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# The British Royal Family: from a patenting authority to an iconic brand

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*I know of no single formula for success.*
*But over the years I have observed that*
*some attributes of leadership are universal*
*and are often about finding ways of encouraging people*
*to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights,*
*their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together.*

Queen Elizabeth II

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# INTRODUCTION

"Cultural icons dominate our world" : Queen Elizabeth II "diamond jubilee" celebrations in 2012 attracted worldwide fascination ; in 2011 millions of people in 180 countries watched the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton , two billions people in every time zone watched the 2018 royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle ; Kate – George and Charlotte produced an "effect" described as an "uplift to fashion and other brands worn, used or otherwise endorsed" that generated incredible incomes to the Royal Family. Could all these facts be interpreted as results of a brand that became an icon?

Nowadays, the British Royal Family, apart from being a political institution, is present in the cultural heritage of not only the English population, but also in the global community. The influence of "the Crown" on people is now easily perceivable through the phenomenon of "royal watching"[1] - mass media attention, tourist activities and royal events' attraction - unequalled to other monarchies in the world. Although, the British Royal Family has not always been perceived as in the same way, being at its origin a simple political institution, functioning as all other monarchies.

How could the commercial side of this political organisation, initially established as a matter of patenting products, with the so-called Royal Appointment, become an institution recognised as a worldwide known brand? Is it possible to mark, in the history of the BRF, the development of one of the most famous iconic brands?

In the first chapter, the analysis starts with the description of how the brand economy was born, to show the process of transformation from trademarks to brands. The aim is to show how the birth of the brand economy is identified with the origin of the trading process, with seals and marks detaching

[1] The Atlantic, "How the British Royal Family Became a Global Brand", https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/british-royal-monarchy-queen-elizabeth/411388/ , consultation date 02nd June 2018

from the only idea of it as a capitalistic function used to create financial benefit, and then evolved into the modern concept of the brand management system.

In the same way, the BRF, as what we may interpret today as a brand, was born in the 12th century as the Royal Appointment. In the second chapter, the idea is to examine the history of the Royal Appointment, focusing on two main periods: from the 12th to the 14th century, observing how the Royal Family started to relate with the trading people; and from the 14th to the 20th century, the period in which the Royal Appointment evolved as a patent, being adapted to the evolution of the trading process.

But not only the BRF became commonly renown because of the legal nature of the Royal Appointment, it was also recognised as a corporate brand. In the third chapter, after having defined the concept of "corporate brand", the aim is to analyze how, also thanks to its cultural heritage, the BRF can be described and managed as a corporate brand, with its own branding mix and brand identity.

The final part of the research is focused on the last step that may enable the BRF to be globally recognised as an iconic brand. The last chapter starts with the theoretical analysis of how a brand can become an icon, to demonstrate that the same process was implicitly developed by the BRF, in order to give an interpretation of how a brand, that was born as a patent, possesses now, thanks to its peculiar characteristics, great economical and identity values.

# CHAPTER 1

# THE HISTORY OF TRADEMARKS AND BRANDS: THE BIRTH OF THE BRAND ECONOMY

## 1.1 The birth of the commodity branding through sealing techniques

For a long time, the concepts of brands and branding have been identified as a feature of the modern global economy, as a cultural move of late capitalism. However, according to recent studies, brands are now considered as being "as old as cIvilisation".[2] In order to understand when and how the modern branding concept was born, we must broaden the idea of brand, detaching from the classical definition of it as a function of capitalist production related to the financial benefit, while focusing also on its social and operational meaning.

The brand economy can be defined as a system based on the exchange of substitutable and standardized goods and labour[3], a kind of system that has been common since the beginning of human history. According to this definition, the role of seals, marks and labels in early societies must be reconsidered. These indicators have been found since the fourth millennium BC, in Late Imperial China, Ancient Greece and Mesopotamia[4] and should be analysed taking into consideration two spheres of activities: their bureaucratic functionalities, so the use of them as administrative tools, and simultaneously their communication features, so as signifiers of product identity.

