal* is their behaviour, traditions and culture of their identity. Monarchy should also be *Relevant* in the sense of national identity. *Respect* between the Crown and the people is also critical and very vulnerable. According to Balmer, *Responsiveness* means that the monarchy needs to consider all changes in politics, society, ethic etc. The final R, *Regulation*, is embodied in the monarch and his or her Private Secretary, Prime Minister and the Government of the day.

In such a monarchy, the Royal Family is vital for state and international relationships (Parker, 1991, p. 96). Members of the Royal Family are great diplomats who can help to build bonds with other nations. As Harris (2016, p. 12) explains,

the Royal Family represents stability, the national heritage, solidarity, and it is a symbol of the nation's family. Even though there are still strong traditions, some changes must naturally happen. The Queen holds the Royal Family together, and thanks to her, all the changes are happening in a very conservative, careful and sensitive way. (Harris, 2016, p. 12).

In a constitutional monarchy such as the British one, the monarch has symbolic power, not political power. It is neither a theocratic (the monarch is seen as the servant of the God) nor an autocratic (people seen as subjects of the monarch) system anymore (Balmer, 2009, p. 670). Marr (2012, p. 9-10) describes the Queen as a symbol of the nation, symbol of continuity, authority and as a representative of the state. However, she is not the symbol of the people because of the individual differences. The Queen serves the people. As Balmer (2009, p. 655) emphasizes, the Monarchs "need to be mindful of the voice of God (*voxdei*) and the voice of the people (*voxpopuli*)".

As Marr (2012, p. 5) notes, even though the Queen is seen and known almost everywhere, there is still some mystery around her, which brings out a question of how mysterious the Queen should be. We will never know what is going on behind the walls of Buckingham Palace; we will never know what the Queen really thinks about most political matters. However, it plays in her favour if people feel closer to her thanks to realizing that she is also just an ordinary woman in most cases.

The Queen's role is mainly ceremonial, and she is above politics. Her right is only to encourage, warn and consult (Harris, 2016, p. 12). However, she can still appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and the government (Balmer, 2009, p. 32). The Queen would probably use this power only in a very extreme situation because it would be a great risk for her to get involved in politics and dismiss her government or Prime Minister. Queen Elizabeth II is very dedicated to her job, and she spends a lot of time reading paperwork from the government because she needs to be informed about everything.

The Queen is also the head of the Church - Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England – which gives her the right to appoint bishops and archbishops. Another title of the Queen is the Head of the Armed Forces,

which means that the soldiers fight in her name. She is also a patron of many charities, and she bestows medals, knighthoods, ribbons etc., on the advice of the government. But most importantly, the Queen is the Head of the Commonwealth – an organization founded to keep alliances with previous colonies (Marr, 2012, p. 15-17).

The Commonwealth organization was founded in 1931, and the countries within the Commonwealth are independent members under Great Britain. This companionship benefits the countries because of economical, trade and other connections with the United Kingdom (Erickson, 2004, p. 15). The Commonwealth consists of 54 members; sixteen are constitutional monarchies with Queen Elizabeth II as their official sovereign - Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Bahamas, Jamaica etc. (Balmer, 2011, p. 520).

The Queen and other members of the Royal Family visit the countries around the Commonwealth. These trips are a big part of their work as Royals. They do not visit only countries abroad; they also visit and greet people of the United Kingdom, they visit hospitals, some charity organizations and many others. The Queen also meets other diplomats or presidents of other countries. As Marr (2012, p. 124) puts it: “Most of the intercourse with world leaders has been at the level of the polite and uncontroversial exchange of expressions of goodwill. Her job is to meet, to listen but not to interrogate.” Because of her strongly admired personality, her presence can help to get some help from other countries and build better relationships with other countries.

Erickson (2004, p. 173-174) describes that the Queen receives two boxes of paperwork from the government per day. She reads them carefully to be well informed about everything that is going on in her country. If there is no official meeting, the Queen has to sort out many things connected with the Royal Household. She accepts new employees of the Palace, she approves daily menus, and she also manages the Royal Household's finances with her team.

2.3 The Coronation and the New Elizabethan Era

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, which took place in 1953, had to be very well prepared. It took many months of training and preparations so that everything would be ready and there would not be any chaos or embarrassing moments during

the ceremony. The Queen had to practice walking with the heavy Crown on her head and the monumental veil on her back to look dignified as expected from a Queen (Harris, 2016, p.60). The dress code for the coronation was also strictly made. Nobody was allowed to wear hats or coats inside the cathedral, no matter what the weather would be like. The rest of the dress code was decided according to the people's title or degree (Harris, 2016, p. 58).

This coronation was televised by the British Broadcasting Corporation. However, before the ceremony, there was a wide discussion whether it should be broadcasted or not. In history, the coronations were almost private, just for the aristocracy, not for the public. Winston Churchill and the Queen's Private Secretary were doubtful about it. Any imperfection would be immense because of that (Balmer, 2009, p. 15). The Queen was also against it, naturally, because it would put a great pressure on her. However, as the public learned about the opportunity to see the ceremony, letters were coming to the Buckingham Palace expressing the desire to be able to watch the coronation. Prince Philip supported the idea of broadcasting the ceremony and also due to Richard Dimbley, a British journalist, the broadcasting happened (Harris, 2016, p. 56). In the end, about 20 million people watched the ceremony. This reflected the power of democracy in the United Kingdom and the fact that "the monarchy is there for the people" (Balmer, 2009, p. 16).

As Harris (2016, p. 58) described, the coronation had a mythical atmosphere with all the coronation objects, generic insignias etc. The Queen promised to serve the country and signed the promise with a golden quill. Her husband, Prince Philip, pledged an allegiance to the Queen. On the way back to the Buckingham Palace, thousands of people gave the ovation to the golden carriage with the Queen in it (Parker, 1991, p. 52). After returning to Buckingham Palace in the late afternoon, the Queen delivered a speech to the awaiting crowds. Then she made an appearance on the balcony with other members of the Royal Family to greet the people once again (Erickson, 2004, p. 124).

As Balmer (2019, p. 16) commented on the coronation, such ceremonies have a long history, however, they can carry different meanings over time. Winston Churchill described the coronation as a ceremony which celebrated the new Queen and the new era, but also the difficult duty as Elizabeth II promised to serve the people

(Churchill qtd. in Harris, 2016, p. 57). Elizabeth II claimed the throne as a very young and attractive woman in her twenties; therefore, some people of puritan views could have been doubtful (Parker, 1991, p. 31). On the other hand, some people saw this as the beginning of a new promising era. Elizabeth II also carried the symbol of a family because of being a young mother and a wife at the same time as being the Queen of the United Kingdom (Parker, 1991, p. 41). Especially after the two world wars in the 20th century, the new Queen could be seen as the new beginning and hope for the nation. As Parker (1991, p. 39) mentioned, Elizabeth II presented a connection between the past and future hope, because of her accomplishments during the war.

Harris (2016, p. 48) described Elizabeth II's behaviour at the beginning of her reign as natural with dignity. She followed the example of her parents – she kept visiting hospitals, schools, occasions for charity and many others. The Queen is also an important representation of the state; therefore, her job was to greet many diplomats from other countries (Erickson, 2004, p. 115). As many traditions are held in Buckingham Palace and within the Royal Family, some of them coming even from the Middle Ages, the Queen had to follow them but also made some changes because of the modern age and the involvement in the society (Parker, 1991, p. 95). The Private Secretary of the Queen, Alan “Tommy” Lascelles, influenced the early years of her reign (Parker, 1991, p. 42).

After the coronation, Elizabeth II and her husband Prince Philip travelled around the British empire for five and a half months. They visited countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Gibraltar and many others (Harris, 2016, p. 64). The way of this tour, between the years 1954-1955, created an example for the future years (Parker, 1991, p. 60). The tour was an overall success, Elizabeth II and her husband managed to deepen the connection between the Commonwealth and to strengthen the Queen's position in those countries (Harris, 2016, p. 66).

3 The Important Milestones

3.1 How the Death of Princess of Wales Shattered the Monarchy

Princess Diana was a remarkable figure in the history of the United Kingdom. She was admired not only in the United Kingdom but also in other countries, where she was seen as a beautiful princess with a warm-hearted personality. Very often, she was named as the “People’s Princess” because of her extraordinary popularity.

Why was Princess Diana so popular? The authors of the documentary titled *Diana: The People’s Princess* (Sky News, 2017) describe her as “a confident, pretty, compassionate woman who was an inspiration for many moms”. People admired her clothing, her hair; it seemed that people believed she was a real princess. Diana married Charles, Prince of Wales, which appeared as a fairy tale at the beginning. As journalist Carole Manole (Manole qtd. in Sky News, 2017) said: “People wanted the fairy story and Diana represented the fairy story.” However, her marriage was not very happy after all.

Mainly, people respected her for her charity work and compassion towards other people’s lives, especially children’s lives. “I am a humanitarian figure and always have been and always will be”, said Diana about herself (Princess Diana qtd. in Sky News, 2017). The already mentioned documentary captures Princess Diana during her humanitarian efforts. She visited patients with HIV in Middlesex hospital; she also went to Angola to see one of the minefields that were being cleaned in 1997. However, Diana also wanted to see a heart operation with her own eyes. “You know I am a great lover of children and the fact that a little person can have a second opportunity in my country... I am very proud to be involved,” she commented on the operation (Princess Diana qtd. in Sky News, 2017).

When she visited AIDS patients in Middlesex hospital, she shook hands with one of the patients, which had been seen as a taboo up to that time. Ian Govendir, AIDS Orphan Founder, commented on this: “Having been affected by HIV myself, I felt a huge sense of relief that actually someone was out there fighting the corner for people living with the virus.” (Govendir qtd. in Sky News, 2017) We can see that Diana was using her popularity in an admirable way and she became an important

person in many people's lives. She proved that someone from higher society could care so much about other people who are having hard times in their lives.

On 31 August 1997, Princess Diana died after a severe car crash in Paris. The official Royal website notes that she was accompanied by Mr Dodi Fayed, a driver and a bodyguard. The only person who survived this tragedy was the bodyguard, who also had serious injuries. Her death was so sudden, tragic and unexpected that the public of the United Kingdom, but also people from other countries, were stunned by this tragedy.

After this incident, the Royal Family stayed at Balmoral Castle in Scotland and "went into private mourning". (Balmer, 2009, p. 640-641) This reaction of the Royals met with a vast disagreement from the public. The Queen's people wanted to see their Queen at this challenging time of mourning.

Brian Reade (2017) from *The Daily Mirror*, describes how he, as a republican was travelling and reporting people mourning for Princess Diana. "As a life-long republican, it is fair to say I have had better jobs. I was not anti-Diana. I had admired her jaw-dropping TV interview in which she exposed the sham marriage she was lured into." (Reade, 2017) Reade goes on about how people started being angry about their Queen and he describes it as something extraordinary that people united themselves holding Union Jacks and stood against the Royal Family. "It felt like the nation was seeing, for the first time, a cynical aristocratic clan whose only concern was self-preservation." (Reade, 2017) *The Daily Mirror* also released newspapers with the head-title "Your People Are Suffering – Speak to Us Ma'am".

