

Global Royal Families: Concepts, Cultures, and Networks of International Monarchy

Veranstalter: Falko Schnicke (German Historical Institute London, GHIL); Cindy McCreery (University of Sydney); Robert Aldrich (University of Sydney)

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Bericht von: Paige Emerick, History, University of Leicester

The event brought together scholars from four continents and eight countries to discuss the timely issue of global monarchies. There were nearly forty attendees, and nineteen speakers presenting ideas spanning royal families across two centuries and the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Despite the wide variance in time periods and geographical locations, there were many overlapping and complementary themes, including the importance of the visibility of monarchs, the need to secure status on a global stage, as the role of royals as official and unofficial diplomats, and the media's influence over the public image of a royal person or dynasty. The conference's main findings were that the global, national and regional aspects of royal families were constantly intertwined, and that the political significance of monarchies recurred in different 19th- and 20th-century contexts.

In his introductory talk, ROBERT ALDRICH (Sydney) detailed the coverage of global royal families in history and historiography. Starting with comparative examples from both the early 19th century and modern-day marriages between the Napoleon and Habsburg dynasties, Aldrich highlighted the intertwined genealogical, political, and cultural ties between royal families across the world. He maintained that in the 19th century European monarchies were affected by empire, which demonstrated their power to conquer and their interest in collections of „exotica“. Yet at the same time, non-European monarchies were adopting western styles of clothing, architecture, and court culture to be more accepted on the global stage.

The first session focused upon royalty in in-

ternational affairs and diplomacy. MORITZ A. SORG (Freiburg) examined the extent to which the First World War damaged royal family relationships across Europe. He provided parallel case studies of Ferdinand I of Bulgaria and Ferdinand I of Romania to demonstrate how the First World War placed related monarchies on opposite sides, and the consequential impact this had on how these royal individuals were viewed in their respective countries and under the condition of increasing nationalism.

MICHAEL KANDIAH (London) focused upon how the British royal family has utilised its „soft power“ since 1952 to improve diplomatic relations between countries. Using oral testimonies of British diplomats, he explored how Queen Elizabeth II has been able to use her royal status, which places her above politics, in order to maintain good relationships through official engagements, both internationally and in Britain.

The second session centred on the House of Windsor and their relationship with foreign royal houses. Continuing the focus on Queen Elizabeth II and the current British royal family, FALKO SCHNICKE (London) analysed the content of speeches given at state visits and highlighted the input that the Government and the Palace had over these. He proved that it was the Foreign Office which inserted the references to personal family remarks within the speeches to demonstrate the network of monarchies and the intensity of the international royal relationships. Thus, the royal family functioned as a collective unit rather than as individuals.

HILARY SAPIRE (London) examined the relationship between the British and Zulu royal families in South Africa in the colonial period and through the early 20th century. She argued that royal events and the links to the British monarchy were used by both Zulu monarchists and nationalists to advance their cause for independence.

In his keynote, FRANK MORT (Manchester) analysed how the media was used to transform the monarchy under George V, Queen Mary, and Edward VIII, into a consumable entity for the public. The increased visibility of the royal family through informal royal visits both in Britain and the colonies

helped to make them more accessible to the ordinary public. Mort took a bottom-up approach to judging how the public emotionally responded to different members of the royal family through drawing upon first-hand accounts of seeing royalty. He argued that the rise of human-interest journalism meant that there was a more extensive and global coverage of the royal family, and an attempt to make them more approachable by conducting unceremonious visits. He stressed the differences between George V and Queen Mary helping to solidify the notion of the royal family as a domestic unit, whilst the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII) fostered a celebrity culture around his younger lifestyle.

Session three looked at the global reach of the British monarchy. JOHN R. DAVIS (London) examined British attitudes towards India in the 19th century. Using Queen Victoria's diaries and the Royal Library catalogues, he argued that Queen Victoria was first introduced to German philology by Prince Albert. This early introduction to philology and reoccurring meetings with renowned scholars such as Max Müller helped to fuel her interest in Indian culture during the latter part of her life.

Moving into the 20th century, CHRISTIAN OBERLÄNDER (Halle-Wittenberg) presented a contrast to this with a paper analysing how the British royal family were a model for Japan's Imperial house, looking particularly at the role of the Japanese sovereign as a „symbol“ emperor after the Second World War. He argued that through the Japanese Imperial family embracing state visits, they placed themselves as the figureheads of the nation and allowed Japan to open itself up to the public at home and in the West.