But when do seals, marks and labels stop being simple symbols providing information about the origin and quality of a product and become tools that communicate product identity and image?

Symbols exist since human kind was born, as a mean of communication and socialisation between people. This is the first reason why we do find seals,

[2] K.Moore, S. Reid, "The birth of brand: 4000 years of branding", *Business History,* 50 (2008), p. 419
[3] F. Fanselow, "The Bazaar Economy or How Bizarre is the Bazaar Really?", Man, 25 (1990), 2, p. 262
[4] B. De Munck, "The agency of branding and the location of value. Hallmarks and monograms in early modern tableware industries", Business History, 54(2012) 7, p. 1

marks and labels on wares and goods since the era of cIvilisation started. People began to exchange goods and the need of transferring information and explaining the life cycle of products arose. However, simultaneously the employment of symbols gained another function, communicating the value and the reputation of the product.

To understand how literature has developed the research, we must start with the description of the structural characteristic of the so called "brand economies". Since trade exists, markets have been characterized by the coexistence of substitutable and non-substitutable goods. Markets where goods are predominantly unbranded and heterogeneous mean few opportunities for consumers to establish the quality and the characteristics of the product before purchasing. Thanks to the asymmetry of knowledge, the distributors own the most of the power to influence the act of purchase. However this type of markets have not been common in the history of trade.[5] The majority of the economies have always been characterized by branded and homogeneous commodities.[6] This type of goods generate a different flow of information between producers and consumers, where the trading procedures and structures are different. As the quality of goods answers to the same standards for a given genre of goods, consumers have the power to exchange knowledge and information about the product and make a weighted decision before the purchase. The willingness of consumer to differentiate products from their association with particular information, is the reason why, since few millennium BC, producers felt the need to mark their products.[7]

The first surface and subjects that were available for producers to represent themselves have been seals. Brands are always associated with the packaging and the sealing of products, and the same, even though in a different way, was in the past. After numerous studies on artefacts, it emerges that the

[5] Fanselow, *The Bazaar Economy or How Bizarre is the Bazaar Really?, cit, pp.260-263*
[6] *Ibidem*
[7] *Ivi,* p. 253

technique of sealing represents the earliest known technique to mechanically duplicate a crafted image.[8]

Sealing practices have been always recognised and examined because of being a form of art.[9] At the same time though, their primary function was not only being an artistic expression, but marking and safeguarding goods and merchandise. Seals are recognised as a complex procedure, which derives from a combination of physical, social and psychological processes. This is demonstrated, above all, by the meaning of the act of breaking a seal. After it was attached to a product, the seal could not be damaged and, the act of breaking it meant the violation of both previous agreement but also of relationships. Therefore in the past the act of breaking a seal was judged nearly as a moral violation, and the breaker could be seen almost as a different person.[10]

The primordial types of sealing techniques, the marking of containers with impressed images, can be identified in the Middle East back to the late seventh millennium BC. It was composed by two main elements: the seal, usually a crafted object made by some hard material, and the sealing, a soft substance which had both the function of holding the closure of the container and also containing the impressed seal image in relief. [11]

The use of seals to mark wares and containers in this way developed in the areas of Middle East and in Eurasia during the Bronze Age, thanks to the expansion of urban economies. In other areas, such as in Europe, the adoption of this technique was a later development, which dates back after the Roman conquest. This difference is due by the fact that sealing practices are a phenomenon born in villages, that didn't have the characteristics to be born and developed in cities.

[8] D. Wengrow, "Prehistories of Commodity Branding", Current Anthropology, 49 (2008), 1, p. 13
[9] *Ibidem*
[10] *Ibidem*
[11] *Ibidem*

As a matter of fact, the context in which first sealing practices were developed back in the late seventh and early sixth millennia BC is the region of Mesopotamia, composed by small farming villages, widely spread between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers but well connected and densely networked. Except from subsistence agriculture, one of the main activities was the so-called "household industry", mainly the production of painted crafted ceramics.