Arguably, *The Express* news used quotes from the book *The Firm* (2005) written by Royal author Penny Junor saying: "Her first thoughts were for her grandchildren, and for once she put family before duty." (Junor qtd. in Kretschmer, 2019) The article also puts Queen Elizabeth II's response to Diana's death in 1997 in context with the history of Queen Victoria after Prince Albert died in 1861. It is essential to know that Queen Victoria also would not be seen in public after this tragedy. The response from the public was in very similar mood as with Queen Elizabeth II. Penny Junor (2005) also wrote: "When the nation is in mourning, it looks to the monarch to lead

the process. The magic of monarchy is in the seeing. And it is magic – despite what cynics might say.” (Junor qtd. in Kretschmer, 2019)

The Independent published an article “No Flag Flying, a Family Far Away, and the People Feel Uneasy” on 4 September 1997. The authors of this article quote what the Prime Minister said in support for the Royal Family: “They are trying to make all the practical arrangements, which are very complex, obviously, for the funeral, at the same time as comforting the two boys. They share our grief very much and we should respect that.” (Blair qtd. in Streeter and Bevins, 1997) The authors of this article also interviewed a few people who were waiting to sign the books of condolence at St James’s Palace. These people felt that the Royal Family should show their respect to Princess Diana by giving at least some statement. The article also reports that because the Queen was not present in Buckingham Palace, there was no flag at half-mast. This fact was also seen as disrespectful to Diana. On the other hand, Ronald Allison (the Queen’s former press secretary) said for this article: “It is my belief that they do share that grief and that sorrow, that they are dealing with it in their own way, which may not be our way.” (Allison qtd. in Streeter and Bevins, 1997) Nevertheless, we can definitely sense the uncertainty from this article about what is going to happen next with the relationship between the Royal Family and public.

On 5 September 1997, *The Independent* released an article titled “The Queen bows to her subjects”. (Streeter, 1997). This article informs people that the Queen will broadcast and there will be the Union flag flying from the Buckingham Palace at half-mast even when “traditionally, only the Royal Standard is flown – and then only when the Queen is resident” (Streeter, 1997).

In the documentary *Diana: The People’s Princess* (Sky News, 2017), journalist Carole Manole describes the atmosphere after the Queen came back to London. She describes the heavy atmosphere between the Queen and the mourners whom the Queen was passing by. Then Carole Manole continues: “You could see as she walked around and as she looked concerned, the crowds kind of calmed down. She was saved and I really think it was that important. I think if she had not come then, the country might never have got over it. They needed her.” (Manole qtd. in Sky News, 2017)

Afterwards, on 5 September, the Queen decided to give a speech which was unusual because she has only two scheduled speeches in a year, the Christmas speech and the Opening of Parliament. (Benoit, Brinson, 1999) The Queen described her emotions which she shared with the public, but more importantly, she mentioned her role as the Queen and grandmother. “So what I say to you now, as your Queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart.” (Queen Elizabeth II., 1997) She continued with paying respects to Princess Diana: “First, I want to pay tribute to Diana myself. She was an exceptional and gifted human being.” (Queen Elizabeth II., 1997) The Queen also mentioned that they were trying to help Diana’s sons that week at Balmoral and thanked people for paying respect to Diana. At the end of her speech, she asked the people to unite. “I hope tomorrow we can all, wherever we are, join in expressing our grief at Diana’s loss, and gratitude for her all-too-short life. It is a chance to show to the whole world, the British nation united in grief and respect.” (Queen Elizabeth II, 1997). According to Benoit and Brinson (1999), the Queen commented on their staying at Balmoral in this part of speech by saying: “It is not easy to express a sense of loss, since the initial shock is often succeeded by a mixture of other feelings: disbelief, incomprehension, anger and concern for those who remain.” (Queen Elizabeth II, 1997)

Benoit and Brinson (1999) comment on this speech in their article referring to the “image repair discourse”. They see this speech as a good one in regard to the temper in the country in those days. “The speech was not simply adequate, not merely inoffensive, but positively well crafted to succinctly but distinctly make her point.” (Benoit, Brinson, 1999) They also mention that “the situation including the fact that such a speech was unprecedented, favoured the Queen.” (Benoit, Brinson, 1999)

It is clear that these events connected with the tragic death of Princess Diana took an unexpected course for the Royal Family. However, the Queen made very important and brave step by delivering the speech and that step probably saved her respect as a monarch. Even though the public disagreement still continued in some degree, the situation slowly calmed down.

3.2 The First State Visit to the Republic of Ireland

This particular state visit made in 2011 is an important milestone in Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Her grandfather King George V visited Ireland in 1911, which was the last state visit to Ireland (BBC, 2011). Then the First World War started, but also the Irish War of Independence between 1919 and 1921. In 1922 the Irish Free State was established, but full independence was gained in 1948 when Ireland became the Republic of Ireland. (Dorney, 2012).

The relationship between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland is therefore complicated due to their long shared history. Jilly Beattie (editor of *The Daily Mirror's* print and online Irish editions) noted: "It is a confusing type of relationship and a confused relationship as well. But there is such a loyalty there too." (Beattie qtd. in Reach Podcasts, 2020) The Queen's twelfth prime minister admitted: "I was nervous about it. But I was hugely admiring of the fact that the Royal Family wanted to go ahead with this visit relatively quickly after the finalizing of the last bits of devolution of power to Northern Ireland." (Cameron qtd. in Marr, 2012, p. 2) Sir John Major, who was the British prime minister before David Cameron, said that this visit could help to build a better relationship in the future between those two countries. (Major qtd. in BBC, 2011)

Queen Elizabeth II gave a remarkable speech on 18 May 2011 in Dublin Castle. The interesting fact is that the Queen started her speech with a few words in Irish which was a great accommodating step. According to *The Express* article of 2020 "the Queen caused people's jaws to drop when she began her speech in Gaelic." (Santolo, 2020) The article even describes the surprised reaction of the Irish President at that time, Mary McAleese, when she uttered a "wow" after the Queen started her speech. The Queen then continued with some remarks about their long relationship and history; however, she also paid sincere respect to people who had suffered during challenging times: "To all those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past I extend my sincere thoughts and deep sympathy." (Queen Elizabeth II, 2011) The Queen also thanked people who took part in building the peace between their two countries, and she expressed her belief in further cooperation in the future. Santolo (2020) also commented that the visit was a very brave step and that the speech delivered in Dublin is seen by experts as one of the best in history made by the Queen.

This whole trip took four days, and the Queen visited Dublin Castle, the First World War memorial dedicated to soldiers of the British Army, but she also visited Croke Park - in this place, the tragedy known as Bloody Sunday happened in 1920. (Mulraney, 2018) *The Guardian* informed about this state visit in their article titled 'Irish Eyes Are Smiling: Show of Respect Turns Queen into Runaway Favourite', where the authors mention that the Queen went to see a fashion show and a concert. "Later, the Queen was given a five-minute standing ovation as she went on to the stage to meet performers..." (Bates, McDonald, 2011) This whole article describes the Queen as very well received and welcomed famous person in Ireland, the authors close this with a remark that the Queen "has unexpectedly become an Irish media star" (Bates, McDonald, 2011).

This trip also recalled the tragic death of Lord Mountbatten, who was a Royal relative. The IRA (Irish Republican Army) ordered to kill him in 1979 (Santolo, 2020). Richard Palmer (*Daily Express* royal editor), who was part of this visit in 2011, recalled in an interview that the Queen met Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. It is still questioned if these two people were part of the IRA who ordered the death of Lord Mountbatten (Palmer qtd. in Reach Podcasts, 2020). Jilly Beattie (editor of *The Daily Mirror's* print and online Irish editions) also mentioned in the same interview the moment when Martin McGuinness shook his hand with the Queen. Jilly Beattie described it as a very unexpected moment during the visit, and that Irish people felt very differently about it. Some people felt sorry for the Queen, some people for Martin McGuinness. Jilly Beattie also said: "...but we will never know what was going on in the minds of these two people." (Beattie qtd. in Reach Podcasts, 2020)

It is essential to mention how Gerry Adams, who was at that time the President of the Sinn Féin political party, reacted to the speech Queen Elizabeth II delivered in Dublin. "I believe that her expression of sincere sympathy for those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past is genuine." (Adams qtd. in Bates, McDonald, 2011) However, Sinn Féin disagreed (Mulraney, 2018). We need to be aware of the fact that some people still did not receive the Queen so well, or they were just not interested in this visit. As in every society, the opinions are varied.

Therefore, it was still a risk for the Queen to go to Ireland, because they could not be sure what was going to happen there and how well she would be received.

That is the reason why there was quite a big security operation during the visit. Before the visit took place, there was a bomb found on a bus in Dublin, as BBC (2011) informed. The bomb was disposed of safely and nobody got hurt.

On the other hand, this state visit was such a great success that even *The New York Times* informed about it in 2011. The author described this visit as a vital reconnection of these two countries and he also mentions that the Queen expressed her respect to the Irish people. Moreover, she showed an incredible humbleness in her appearance, as she wore green clothes (Cowell, 2011). Cowell (2011) continues by mentioning how the anthem *God Save the Queen* was listened to in Dublin and how the Queen walked to greet people in Cork.

The Irish Central published an article (Mulraney, 2018) on the seventh years anniversary of the visit to remember the peace process between their countries during Brexit confusion. This article starts with a brief summarization of the important historical events which affected the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Mulraney (2018) also mentions that the trip “is one of those moments that should be celebrated for showing just how far peace has come.” The article describes the Queen’s moving speech and some other moments during which was the Queen very well received.

At the occasion of another state visit to Ireland in 2020 made by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge was a great opportunity to remember the tremendous visit in 2011. Richard Palmer (*Daily Express* royal editor) was therefore a guest at the podcast *Pod Save the Queen* because he had been to Ireland with the Queen in 2011. He also came with Prince Charles and his wife Camilla in 2015, and he joined Prince William and his wife Catherine to Ireland in 2020. He was therefore comparing all the visits: “One thing that I found a little disappointing I suppose, was that the security arrangements were really very similar to those in 2011.” (Palmer qtd. in Reach Podcasts, 2020). Palmer went back to remember the visit in 2011. He described the atmosphere as very uncertain at the beginning, but more relaxed at the end. Palmer also remarked: “...that is the highest diplomacy when members of Royal Family go on these foreign trips...” (Palmer qtd. in Reach Podcasts, 2020). The members of the Royal Family are important diplomats and they help to build strong

relationships with other countries as we can see at this example with the Republic of Ireland.