Session four continued the theme of royal travel through focusing on the Spanish and Austrian royal families. Firstly, JAVIER MORENO-LUZÓN (Madrid) explained how Alfonso XIII of Spain (r. 1886-1931) fostered closer relations with Latin America through royal visits, celebrations, and a shared culture to create a transnational image of the royal family. He argued that from the late 19th century until the end of the 1920s, the royal family successfully promoted Spanish national identity centring on the monarchy through the careful selection of sending differ-

ent royal individuals to Hispanophone Latin American countries. They were thus able simultaneously to promote the historic ties to Spain and highlight a progressive future.

AGLAJA WEINDL (Munich) provided a case study of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and how he was an „unexpected global royal“ because of his world tour in 1892/93. This extensive travelling not only educated the Archduke but provided an opportunity to build better relations with other Protestant and Orthodox countries. Using Franz Ferdinand's own accounts, Weindl provided a personal insight into the repetitive nature of royal ceremonies across Europe and how the guests felt about attending them.

Session five focused upon global encounters, with JUDITH ROWBOTHAM (Plymouth) using a range of local, national, and colonial newspapers to analyse the reception of the British royal family within different colonies. Taking examples of tours through India, Canada, Australia, and beyond from the late 19th to the early 20th century, she emphasised the impact that these visits had on global networking and diplomacy. Specifically tailoring the tone of the visit and the activities not only aided relationships with the authorities, but allowed a sense of community to develop in the colonial public.

CINDY McCREERY (Sydney) followed this with a case study of the 1881 visit to Japan by King Kalakaua of Hawai'i and Princes Albert Victor and George of Great Britain, and explored how this occasion was used to foster better relations between the countries. Highlighting similarities that mirrored Oberländer's paper, McCreery argued that the opening of Japan to royal visits was an attempt for the country to reinvent its global image, appear more welcoming, and encourage trade deals. Such a tour also allowed the King of Hawai'i to develop an international presence. Photographs of the visit demonstrated that there was a clear acknowledgement of the status of foreign royalty, whilst showing differences in hierarchy due to age and position in relation to the throne.

The next session centred around the importance of letter-writing between royals, with emphasis on female family relations. SUSANNE BAUER (Trier) explained her re-

search project cataloguing and analysing the 20,000 letters of Augusta Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Queen of Prussia and Empress of Germany. She argued that Augusta expressed many political opinions within these letters, tried to advise her husband (whether he asked for advice or not), and was a key factor in building relationships with royalty and politicians across Europe and beyond, with approximately 230 royal and non-royal correspondents.

MARY T. DUARTE (Milwaukee) analysed letters written over the course of the 19th century by four generations of female royals from the line of descendants of Maria Theresa of the House of Habsburg. She scrutinised the type of advice passed from mother to daughter, and between grandmother and granddaughter, especially pertaining to marriage and sexual life. She contended that as the generations went on, the tone of this advice softened, although duty and obedience were still often stressed.

The second keynote was delivered by IRENE STENGs (Amsterdam), who provided an in-depth anthropological analysis of the mourning culture in Thailand following the death of King Rama IX in 2016, and the meaning of the symbolism and rituals in the coronation ceremony of King Rama X in 2019. Taking a step-by-step approach through the elements and stages of the coronation ceremony, Stengs highlighted how this event was used to unite the country through a shared experience and emotions. Whilst there were historical and religious precedents for several aspects of the event, the incorporation of modern technology, such as mass television broadcasting and drones, gave the new monarch increased accessibility and a personal quality. Stengs also presented a close analysis of the use of colour by the organisers of the event to mark a new reign, and explained the significance this holds within Thai culture.

The next session explored the regional dynasties and transnational royal families. AIDAN JONES (London) gave a case study of Alexander II of Russia's visit to Britain in 1874 on the occasion of his daughter Marie's marriage to Prince Alfred. He analysed the dynastic politics of the marriage arrangement and the wider implications this had for inter-

national diplomacy.

PRIYA NAIK (Delhi) explored the consumption of Britishness by Indian Princes in the first half of the 20th century. She argued that by consuming goods, language, culture, and customs, Indian Princes were hoping to be accepted within British society and to join an international aristocratic network.

The final session analysed the different international models of monarchy. NICHOLAS MILLER (Lisbon), like McCreery, focused on King Kalakaua of Hawai'i (r. 1874-91), comparing him to Sultan Abu Bakar of Johore (r. 1886-95) in the Malay States. He examined the two kings' different approaches to ruling small monarchies and gaining international recognition for their states, as well as addressing the issue of labour migration.