The objects produced were highly indIvidualized and artisans focused mainly on the creation of a wide range of domestic serving vessels, because of their shapes which recall the presentation and consumption of drinks and food. They were personalized, humanized and gendered through the addition of particular decorations, such as facial features, clothing and ornaments. Moreover, they were often used in funerary rites, the demonstration that crafted products were highly related to particular people.[12]

The first development of seals, which dates back to the late sixth and early fifth millennia BC in Mesopotamia, during the so called Halaf period, are stone seals. They were designed for stamping complex linear patterns to the clay sealing of mobile containers. Each seal was created as a unique object, with a particular form who related to a specific person. Some examples found are seal recalling old types of ornament, such as bones, animal teeth and palms (fig. 1). They were guarded as if they were personal amulets, a feature that helps understanding how, since the beginning of commercial trades, these symbols conferred "part of the bearer's personality on unanimated things"[13].

[12] *Ivi,* p.14
[13] *Ibidem*

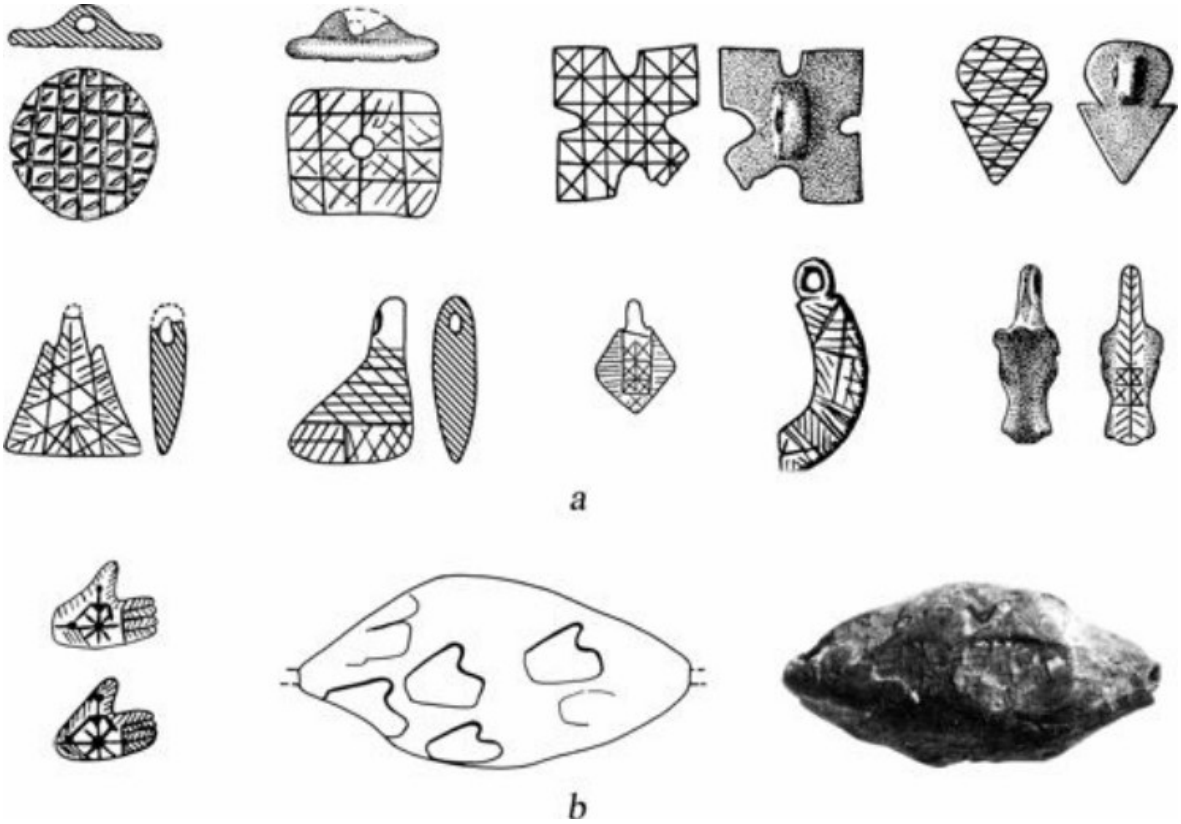


***Fig. 1*** *A – various types and shapes of seals;*
*B – an ovoid hanging cretula and the seal applied on it.*

Nevertheless, there are some main features that differentiate this first development of sealing techniques compared to earlier ways of creating objects. First of all, the possibility of composing different types of precise seal images in a short time. Moreover, for the first time, the shape of the seal was not dependent from the type of object to which it was related. And finally, the nature of transactions that saw temporal and spatial bounds, and so the need to communicate the identity of the producer and the quality of the products in situations when the timing of exchange and the consumption could not be controlled by the manufacturer. [14]

In the course of the period between the fifth and the third millennia BC, sealing practices experienced significant transformations. This due to great

[14] *Ibidem*

changes in the structure of villages, productions and trades.[15] Highly personalized products were replaced by standardized products with homogeneous designs, mainly pottery and fabrics. Moreover, concerning the structure of villages, the Middle East region saw an economic centralization, with the emergence of administrative institution to regulate the increasing production and trade of goods. [16]

Stamp seals started being used no more to mark a single object, but to represent indIvidual houses, marking both also portable containers and the houses of the producers. In this way a strong traceable link between particular buildings and the movable products was created. Also the shape of seals underwent some transformation. Adapting to the standardization of seal shapes, there was a shift from linear surface patterns to a fixed collection of figural images, such as animal, drinking and violence scenes.[17]