This particular state visit was a success which definitely favoured the Queen. It also showed to the world that although the Queen is not involved in politics, she is a very important diplomat for the United Kingdom. The Queen helps the constitutional monarchy to make better relationships with other countries, such as Ireland, which is significant for the further development of the United Kingdom.

3.3 Scottish Referendum 2014

In history, Scotland used to be an independent kingdom within the British Isles. However, after Queen Elizabeth's death without a successor in 1603, James VI of Scotland claimed the throne in all three realms of the British Isles (Mullen, 2014, p. 627). The kingdoms were fully united in 1707 by the Treaty of Union (Mullen, 2014, p. 628). After the union, Scotland still had their separate powers in some cases (for example Presbyterian church). The discussion about what powers should the respective nations (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) have in their own hands continues till nowadays.

It is essential to understand the United Kingdom as a kingdom consisting of different nations, specifically, English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. The Republic of Ireland is already a separate state, and it is well known how complicated process it was. Even in other parts of the world, there used to be multicultural states or monarchies (for example Austria-Hungary) and there still are such states (for example Canada). These facts can help us to understand the complicated process of gaining independence.

In Scotland, nationalistic feelings were rising. As Mullen (2014, p. 631) mentions, in May 2011 the Scottish National Party won the election to the Scottish Parliament, which meant that the path towards the referendum was set up. It was time to agree with the UK government on the conditions of how the referendum was going to happen. Therefore, there was the Edinburgh Agreement of October 2012 (Mullen, 2014, p. 631).

The predictions about how the referendum might end started appearing. It was already evident before the referendum took place that the result would be very narrow and only a small percentage would probably decide. *The Guardian* released an article in 2014 where they summarize the predictions. In a survey by *The Observer* the difference was six per cent, in *The Sunday Times* only two per cent. In a research made for *The Sunday Telegraph*, the idea about becoming independent won with 54% (Carrell, Watt, Quinn, 2014).

Six years after the referendum took place, *The Herald* released an article summarizing what the headlines of the newspapers looked like in 2014 (Duffy, 2020). Some headlines sounded more objective, referring to the referendum as a day of destiny, deciding about the nation's future etc. To be accurate, *The Scotsman*, for example, released an article titled "Day of Destiny". Other newspapers' headlines were encouraging people to decide: "Choose Well Scotland" (published by *The Daily Record*), very brief title "Vote." (*Metro*). These newspapers often mentioned that no matter how people would decide, it was necessary to engage in the vote. Some newspapers encouraged people to choose a particular option. *The Daily Mirror* was trying to persuade people to vote for 'No' in an article titled "Don't Leave Us This Way". The report "Don't Let the Sun Set on Our Union" (published in *The Scottish Daily Express*) also urged people to save the union. The newspapers mainly supported the 'No' vote except for a few other newspapers, or they supported people's decision no matter what it would be.

The Royal Family is linked to Scotland because they visit Balmoral Castle there, one of the famous Royal residences, and they also have Scottish titles (Webber, 2014). The question then was what would happen with the relationship between the Royal Family (mainly the Queen) and Scotland? Would Elizabeth II still be their Queen after the separation, or would they separate completely? There were different opinions about this before the referendum and still are these days. David Cameron, who was the Prime Minister in 2014, expressed himself: "This is a once-and-for-all decision. If Scotland votes yes, the UK will split, and we will go our separate ways forever." (Cameron, qtd. in Carrell, Watt, Quinn, 2014) Arguably, Alex Salmond, the First Minister of Scotland at that time, said on one of the BBC shows: "We want

to see Her Majesty the Queen as Queen of the Scots. That is a fantastic title and a fantastic prospect.” (Salmond, qtd. in Carrell, Watt, Quinn, 2014)

It was understandable that people wanted to know what the Queen thought about the Scottish independence and the referendum itself. However, it is difficult to say how she truly felt about the referendum. During her stay at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, she uttered a short remark about the referendum when leaving the church after a Sunday service: “I hope people will think very carefully about the future.” (Elizabeth II, qtd. in Kretschmer, 2019) This remark could have been seen as a very diplomatic answer during leaving the church but there were also ideas that this has been already prepared because the Queen felt very strongly about the referendum. In her article published by *The Daily Express* in 2019 (when the Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon opened the debate about another referendum), Kretschmer mentions a controversial biography of David Cameron written by Lord Ashcroft in 2015. The article quotes some passages from Lord Ashcroft’s biography saying that the Queen felt so strongly about the referendum that they were thinking if she should speak out against the referendum somehow. Therefore, according to the biography by Lord Ashcroft, the Queen uttered the remark in Scotland (Kretschmer, 2019).

Arguably, the Royal Family is known for their strong belief that they should stay out of political matters. The Queen is also known for hardly ever commenting on political situations in the United Kingdom. In September 2014, Buckingham Palace also released a statement saying: “Her Majesty is simply of the view this is a matter for the people of Scotland.” (Kretschmer, 2019) This statement corresponds with the fact that the Royal Family should not share their opinion about these matters with the public, even when sometimes it may seem that the Queen is expected to say something. Therefore, the remark would be seen as a polite answer during a conversation.

The result of the Scottish referendum in 2014 was pro-union. Therefore, Scotland stayed within the United Kingdom. On the 18 September, 55.3 per cent of Scottish voters decided to remain within the United Kingdom (Mullen, 2014, p. 627). There may be many different reasons for this result. People may have been afraid of the risk connected with independence and economic uncertainty. Carrell, Watt and Quinn mentioned in the article for *The Guardian*: “...78% of company chairmen in FTSE 100 companies said independence would damage the economy, according

to a poll by the executive consultancy Korn Ferry.” (Carrell, Watt, Quinn, 2014) However, it was also about the uncertainty what state system would be established in Scotland. As already mentioned, there were different opinions about what Scotland would become, because some thinkers wanted a republic, some wanted to keep the Queen as the official head of state.

We can be certain about the fact that this debate about Scottish independence didn't end with the referendum in 2014, there is another discussion going on. Brexit re-opened the question of Scottish independence. *The Irish Times* published a statement by Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, saying that the majority of Scottish people voted for staying within the EU and also mentioning other difficulties connected to Brexit (Sturgeon qtd. in *The Irish Times*, 2021). Every devolved area of the United Kingdom (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) has some of the powers in their own hands which can be seen during the current coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, each area have had its own restrictions on how to deal with the situation. Some Scottish representatives are very critical about the decisions of the central government. The question if the union will survive is still there.

The Scottish Independence referendum was a threat to the union, but also to the Queen. Even though we cannot be sure what her opinion about the referendum was and how strongly she felt about it, it is possible to say that the separation would be very problematic. Especially because it was not decided what the Queen's role in Scotland would be after the split, some Scottish people wanted her to remain the head of their state, and some people did not.

3.4 Brexit

To understand this complicated political process, we need to summarize the historical context briefly. The United Kingdom was a member of the European Economic Community, which was the predecessor of the European Union, from 1973 (Pruitt, 2019). We also need to take into consideration the difference between the Continent and the British Isles. Great Britain is exceptional in Europe not only because of its being an island and the consequent physical separation from the Continent but also because of its history. As an article published in *The Guardian*

claimed: "...unlike most of western Europe, it has not spent the past few centuries as a battlefield." (Henley, Rankin, O'Carroll, 2020)

It is impossible to capture all the issues that probably led to Brexit. In the history of the European Union, there were some disagreements with the United Kingdom which may have influenced the referendum about leaving the EU. For instance, in the late 1990s, there was a ban on British beef made by Brussel because of the "mad cow" disease (Pruitt, 2019). However, this was not the only disagreement; there were others – about immigration crisis etc.

On 20 February 2016, Prime Minister David Cameron delivered a speech including the announcement of the referendum about Brexit. Firstly, Cameron mentioned a new deal about what the United Kingdom's position in the EU would look like in the future. Then he announced that referendum would take place on 23 June. "You will decide. And whatever, your decision, I will do my best to deliver it." (Cameron, 2016) Cameron also clearly expressed his attitude towards leaving the EU and he finished the speech with: "I believe that Britain will be safer, stronger and better off in a reformed European Union." (Cameron, 2016)

The result of the referendum was very even. Voters for leaving the EU won with only 51.9 per cent (Pruitt, 2019). There may be again many reasons why people voted for leaving the EU. *The Irish Times* released an article in 2020 where they looked back at the referendum in 2016 from a psychological point of view. The article mentioned that not many voters had spent time researching the issue and that they had decided mostly emotionally (Hughes, 2020).

On the other hand, *The Independent* analysed the result by other features. The article published in 2016 mentioned the research by Brian Bell and Stephen Machin, which found that people from areas with lower wages were more likely to vote to leave the EU (Chu, 2016). The article continues by asking rhetorical questions about whether the reasons could be the immigration crisis and social changes in the UK or even media propaganda showing the EU in a bad light.

In the following years dealing with Brexit brought about a constitutional crisis in the United Kingdom. The discussion of whether the Queen should step out and do or say something about Brexit was brought to light again. There were very different

opinions on this matter but also some theories which may have or may have not been confirmed about what was going on in Buckingham Palace.

Firstly, we need to remember that the Queen's role is mainly formal, ceremonial and she is not involved in politics. As *The Guardian* noted in an article, "the crown is for ceremony; MPs do the rest." (Editorial, *The Guardian*, 2019). However, it is known that the Queen has weekly meetings with the Prime Minister, where they privately discuss the government matters. The word *private* is essential. On the other hand, the article published in *The Guardian* continued: "It is not craven deference to note that the prime minister is a crown appointment and many functions of government are performed by royal prerogative." (Editorial, *The Guardian*, 2019) Furthermore, as already said, the Queen's role is ceremonial and formal, and her position may be seen important in uniting the citizens and bringing people together. Shouldn't she, therefore, step out during such a crisis as Brexit? Isn't this crisis analogous to the one after Princess Diana's death? Or what is the difference between these two?

It is difficult to answer these questions because as we recall, people needed to see the Queen after Princess Diana's death, and when she didn't step out, it had serious consequences. On the other hand, before the Scottish referendum, the Queen noted a very polite remark in Scotland and that might have been seen as inappropriate by many people. *The Express* quoted Lord Heseltine speaking on LBC (the *Leading Britain's Conversation* radio station): "One of the most treasured aspects of our constitution is that the Monarch remains above the party clash." (Whitefield, 2019)

In 2016, *The Sun* released an article with the headline saying "Queen Backs Brexit". The Independent Press Standards Organisation disagreed with this title because it was misleading and therefore, *The Sun* infringed the Editors' Code (Newton Dunn, 2016). The article released information received by innominate sources that the Queen expressed herself about the European Union during a lunch with Nick Clegg at Windsor Castle. Buckingham Palace stated in response: "The Queen remains politically neutral, as she has for 63 years. We would never comment on spurious, anonymously sourced claims." (Newton Dunn, 2016) However, everyone has an opinion, even the Queen herself, but it should be respected that she doesn't wish to make her opinion public.