CHARLES REED (Elizabeth City) closed the conference by returning to India via the Gaekwad of Baroda. Like Naik, he highlighted the Gaekwad's desire to foster good relations with the British. Reed's approach was to explore how this was achieved through the lens of royal visits to Britain from the later 19th century and the public image they were trying to promote of a princely state in India during the colonial period and after independence.

The conference closed with reflections from the co-organisers, who drew out some of the key themes across the papers. The breadth of time period and geographical locations had highlighted that monarchies achieved local, national, and global reaches. Several papers pointed out that royalty was used, often unofficially, for diplomatic reasons to improve relationships between dynasties and nations, which provoked discussions about how individual royal persons perceived their role. It was agreed that monarchy is an evolving concept, and in recent times, through embracing modern technology and utilising media coverage, royal families have been able to appear relatable and relevant to contemporary society. The importance of the family unit at the heart of the monarchy was understood to be a central factor in emphasising the longevity and stability of the institution, and some of the paradoxes of private life and public role for royal families had been illustrated throughout the papers. Finally,

the visibility of royalty, either through first-hand accounts of travel, or increased coverage in the press and accompanying images, was a central theme across many of the papers. This increased visibility frequently allowed the royal individuals to appear more personable, and enhanced their popularity nationally and globally. The conference also confirmed the need for further studies, even in the 21st century, on the evolving of the central position in political, social, and cultural life occupied by monarchs and their royal families in many countries.

Conference overview:

Christina von Hodenberg (Director of the GHIL), Cindy McCreery (Sydney) and Falko Schnicke (London): Welcome and Opening Remarks

Robert Aldrich (University of Sydney): Family Matters. Global Royal Families in History and Historiography

Session 1: Royals in International Affairs and Diplomacy

Moritz A. Sorg (University of Freiburg): Strangers in Their Own Kingdom. The First World War as a Crisis of Transnational Monarchy

Michael Kandiah (King's College London): The British Royal Families as Diplomats, 1952 to the Present Day

Session 2: The Windsors and Foreign Royal Houses

Falko Schnicke (GHI London): Family Diplomacy. Using the British Royal Family as a Rhetoric Asset in Twentieth-Century State Visits

Hilary Sapire (Birbeck College, University of London): The Zulu Royal House and the British Monarchy in the Early 20th Century

Keynote

Frank Mort (University of Manchester): Democracy, Diplomacy and Populism. A History of the Modern British Monarchy from Below

Session 3: The Global Reach of the British Monarchy

John R. Davis (Queen Mary London / Historic Royal Palaces): British Royal Attitudes to India in the 19th Century and the Influence of German Philology

Christian Oberländer (University of Halle-Wittenberg): The British Royal Family as a Model for Japan's Imperial House in the 20th Century

Session 4: Royal Travel

Javier Moreno-Luzón (Complutense University of Madrid): The Majesty of the Race. The Spanish Royal Family and America (1902-1931)

Aglaja Weindl (University of Munich): Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria – an Unexpected Global Royal

Session 5: Global Encounters

Judith Rowbotham (University of Plymouth): "...to be cheered vociferously by the crowd" – Royal Trips to the Colonies: Reaching Out to the Empire, 1875-1914

Cindy McCreery (University of Sydney): Meeting the Global Royal Family. The 1881 Visits of King Kalakaua of Hawai'i and Princes Albert Victor and George of Great Britain to the Meiji Emperor of Japan

Session 6: Letters and Advice Between Royals

Susanne Bauer (University of Trier), Writing to Influence: The Correspondence of the Prussian Queen and German Empress Augusta (1811-1890)

Mary T. Duarte (Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee), Royal Marriages, Royal Advice: Instructions from Queen Mothers

Keynote

Irene Stengs (Meertens Instituut/Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam): The Politics of Thai Royal Ritual and the New Reign. Historical and Anthropological Perspectives

Session 7: Regional Dynasties and Transnational Royal Families

Aidan Jones (King's College London): Anglo-Russian Royal Family Connections. A Transnational Prince and the Diplomacy of a Dynastic Marriage

Priya Naik (University of Delhi): Gadgets, Goods and Technology. Consumption of Indian Royal Families (1920-1948)

Session 8: International Influence and Evolution of Models of Monarchy

Nicholas Miller (University of Lisbon): Kalakaua of Hawai'i and Abu Bakar of Johore. Indigenous Kingship, Contract Labour and pan-Malay Overtures in the Late 19th-Century Asia-Pacific

Charles Reed (Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City): Princely Tourists. Gaekwads of Baroda in Britain before and after the End of Empire

Reflections on the Conference and Closing Discussion

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