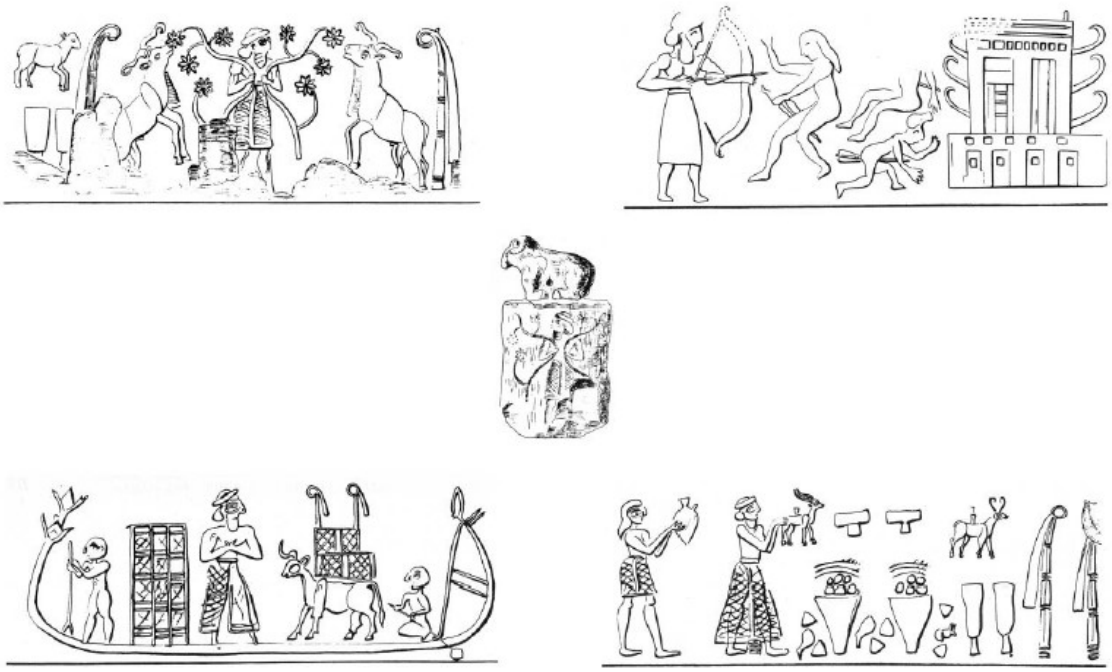

***Fig. 2*** *Reconstructed seal impressions of the late fourth millennium BC*

[15] D. Wengrow, "The changing face of clay: continuity and change in transition from village to urban life in the Near East", Antiquity, 72 (1998), pp. 790-792

[16] M. Frangipane, "Centralization processes in Greater Mesopotamia. Uruk "expansion" as the climax of systemic interactions among areas of the Greater Mesopotamian region", pp. 321-322

[17] D. Wengrow, *The changing face of clay,* cit., p. 16

The latest improvements of sealing are recognised during the mid-to-late fourth millennium BC, during the period that has come to be known as the "Uruk Expansion" in the south of Mesopotamia. The change in the shape of seals help understanding how the communicative functions were more and more combined to the administrative ones. Manufactured goods and live resources were produced and exchanged between villages from the north to the south of the area, developing a wider market. The design of seals started representing the evolution that villages and techniques were undertaking. The most recurring images were scenes of work and male figures depicted in their activities of production, collection and transportation of finished goods.[18]

Therefore, at the basis of these primary concepts of branding we must recognize the role that commoditization had in the Urban Revolution. [19] Not only the volume of trades increased, but also the way of producing and selling goods saw crucial improvements. What influenced consumers choices, was for sure the quality and provenance, the purity and the finesses, but also the wider cultural value that the product represented and that users felt they could access only through their consumption.

Consequently, the need of regulating these processes arose. The main developments to guarantee the quality and the provenance of mass-produced goods were two, and these features serve as a connection bridge with the modern firm of regulating trades. First, the shift from the production of specialized goods to standardized products that had to respect regulations and present particular characteristics. Secondly, specialized managerial systems were developed in order to control the new production methods and make sure they respected the standards, and they were no more focused on the quality of products and producers but on the general types of things and labours.[20]