Even Nick Clegg commented: “I find it rather distasteful to reveal conversations with the Queen.” (Newton Dunn, 2016)

It must be mentioned that the Queen has the power to adjourn parliament. *The Guardian* said: “Jacob Rees-Mogg identified that simple truth when he suggested that parliament could be prorogued to prevent MPs legislating to obstruct a no-deal Brexit.” (Editorial, *The Guardian*, 2019) There follows a question about what the consequences of this act would be. Would the people admire the Queen for stepping out, or would they get upset? After all, the Queen is known for her very neutral position in such matters.

The American newspapers also reacted to this situation and questioned whether the Queen should do something or stay neutral. For instance, *The New York Times* came to a conclusion that the Queen was worried to do anything (Barry, 2019). This article also quoted Jack Simson Caird (a senior researcher at the Bingham Center for the Rule of Law): “The way our system is supposed to work, you have already failed if the Queen is forced to make any sort of decision.” (Caird, qtd. in Barry, 2019) An earlier article (published in 2018) by *The Washington Post* said: “This Queen doesn’t do politics. That’s the key to her staying power: She rules by not ruling.” (Adam, 2018)

Brexit has revived the discussion of whether the Queen should get involved in politics. Unlike other debates about the constitutional monarchy in the United Kingdom, this one seems a little bit more straightforward. Even though some people would be grateful to see the Queen more involved in these matters, it would be problematic for the Queen to do so. Recalling the situation in 2014 (Scottish referendum) when the Queen uttered a very polite remark could help us imagine what response would it have.

3.5 Meghan and Harry

Prince Harry is a son of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, which means that he is publicly known from the day he was born. Prince Harry was only eleven years old when he lost his mother, which was a trauma that affected him. Prince Harry served in the military, he went to Afghanistan with the British Army on two tours (Royal Household, n.d.). His wife Meghan Markle is an American actress, that means,

a woman who gained her popularity herself unlike the members of the Royal Family, who were born into the public spotlight. Meghan Markle is known for being a feminist. Even before she became a member of the Royal Family, she supported women's empowerment and social justice (Royal Household, n.d.).

From the time Meghan appeared next to Prince Harry, she experienced pressure from media. Meghan, an American, divorced actress and a woman of colour naturally drew attention. However, this attention continued even after the couple got married, after they had their first baby, and it did not seem to end. Before the wedding in 2018, *the BBC* released an article (Dymond, 2018) questioning what would Meghan bring to the Royal Family. The article highlighted that she was working and already had a public profile which she used to communicate important matters. The author was asking a question about how Meghan would manage to work for the Royal Family: "Don't get me wrong, it is important work – hard work, at times, often boring work, I imagine. But it is not what she is used to." (Dymond, 2018)

Unfortunately, there were other articles, some of them were literally shaming Meghan Markle. For instance, *The Daily Mail* published an article criticising Meghan for touching her belly. Opinions of reporters and experts are mentioned, some of them understanding, some of them annoyed. Liz Jones (MoS columnist) said: "I do wonder what it is to come once Meghan begins to breastfeed...will she milk it for all she's worth?" (Jones, *Mail on Sunday*, 2019) Are such comments really necessary about a future mother? In an interview, made by *ITV News* (2019) shortly after giving birth to their son, Meghan expressed her feelings. It is clear to see her struggling in the video. Meghan mentioned that being pregnant and being a mom of a new-born are difficult times. There were other unpleasant articles, so it almost seemed that everything Meghan did was wrong.

In October 2019, Prince Harry made a statement responding to the situation with the media. He highlighted the importance of media in democracy at the beginning of his message, but then he continued with comments on the problematic situation with the press. At the end, Prince Harry expressed his feelings connected with the loss of his mother, Princess Diana, who was also under media pressure: "I lost my mother and now I watch my wife falling victim to the same powerful forces." (Duke of Sussex, 2019)

In January 2020, the couple decided to step back from the Royal Family. *The Guardian* informed about a speech Prince Harry delivered to express their previous hope for further serving the Queen, the military service and the Commonwealth. “Unfortunately, that was not possible.” Prince Harry continued (Davies, 2020). Prince Harry also thanked the Royal Family and the Queen for their support in the previous months.

The Queen’s statement from 18th January 2020 expressed support to Prince Harry and his family. The Queen also thanked them for their work within the Royal Family and wished them a happier and peaceful new life. (Elizabeth II, 2020). The Buckingham Palace announced their agreement that Prince Harry and his wife would not use their HRH titles, they would no longer formally represent the Queen and they would not receive the public funds for their Royal duties (Buckingham Palace, 2020).

At the same time, there was another affair in the Royal Family. Virginia Giuffre accused Prince Andrew of being forced to have sex with her when she was only seventeen years old. Buckingham Palace denied this accusation (Buckingham Palace qtd. in Davies, 2019). However, Prince Andrew stepped back from his working position as a royal without his HRH titles taken away (BBC editors, 2019). From that time it seems like it sort of vanished.

In comparison to Meghan and Harry stepping back from their Royal duties, Prince Andrew’s affair does not appear in media so much as Meghan and Harry do. We can only guess why that is. Such scandal that a member of the Royal Family could have sexually abused someone in the past must be very hurtful for all the other members of the Royal Family, especially for the Queen. There is an option that media could respect this being a very sensitive topic to write about, especially when other members of the Royal Family had nothing to do with this scandal.

These occurrences showed how important the Queen is in these matters, because she holds the family together. *The Washington Post* also recognized that in an article published in January 2020. The article pointed out the Queen’s ability to work in crisis and to sort problems out (Booth, 2020). She had and still has a vital role in protecting the royal tradition in the United Kingdom.

3.6 The Queen's Role in Tragic Incidents

The Queen's role in political matters but also in the Royal Family matters have been discussed above. The question remains what her role should be in relation to tragic incidents in the society, for example the Grenfell Tower fire. What is expected from the Queen and how she managed such crises in history?

On 14 June 2017, a big tragedy happened in London, the fire of the Grenfell Tower building. *The BBC*, who informed about this tragedy, described the building as "a sprawling inner-city social housing complex of almost 1,000 homes." (Manning, 2017). The article informed that the fire started after midnight, therefore, there was a lot of people present in their homes, where they became trapped. This was a tragedy full of heart-breaking stories about losing home or close relatives.

It is expected from the Queen to react to such a tragedy. She did so the next day when she released a message to the victims, emergency services and volunteers. The Queen expressed her sympathy with the victims of the fire. She also thanked all the people helping during this tragic event and highlighted their bravery and generosity (Elizabeth II, 2017).

The Independent informed about a visit made by the Queen and her grandson Prince William. They visited the relief centre for the Grenfell Tower fire victims. "The royals were met by a crowd of around 40 people at the Westway Sports Centre near the remains of the burned-out building in north Kensington." (*The Independent* Editors, 2017) The Queen paid tribute to the workers and volunteers and Prince William emphasised that it was important to talk about the suffering the victims had experienced.

The Queen mentioned the tragedy of Grenfell Tower fire during the Christmas Broadcast in 2017 dedicated to the theme of *home*. Furthermore, she mentioned the bombing in Manchester during Ariana Grande's concert. The Queen expressed sympathy with all victims of these tragic events and gratefulness to all workers and volunteers (Elizabeth II qtd. in Davies, 2017). As *The Guardian* put it, this was "a highly personal Christmas broadcast" (Davies, 2017).

In 2018, on the one-year anniversary of the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Queen wore a green outfit as a symbol of the Grenfell Tower. The origin of the word Grenfell is from a phrase *green field*, therefore, the green colour symbolised the building. “The colour green has come to represent the plight of those who were killed in the blaze.” (Vonow, 2018). *The Sun* flattered the Queen in their article for this symbolic step with mentioning positive reactions on Twitter. The Twitter posts mainly showed that people saw this as a very good way of showing sympathy. There was a photo of her and Meghan Markle standing next to each other, being silent for one minute to pay respects (Vonow, 2018).

As the third season of the Netflix fiction named *The Crown* was released in 2019, it opened some discussion. It recalled the Aberfan Disaster in 1966 where a coal waste slid down on a school and 144 people were killed (Blakemore, 2019). The victims were mainly children, which made the disaster even worse. However, the Queen visited Aberfan eight days after the disaster; even later than her husband Prince Philip. This had met with a criticism and nowadays it is said that the Queen regretted not visiting Aberfan immediately (Blakemore, 2019).

The Crown captured the tragedy in one episode. The Queen, played by Olivia Colman, was captured as a person who was struggling to feel the actual grief. *The Independent* mentioned how people reacted differently to this. There were people favouring the fiction for paying attention to this disaster and bringing it back to light so it would not be forgotten. Some people saw it as a great step not to be afraid to put the Queen in a bad light, however, there were others who strongly disagreed and were saying that the Queen had felt strong emotions during the visit of Aberfan (Barr, 2020).

The Express quoted a survivor of the Aberfan disaster Jeff Edwards, who said that it was clear that the Queen had cried during the visit in 1966 (Kretschmer, 2019). However, Netflix reacted: “We show a monarch who is naturally restrained, while advisors around her question her stoicism in the face of such a terrible disaster.” (Netflix, qtd. in Kretschmer, 2019). *The Crown* is still a fiction and all the private dialogues are made up, we will never know for sure what was happening behind the walls of Buckingham Palace or in the Queen’s mind. In my opinion, she is an incredible monarch who serves the people and who is above politics.

The discussion about *The Crown* as a fiction came back with the fourth season released in 2020. The fourth season focused on 1980s years, which is a very modern history. On a demand that Netflix should emphasise that *The Crown* is only a fiction, Netflix reacted: “We have always presented *The Crown* as a drama and we have every confidence our members understand it is a work of fiction that is broadly based on historical events. As a result we have no plans, and see no need, to add a disclaimer.” (Netflix qtd. in Guardian staff and agencies, 2020).

During the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the Queen made a supportive speech in April. She thanked not only the NHS and other workers helping during these times, but also the people who stayed at home. The Queen asked the people to unite, stay home and safe. She closed her speech with saying: “Better days will return. We will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.” (Dymond, 2020). This speech also showed that the Queen realises how important it is to speak to the people during difficult times for the nation in order to support and unite the citizens.

4 The Diamond Jubilee

In 2012, Elizabeth II celebrated 60 years on the throne. The only other British monarch, who achieved this remarkable jubilee, was Queen Victoria. As Cannadine (2012, p. 125) mentioned, Queen Victoria's jubilees "mark the high noon of empire, confidence and splendour." There has always been some competition between nations about their traditions and celebrations. For example, the Austria-Hungary monarchy celebrated its jubilees in a very noble way – Francis Joseph's Diamond Jubilee or the Habsburg monarchy's six hundredth anniversary (Cannadine, 2012, p. 128). Even though many monarchies in Europe didn't last till these days, the British did.