[18] *Ivi*, p.19
[19] *Ivi*, p.20
[20] *Ivi*, pp. 19-21

The main protagonists of the birth of the first branding concept have been seals. Seal impressions acted as "marks of quality and provenance"[21], therefore as a communicative tools. The context that enable and drove the development of the branding concept was the wide process of urbanization accompanied by the diffusion of commoditization in increasingly centralized societies, that lead to modifications in the nature of consumption. So the standardization of sealed packaging found in early Mesopotamia represents the basis of the creation of a brand economy, where commodities and labour become always more substitutable.

As communication and languages, commodity branding has to be recognised as a long-term feature of culture and human development, which varied in different ways according to the ideological and institutional contexts, and developed over time and space, evolving from the starting point of the sealing techniques.

## 1.2 Guilds and hallmarks: early modern branding in Europe

After having acknowledged that, in ancient times, the concept of branding is linked with seals and commoditization of both products and labour, how did branding evolve in the early modern era, when labour and products were commoditized but the majority of them controlled by guilds?

While seals, guild hallmarks or trademarks are identified as "the earliest signs of branding"[22], in the more physical and practical meaning of the concept, early modern craft guilds refer to a broader definition of brand. Brand can be defined as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers"[23], so transmitting the value and the identity of a product or a service and of the producer. Even if guilds marks cannot be compared at the same level to modern brands or

[21] *Ivi*, p.20
[22] P. Kotler, Marketing management, Milan, Pearson, 2012, p. 274
[23] American Marketing Association (AMA) Dictionary and Marketing Accountability Standards Board (MASB)

trademarks, there are some features and functions that can help reconstructing the process of creation of the modern branding concept.