Therefore, such celebrations or jubilees have an important role for the nation in looking back and into the future. Balmer (2011) stresses that the tradition of monarchy and the Royal Family is a process, and it connects past, present and future. It is a symbol of continuity and stability when society is going through many changes throughout the years. Others mention its relevance in the meaning of national prestige (Harris qtd. in Cannadine, 2012, p. 156) or an escape from monotonous life (Petries qtd. in Cannadine, 2012, p. 156). What can be said for sure is that the Diamond Jubilee was a celebration of sixty years spent under one monarch as a head of state.

There comes a question of what role the press has in such celebrations. Wardle and West (2004) analysed headlines of newspapers before the Golden Jubilee took place in 2002, and they came to the conclusion that the press had a significant role in building a national identity. Accordingly, it could be expected that there would be some consequences if the press concentrated mainly on scandals in the last months. On the other hand, the press would be able to encourage people to celebrate the occasion.

In March 2012, Queen Elizabeth II addressed Parliament in relation to the Diamond Jubilee. She commented on how vital Parliamentarians are for the nation and mentioned the long relationship between Parliament and monarchs. The Queen also expressed gratefulness to her husband Prince Philip and other members of the Royal Family for their work, especially for their overseas tours to Commonwealth Realms or countries, made on the Diamond Jubilee occasion. The Queen also announced that she and her husband Prince Philip would be visiting

towns and cities of the United Kingdom on this occasion. At the end of her speech, the Queen "rededicated" herself to the country's service (Elizabeth II qtd. in BBC, 2012).

As usual, the ideas about what the Queen should mention occurred after this speech. Robinson (qtd. in BBC, 2012) suggested that some people may have expected her to note that she is also the Queen of Scottish people. However, this could have been problematic and seen as involving herself in politics. BBC Editors released another article summarising the address where they mention the Queen receiving a standing ovation. The article also opens a debate about the monarchy by saying that "a small number of anti-monarchy protesters gathered outside Parliament during the Queen's speech" (BBC Editors, 2012).

In May, *The Guardian* ("The People's Panel", *The Guardian*, 2012) asked their readers whether they were going to celebrate the jubilee or not. Anna Walker (a UK Uncut member) wrote that UK Uncut wants to celebrate for different reasons – to point out other important matters in their country, especially unemployment. Tom Dougan informed about a street party they were planning. Rebecca Smith recalled the year 1997 when Princess Diana died and how people turned against the Royal Family. She was surprised how easy it had been for people to forget this, and she also did not understand why there was a monarchy in the 21st century and not a democracy. Claire Sheppard, on the other hand, was planning to be a real part of the celebration. Even though she mentioned people around her discussing the monarchy, she expressed how she admired the Queen. The jubilee celebration was not a celebration of monarchy for her so much as a celebration of the Queen's life dedicated to their country. ("The People's Panel", *The Guardian*, 2012)

The celebrations of this jubilee included an extra holiday on 5 June. There was the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, a concert outside Buckingham Palace and many street parties planned all over the country (History Editors, 2012). *The Guardian* informed about the celebrations during that weekend in an article titled "Jubilee Pageant: Rain Fail to Dampen a Very British Occasion". The report commented on the bad weather and heavy rain throughout the day of the Thames Pageant. But overall, the article concluded that it was a success, and despite this and a few protestors, many people stayed and celebrated (Davies, Jones, Walker, 2012).

On 5 June, the Queen released a short message to thank for the celebrations. She expressed her gratefulness to all people who became part of the celebrations and she promised to bear this gratitude in her mind in the future (Elizabeth II, 2012). *The Daily Mail* informed about the message in an article. The author did not forget to mention that the Queen does not usually deliver other addresses to the nation except for the Christmas message. The article recalls the last time the Queen delivered a message to the nation abruptly – after Princess Diana's death. The article also commented on the Queen's appearance on the Buckingham Palace's balcony with other members of the Royal Family, saying how impressed she seemed when receiving the great applause (English, 2012).

Thanks to the TV broadcast, even people abroad had the opportunity to watch the occasion. *The New York Times* published an article about the Diamond Jubilee, mentioning the successful Thames Pageant. The article also recalled the events after Princess Diana's death saying that it "seemed a distant memory" (Burns, 2012) because of how joyfully people celebrated their monarch's Diamond Jubilee. According to the article, Will Pakenham-Walsh (a businessman from the Isle of Wight) said that even people from Italy and Germany admired the occasion (Pakenham-Walsh qtd. in Burns, 2012). In the end, the article questioned the future of the monarchy. Burns (2012) quoted at that time a recent poll for the Ipsos-Mori group showing that 80 per cent of British citizens favoured the monarchy in the future.

This jubilee brought back the question of whether monarchy is still relevant these days when most countries are republics. However, this question had emerged even during the Golden Jubilee in 2002. From 2001 to 2002, a poll for the Ipsos-Mori group had asked the British citizens about their thoughts on this topic. At that time, 70 per cent of respondents had favoured the monarchy, and only 21 per cent favoured the republic (Ipsos-Mori, 2002). Therefore, this would mean that in 2012 during the Diamond Jubilee, the preferences for the monarchy were even higher. The 2002 poll had also asked the respondents if they thought Britain would be a monarchy in the future. 67% of the respondents answered there would be a monarchy in 25 years, 39% thought even in 50 years, but only 27% of the respondents answered that there would be a monarchy in Britain in 100 years (Ipsos-Mori, 2002).

In conclusion, the Diamond Jubilee certainly celebrated 60 years on the throne of Queen Elizabeth II. However, it also reminded of the monarchy's tradition, which seemed to the majority of the citizens still valid even in those modern days, although some British citizens would rather live in a republic. The occasion showed that even numerous people from abroad respect and honour this tradition so typical for the British nation.

In 2017, the Queen celebrated the Sapphire jubilee. She was also the first monarch who celebrated this jubilee, because in 2015 she became the longest serving monarch in the United Kingdom. This Sapphire jubilee (celebration of 65 years on the throne) was celebrated just symbolically, not so spectacularly as the Diamond jubilee. The BBC also mentioned: “For the Queen, it is a moment for contemplation rather than celebration – as it is also the anniversary of her father’s death.” (Hunt qtd. in BBC, 2017).

5 Survey

5.1 Description and Methodology

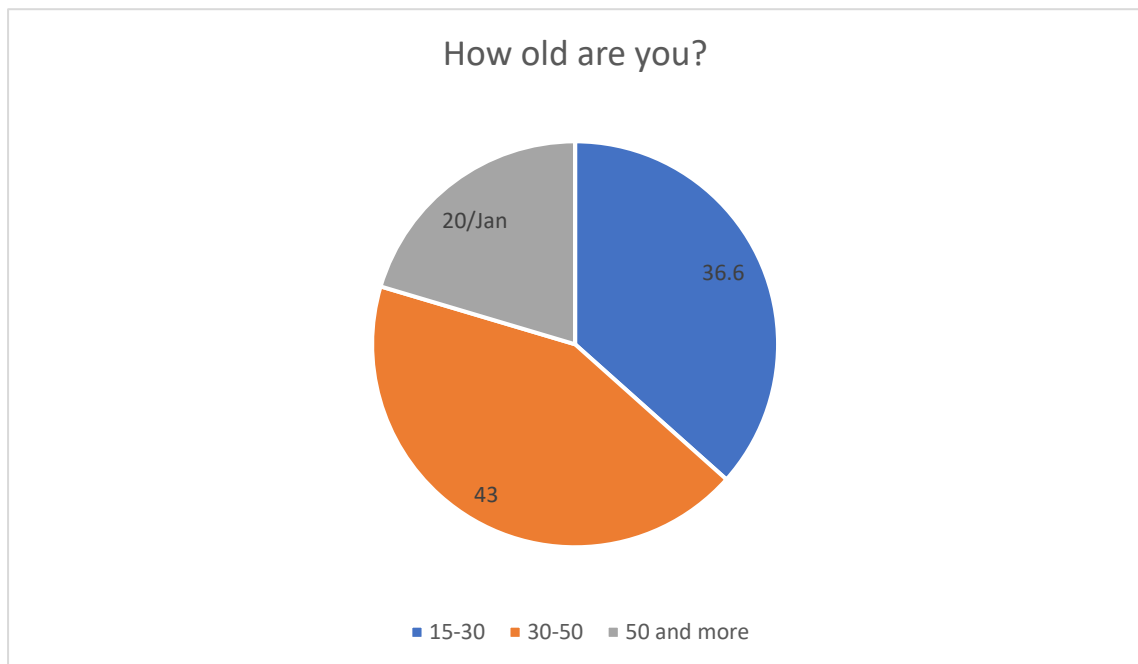
As part of my bachelor thesis, I carried out research among UK nationals concerning their opinions about the Queen. The questionnaire was supposed to be distributed during my Erasmus study programme in the UK. However, because of the Covid pandemic that started in March 2020, I decided to leave the UK. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed with the support of my friends in the UK, who helped me to distribute it among their own friends or families.

The aim of this research was to get an idea of how people see the Queen nowadays. Overall, 93 respondents took part in this survey by filling their answers into an online form available in Google Forms. The survey consisted of ten questions, the last of which was an open one made for additional comments on the topic.

There were five yes/no and four 1-5 scale questions in the questionnaire. The 1-5 scale questions offered respondents the option not to choose only one straightforward answer, but also to express a degree of certainty about their answer. Alternatively, they could choose the middle option expressing uncertainty, or no opinion on the question. The scale questions were asked to reveal how much the respondents identified with the statements. Option 1 represented agreement and Option 5 represented disagreement with the question.

The results were analysed in percentage, combined with the number of respondents choosing the option. The 1-5 scale questions were evaluated with respect to the option chosen by most respondents, and whether the respondents tended to choose the option closer to number 1 or number 5.

5.2 Results and Discussion

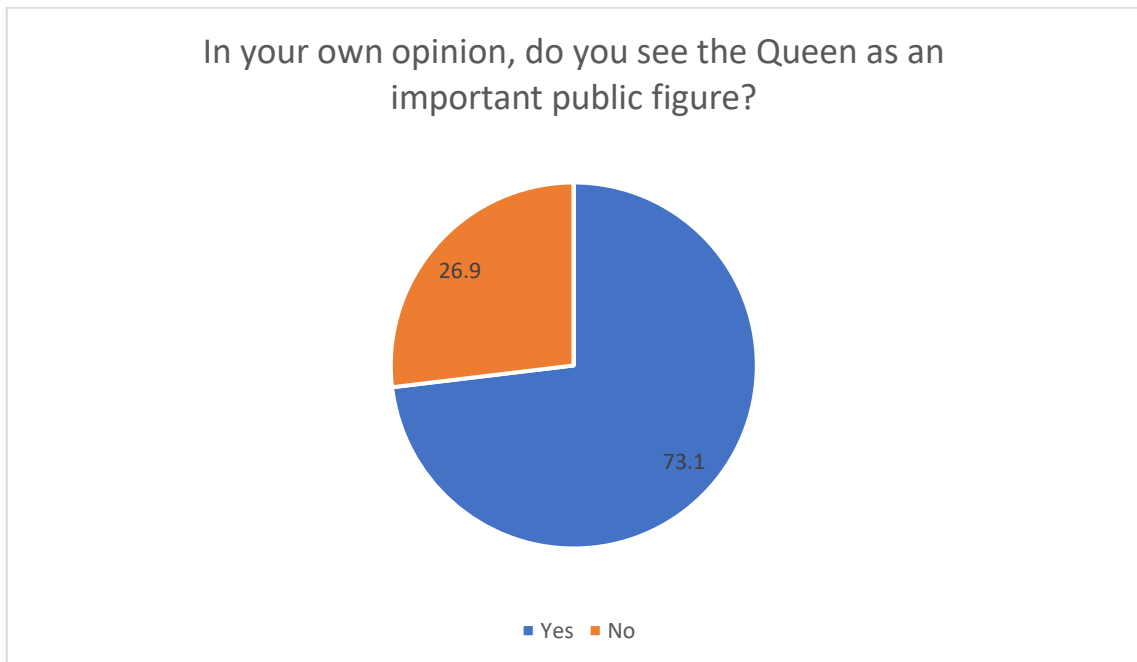


1 How old are you?

Question 1: How old are you?

As shown in the graph above, mainly young and middle-aged respondents took part in the research. Significantly, 43% of respondents were 30 to 50 years old; fewer respondents were between the ages of 15 to 30 (precisely 36.6%). Only 20.4% of respondents were older than 50 years old. The respondents were mainly young or middle-aged because of the complicated distribution of the questionnaire explained in the Methodology above. Therefore, it was difficult to cover a statistically representative sample of respondents.

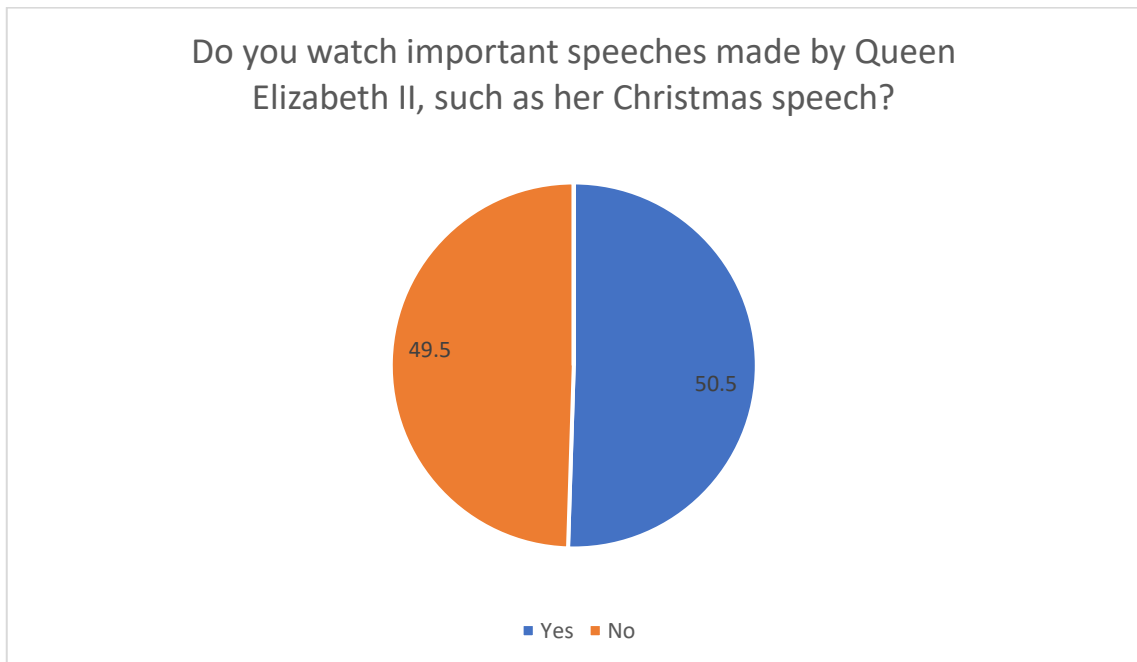
Question 2: In your own opinion, do you see the Queen as an important public figure?



2 In your own opinion, do you see the Queen as an important public figure?

The majority of the respondents answered that they see the Queen as an important public figure (precisely 73.1%). Only 26.9% of respondents did not agree with this.

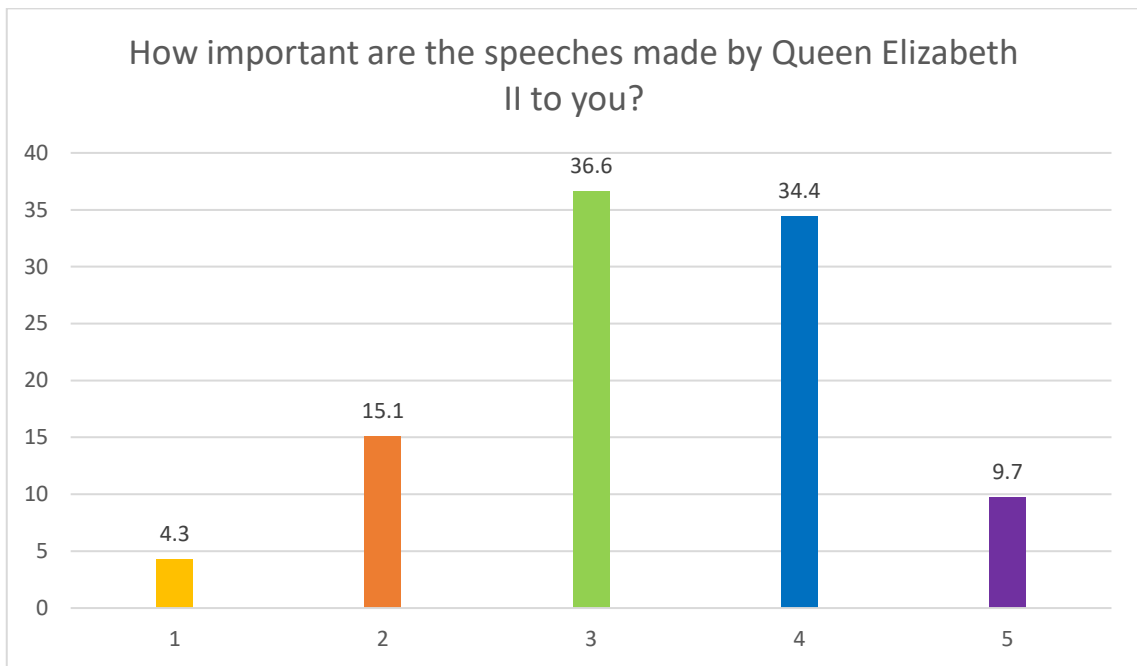
Question 3: Do you watch important speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II such as her Christmas speech?



3 Do you watch important speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II, such as her Christmas speech?

The answers to this question were very narrow. Only 1% fewer respondents answered that they do not watch speeches made by the Queen. This suggests that ca. 20% of those who regard the Queen as an important public figure do not watch her speeches.

Question 4: How important are the speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II to you?

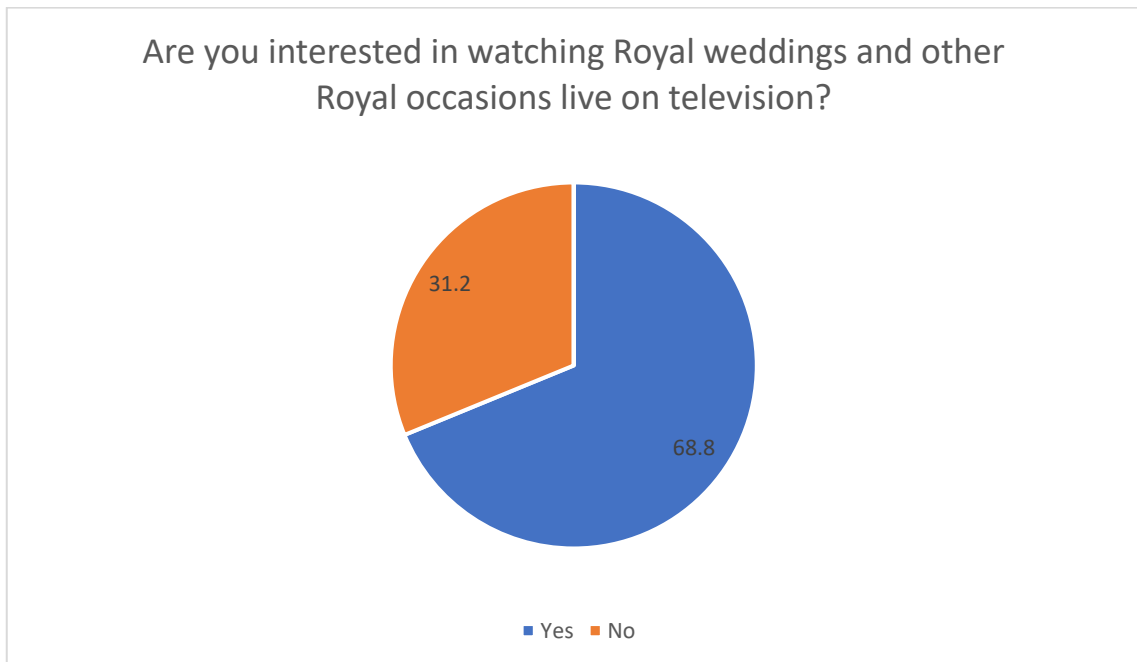


4 How important are the speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II to you?

Respondents were choosing answers on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant 'Very important' and 5 'Not at all'. Shown in the graph above, a majority (36,6%) of respondents answered in the exact middle on the scale, and that was 34 respondents. Only 18 respondents (19,4%) chose the closer alternative to 'Very important'. Other respondents (44,1%) went closer to the 'Not at all' answer.

If we compare Questions 2 to 4, we get 73% of respondents who see the Queen as an important public figure, but only almost 51% watch her speeches. However, Question 4 shows us that 56% of respondents find the Queen's speeches important or middle-important. The reason for this could be that respondents slightly agree that the speeches have its importance, but maybe they are not so important for them personally. Also, thanks to the internet media or the Instagram of the Royal Family, they can search for the speeches, or quotes from them, elsewhere and they do not have to watch it as a live broadcasting on TV.