In late medieval and early modern manufacturing guilds the supervision of the quality was a great problem.[24] Product quality was guarded both before the production started, through the establishment of apprenticeships and the obligation of producing masterpieces, and also after the products were made, for example with the inspection of the workshops and goods before they could be sold. Hallmarks were the visual manifestation of the guilds' system, built with the aim of solving the problem of information asymmetries and monitoring production, trades and competition.

As for seals, the first feature of collective marks of guilds was to guarantee the quality and the provenience of goods. At the same time though, they played a crucial role in the economic world because marks started conferring cultural identities to individual firms and guilds gave an important contribution to the process of creation of brand names.

There are different facets and interpretations of how collective marks of guilds should be defined and positioned, if more as a signal of the origin and status of a product or more as an identifier of cultural identity.[25] They can be seen as an extension of merchants and compared to modern franchises[26] or as a firm-like function to monitor production chains. Moreover, they could be associated to certification marks, as merchants sometimes were also urban officials, but also, if they were related to merchants, they could be seen as instruments handled almost autonomously to control production practices. [27]

After long examinations, guild hallmarks came to be associated above all to masters rather than merchants because they started using them as instruments to mark their products long before they were obliged from the law

[24] De Munck, *The agency of branding and the location of value, cit*., p. 3
[25] *Ibidem*
[26] R. P. Merges, From Medieval Guilds to Open Source Software: Informal Norms, Appropriability Institutions, and Innovation, Wisconsin, University of California, Berkeley - School of Law, 2004
[27] De Munck, *The agency of branding and the location of value, cit,* p. 4

to do so. As seals, marks were used in the past from masters to help consumers identity products and shops, using different types of signals such as abstract symbols and figures or letters. [28]

Until the twelfth century, individual marks predominated. As soon as industrial sectors started becoming incorporated during the thirteenth century, individual marks started being subordinated to city marks or guilds marks. At the beginning, city marks prevailed thanks to the diffusion of trade across cities.

Gradually, guilds strengthened their position creating corporations of masters and establishing stricter guidelines. The masters members of the guilds were forced to use collective hallmarks and to respect the regulations imposed by the guidelines, such as the position of the marks in a clear and easy to see part of the product.[29]

In any case, individual marks did not disappeared at once, rather they were associated to fraudulent masters and were used from guilds to identify members that did not respect regulations. In fact, individual marks appeared, at the beginning, alongside the collective marks, to make it easier for guilds official to trace the origin of products and verify the association of the individual mark to the collective mark. [30]

Therefore, the individual marks represented the house and the name of each single producer who belonged to a guild, whereas collective marks referred to guild ordinance, usually linked with a general kind of product or labour. In this sense, they were both quality marks, because it meant products had been controlled and supervised, but they were also related to the social and political context in which the guild itself belonged.

But if hallmarks were the solution to the problem of the supervision of products' quality, how were guilds' collective marks monitored and regulated? It is difficult to decide if they belong more to the bureaucratic states' system,

[28] *Ibidem*
[29] *Ibidem*
[30] *Ibidem*

where the government was responsible for regulating production and trades, or to the open trading systems, where private entrepreneurs were the owners and the creators of brands with more freedom in the processes.[31]

Starting from the Middle Ages, urban or guilds officials were designated to apply marks, with the power of controlling product quality. In this sense marks can be compared to modern certification marks because they provided the guarantee that products had been controlled and approved by the accredited organisation. Basically, even if the market was dominated by merchants and entrepreneurs, guilds' were designated from the government in regard to quality control, causing struggles between merchants and producers. Guilds' officials were elected by the masters belonging to a certain guilds, and in this way they represented the group of manufacturing masters.[32]

In any case, the aim of hallmarks and officials was to certify that a product was made by producers who respected guilds' guidelines, so masters that had completed the apprenticeship and were members of a guild. Then the way in which officials controlled the processes were different in each case, depending on the sector and on the juridical and political mechanisms, peculiar in each situation. For this reason, guilds' collective marks are recognised as belonging more to the urban political context.[33]

This confirms the fact that guild-based marks had two functions, as seals had, conveying information about quality and origin of a product but also creating an image and a personality related to it. How were those two features related to each other inside the same tool, the guilds' collective marks?

The first type of information conveyed from a mark was related to the quality of the raw material used, so an invisible and crucial aspect determinant in the decision of the user in the act of buying. In demonstration of this, lots of different agreements were made in the early modern era, each relate to the

[31] *Ivi,* p.5
[32] *Ibidem*
[33] *Ivi*, p.6

quality of a single product. For each type of approved agreement, a different mark was created. [34] This method was mainly used to differentiate products and masters and to link them to certain guilds, meaning to specific quality standards.

Therefore, these features of marks cannot be explained only from an economic perspective but also from a political one. If from one side, guilds' collective marks were created to solve asymmetries problems, from the other they were exploited for political strategies of exclusion and inclusion.[35] Starting from the fact that to become a master you had to be a burgher, to finish the apprenticeship and to produce a masterpiece, collective marks were then used to demonstrate that a certain product and the producer respected these requirements. So collective guilds linked the product quality to its master prIvilege and political standing.[36]

The connection of guilds' collective marks to political identity is also demonstrated from the visual characteristics of marks. Some example are the sixteenth century hallmarks that were diffused in London, such as the Guilds of Pewterers. They were represented by the symbols of the crowned X or with the crowned Tudor rose, symbols of the coats of arms of guilds.[37]

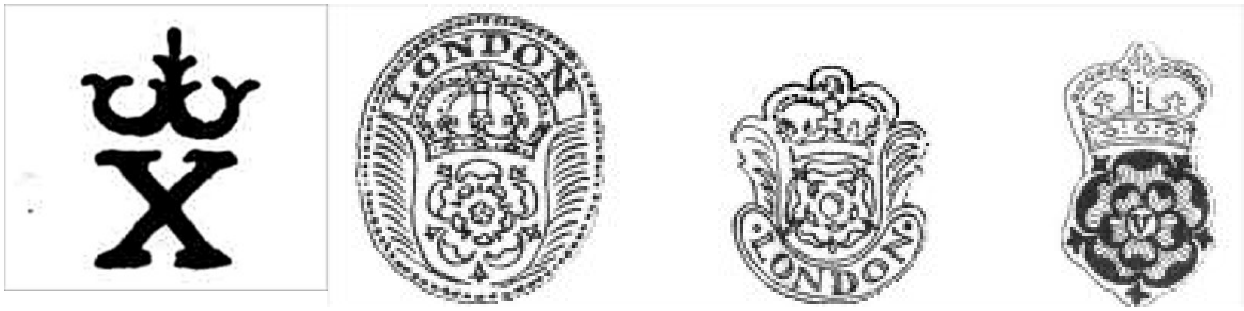


***Fig. 3*** *Examples of the Crowned X and the Crowned Rose*

[34] J. Banister, English Sivler, London, Ward, Lock & Co, 1965, pp.66-72
[35] De Munck, *The agency of branding and the location of value*, cit, p.8
[36] *Ibidem*
[37] R. F. Michaelis, Antique Pewter of the British Isles, London, Dover Publications, 1955, p. 98-99

Moreover, guilds' masters used to participate to public parades, showing their coats of arms and banners in order to help the connections of guilds' collective marks to their political and personal identity. [38]

The most important feature was therefore the trustworthiness of the masters, which enable consumers to take weighted decisions. Guild trademarks are considered political instruments because they allowed freemen to classify the characteristics and the quality of products.[39]