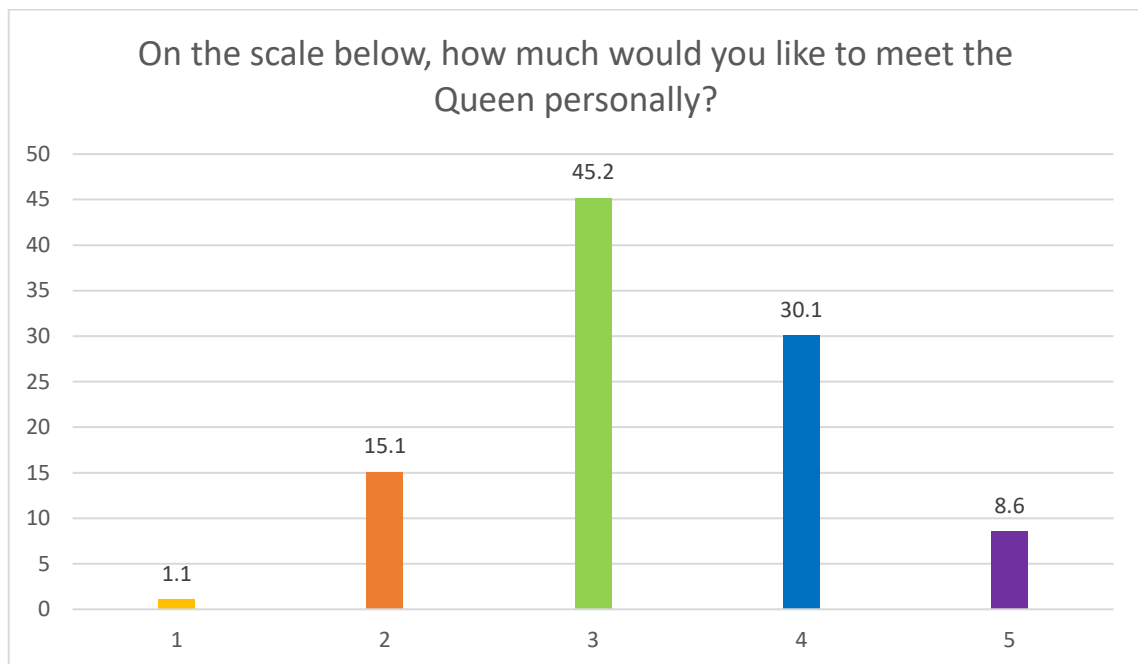
Question 5: Are you interested in watching Royal weddings and other Royal occasions live on television?



5 Are you interested in watching Royal weddings and other Royal occasions live on television?

64 respondents (68.8%) answered that they were interested in watching Royal weddings or other Royal occasions live on television. That is 18.3% more than people interested in watching the Queen's speeches, such as the annual Christmas broadcast. This might be caused by the pomposity of these occasions, people's interest in the Royal Family life together with the common interest in celebrity life. However, we should be careful about mixing the Royal Family with other celebrities.

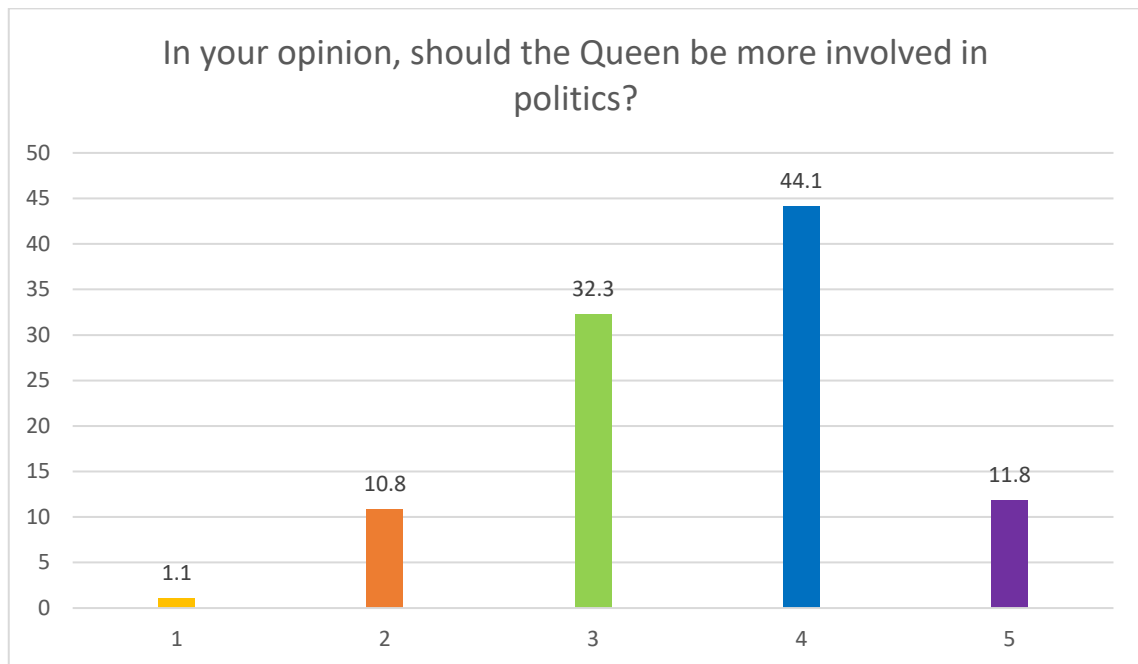
Question 6: On the scale below, how much would you like to meet the Queen personally?



6 On the scale below, how much would you like to meet the Queen personally?

Respondents were supposed to choose an answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant 'A lot' and 5 'Not at all'. As shown in the graph above, respondents tended to choose something between these two options because most of them (45,2%) have chosen number 3. This might be interpreted as their uncertainty about the answer on this question or as choosing the option 'Maybe'. Others were more likely to choose the closer alternative to the answer 'Not at all' because 38,7% chose the numbers 4 and 5. Only one respondent expressed the actual wish to see the Queen.

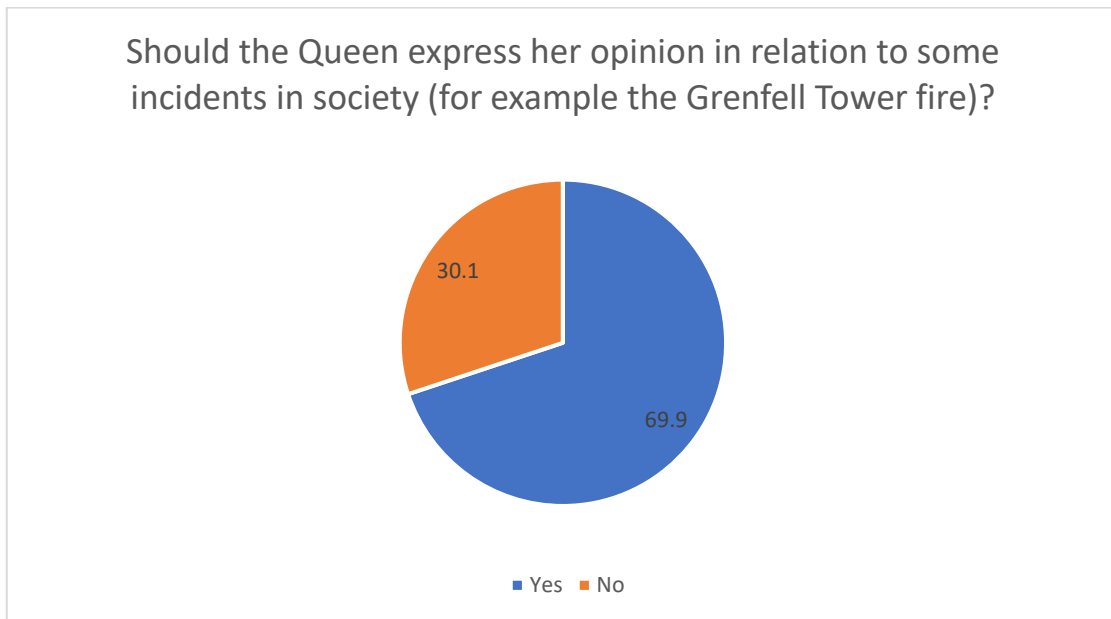
Question 7: In your opinion, should the Queen be more involved in politics?



7 In your opinion, should the Queen be more involved in politics?

Respondents were supposed to choose on the scale from 1 to 5 if the Queen should be more involved in politics, where 1 meant 'Yes, more than now' and number 5 'No, she should not be involved in politics at all'. As shown in the graph above, most of the respondents (44,1%) chose number 4, close option to the number 5 meaning 'No, she should not be involved in politics at all'. They would rather she wasn't involved in politics, or just in a minimal way. This probably reflects the contemporary state when the Queen is above politics and she is not expected to get involved in it.

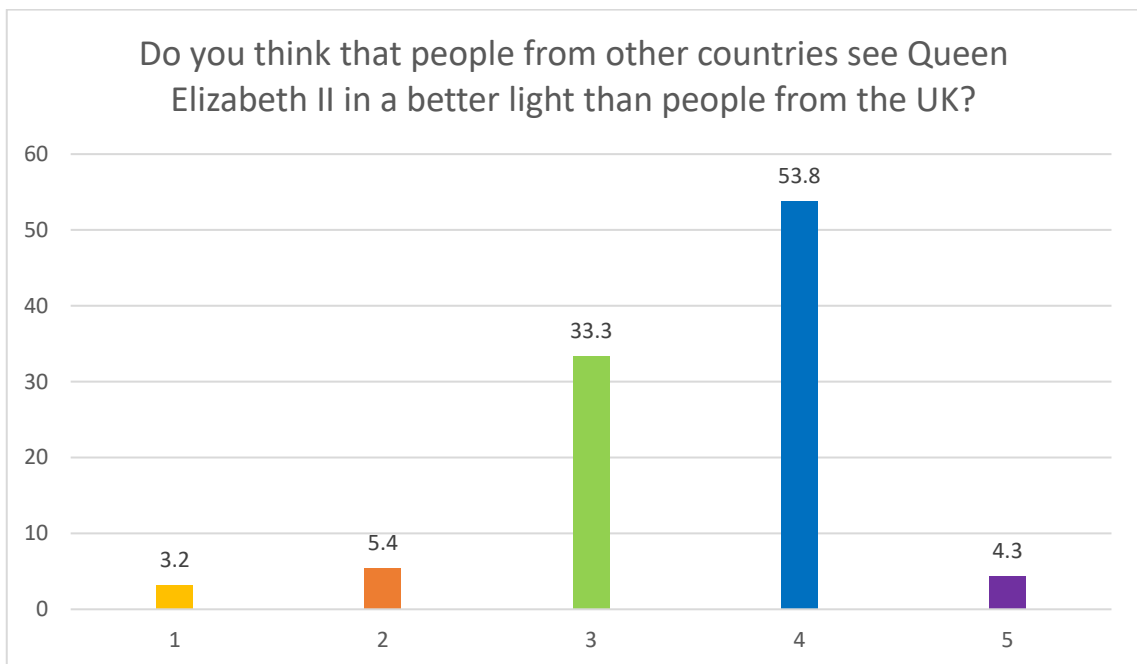
Question 8: Should the Queen express her opinion in relation to some incidents in society (for example the Grenfell Tower fire)?



8 Should the Queen express her opinion in relation to some incidents in society (for example the Grenfell Tower fire)?

69.9% of respondents agreed that the Queen should express her opinion when there is some serious incident in society. Only 30.1% of respondents did not agree with that. Even though the Queen is above politics and she should not comment on the political matters, during some tragedies or incidents in society, the nation seems to look for the monarch to express support and unite the nation in the grief. This had already been shown by the death of Princess Diana or the Aberfan disaster in 1966.

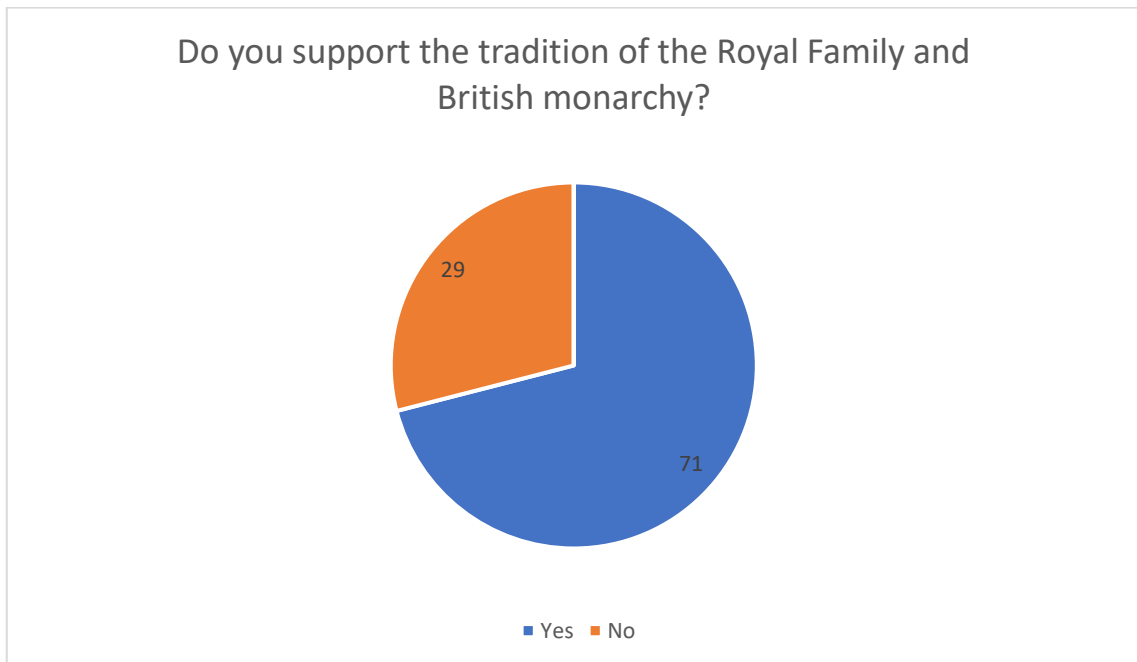
Question 9: Do you think that people from other countries see Queen Elizabeth II in a better light than people from the UK?



9 Do you think that people from other countries see Queen Elizabeth II in a better light than people from the UK?

Respondents were choosing on a scale from 1 to 5, where number 1 meant ‘Yes, they do’ and number 5 ‘No, they don’t’. Most of the respondents (53,8%) chose number 4 – a closer alternative to the opinion that people abroad do not see the Queen in a better light than the UK citizens. The other majority (33,3%) chose the middle answer – number 3. This was an unexpected result, however, the reason for this might be their strong feeling of nationality and the realization that the respondents themselves appreciate their Queen enough. It is their Queen and their tradition while people abroad have their own.

Question 10: Do you support the tradition of the Royal Family and British monarchy?



10 Do you support the tradition of the Royal Family and British monarchy?

The majority of respondents answered that they support the Royal Family and the British monarchy tradition in the United Kingdom – precisely 71%. The rest (29%) chose the other option. This roughly corresponds with result for Question 2. Most of these respondents are probably those who see the Queen as an important public figure. This interestingly also corresponds with the survey made by Ipsos-Mori group in 2002, where 70% of their respondents favoured the monarchy.

Question 11: Would you like to add anything else about how you see Queen Elizabeth II (your own experience, the reason for your answers, etc.)?

The last question offered respondents space to express their opinions about the Queen. Surprisingly, I received quite many messages, some of them did not entirely make sense, but some of them were very meaningful with incentive ideas.

Some respondents just mentioned that she is a celebrity and that her role is mainly ceremonial or crucial to English image. One respondent wrote: “I believe the Queen could be seen as a symbol of both past and present. Meaning, through our

history, the Royal Family has been the main part of how the form of the UK we see today.”

Another respondent commented on the show ‘The Crown’ on *Netflix*: “Watching ‘The Crown’ on *Netflix* a few months ago really changed how I see the Queen in terms of her importance and what her role in society is, I think a lot of people do not understand her purpose or why we continue to follow such traditions. The Queen should not be involved in politics as she provides an identity for the country above differences in political opinion. When I visited South Africa, a few people mentioned how they like the Queen so she really does play a role in how people in other countries view our country, and their opinions on us as people before they get to know us.”

5.3 Conclusion of the Research

As already mentioned, mainly young and middle-aged UK citizens took part in this research. The majority of respondents agreed that the Queen is a significant public figure and that they support the British monarchy tradition. Even though the research for this bachelor thesis did not have a statistically representative sample of respondents, it interestingly corresponds with the survey made by Ipsos-Mori Group in 2002, where 70% of respondents chose monarchy over republic. However, in more concrete questions in the survey for this bachelor thesis, respondents showed a little less interest in the Queen.

The research showed that the respondents agree with the idea that the Queen should be above politics. The research also corresponds with the idea that the Queen is there to unite the nation during difficult times, and she should be seen in public during some incidents in society. However, respondents did not tend to express their wish to meet the Queen personally and only approximately half of them watch her annual speeches.

Overall, it seems that respondents value the tradition of the British monarchy and the Queen’s role in their country. However, because the Queen’s role is mainly symbolic and she does not have such an enormous impact on their lives, they are probably not so much intrigued by her as we would expect.

6 Conclusion

Even though Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne was fairly difficult (after the earlier abdication of her uncle, the world war and the death of her father), she managed to fulfil her duty, to serve the nation for many years and to continue to do so in the future. The Queen accessed the throne as a very young woman and her reign has been the longest one in British history. This bachelor thesis has focused on the more recent years of her reign – from the tragic death of Princess Diana till the year 2020, when Harry and Meghan withdrew from their Royal duties.

The Queen and the Royal Family have their important role in the country. They are great diplomats and representatives of the nation, which can help to build closer partnership with other countries. The Royal institution can also be seen as very prestigious by people abroad and that can help improve the status of the country in the world. The Queen's main role is to be there for the people of her nation. Even the majority of respondents in the research carried out for this bachelor thesis claimed that they see the Queen as an important public figure. In 2011, the Queen went to Ireland for a state visit, which was a great success and a reminder of how essential the Queen's role is for the British nation. The Queen is a diplomat, and her presence helps to build stronger bonds with other nations. The mentioned affairs in the Royal Family (Meghan and Harry, Prince Andrew) have shown yet how the Queen holds the family together and how she protects the royal tradition.

The tragic death of Princess Diana in 1997 demonstrated that the figure of the Queen is important during times like this, when the whole nation is in grief. The public probably wanted to unite in the grief and when they did not get to see or hear from their Queen, they could have felt alone in this grief. The Queen is there to unite and stand for the people which she did not do immediately after this tragedy. Even though she had reasons for her behaviour, because it was not only a national, but also a big personal tragedy. However, when the Aberfan disaster happened in 1966, the Queen also hesitated for some time before she visited Aberfan to offer her condolences to the people living there. On the other hand, in recent history, the Queen has reacted to such national tragedies unhesitatingly (for example after the Grenfell Tower fire, or in her speech about the coronavirus pandemic). In the research carried out for this bachelor thesis, almost 70% of respondents thought that the Queen should step

out when some tragic incident happens in the society. Therefore, it is probably very important that the Queen reacts unprecedently during such situations.

The Scottish referendum and Brexit demonstrated that the Queen is above politics and it is not in her competence to comment on political matters. Even though people are probably curious about the Queen's opinion, when she uttered just a small diplomatic remark before the Scottish referendum took place, without mentioning her opinion, it was mainly received as something she was not expected to do. The research for this bachelor thesis showed that many respondents tended to answer that the Queen should not get involved in politics, or at least in a very minimal way. Only few respondents said that the Queen should probably get involved more than she is nowadays.

In a nutshell, the tradition of the Crown in the United Kingdom is still valid even in the 21st century. Not only for its attractiveness during official ceremonies, jubilees or Royal weddings, but also for its long history and symbolic meaning. It seems that the majority of the UK citizens agree with this, compared to the low numbers of people wanting the republic.

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9 Encloser

The Reign and Reception of Queen Elizabeth II: A Post-Diamond-Jubilee

Retrospect

This survey will be part of my bachelor thesis focusing on the reception of Queen Elizabeth II in retrospect after the Diamond and Sapphire Jubilees. The aim of my bachelor thesis is to find out how the reception of the Queen changed in relation to the crucial moments of her reign and where it stands today. I appreciate a lot your time spent by filling in this form.

*Required

1. How old are you? *

- 15 - 30
- 30 - 50
- 50 and more

2. In your own opinion, do you see the Queen as an important public figure? *

- Yes
- No

2. Do you watch important speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II such as her Christmas speech? *

- Yes
- No

3. How important are the speeches made by Queen Elizabeth II to you? *

Very important

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Not at all

4. Are you interested in watching Royal weddings and other Royal occasions live on television? *

- Yes
- No

5. On the scale below, how much would you like to meet the Queen personally? *

A lot
1
2
3
4
5
Not at all

6. In your opinion, should the Queen be more involved in politics? *

Yes, more than now
1
2
3
4
5
No, she shouldn't be involved in politics at all

7. Should the Queen express her opinion in relation to some incidents in society (for example the Grenfell Tower fire)? *

Yes
No

8. Do you think that people from other countries see Queen Elizabeth II in a better light than people from the UK? *

Yes, they do
1
2
3
4
5
No, they don't

9. Do you support the tradition of the Royal Family and British monarchy? *

Yes
No

10. Would you like to add anything else about how you see Queen Elizabeth II (your own experience, the reason for your answers, etc.)?

Your answer