Although, the judgment of products' quality is not considered as completely objective, but also related to the overall context, so to the production process, the qualification, skills and the identity of the producer.[40] For this reason, the two main features of guilds' hallmarks, so conveying information and creating a product identity, are connected also through a political thread. On the one hand, hallmarks solved the problem of assuring product quality, which was almost reduced to an invisible feature of the products. On the other side it connected the products to guilds' moral and political reputation, creating what we can now call a brand image and that lead collective marks of guilds to be compared to modern brands. [41]

Therefore, the economic function of guilds has always been connected to the cultural and political context in which marks were used. That is the reason why the peculiarities of each single mark depended on the context where it was created and managed. During the seventeenth century, collective marks did not link the quality of a product to the name of the single producer. Instead, they connected the product to a certain political context, depending on the political group to which the guild of the manufacturer belong. The political and cultural context served as a warrant of the products' quality and gave them an identity,

[38] De Munck, *The agency of branding and the location of value*, cit, p.8
[39] Ivi, p.9
[40] Ibidem
[41] Ibidem

an image to which consumers could associate the product and that meant quality and safety and influenced their decisions.[42]

After these reflections, it is clear that, even if at the beginning seals were created to transmit information and marks followed this principal need, during the early modern period the influence of guilds' social and political context was crucial.

This until some critical transformation occurred closed to the end of the *Ancien Régime*.[43] Before that period, as we said, quality was considered to really like an objective feature of the product, instead it depended by the judgement of guilds' officials, and so by the parameters determined by masters. With collective marks, as mentioned before, self-advertisement from single merchants or entrepreneurs was not allowed and the only brand names used were those of the guilds' collective marks. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth, though, quality went under a process of objectification caused mainly by the power gained from merchants.[44]

Merchants started developing more skills, expanding their firms, by employing apprentices and sometimes also masters. So the main shift was from dealing only with the finished products and depending on guilds and manufactures, to managing all the chain, from the production to the final selling of wares.[45] Merchants, who started transforming in powerful entrepreneurs, were not allowed to use collective marks, and so at the beginning, they employed it illegally or did not use it at all. Consequently this means that the political power of guilds was now less influent in consumers' purchase decisions, whereas other criterions of evaluations arose.

Anyway, the privileged position of guilds as warrant of products' quality did not fade at once. Instead, the transformation of collective marks of guilds

[42] Ivi, p.10
[43] B. De Munck, "One counter and your own account. Redefining illicit labour in early modern Antwerp", Urban History, 37 (2010), pp. 26-44
[44] Ibidem
[45] Ibidem

into modern forms of marks was part of a long-term process, in which the cultural and political context saw crucial changes.[46] This is demonstrated also from the transformations of the shapes and the information included in the design of marks, that tended to be larger and to have more writing than symbols. Another great change consisted in the way in which the quality of raw materials was indicated. It was no more associate to the symbol of a certain guilds, but in a more modern way, it was described. In London for example, the product was sold with the marks and also other indicators such as "Made in London" or "Superfine Hard Metal", which were not included in the mark itself.[47]


***Fig. 4*** *Examples of the evolution of marks during the eighteenth century in London*

Therefore, the signs of marks with their aims of certificate product quality and transmit brand image and identity did not disappeared, at the contrary it evolved to adapt to cultural, economical and political changes. Whereas the link between guilds and marks, and the way in which they were monitored and manage faded away during the late eighteenth century, because guilds themselves saw crucial changes as well.[48]

## 1.3 The origin of patents

The power of guilds to control the production and trade of goods during the later Middle Ages has often been interpreted as the authority of guilds to monopolize markets.[49] The idea that "guilds were monopolies"[50] is sustained by

[46] De Munck, The *agency of branding and the location of value,* cit, p. 12
[47] Michaelis, *Antique Pewter of the British Isles*, cit., p.101
[48] De Munck, The agency of branding and the location of value, cit, p. 12
[49] G. Richardson, "Guilds, laws, and markets for manufactured merchandise in late-medieval England", Explorations in Economic History, 41 (2004), pp. 1
[50] G. Holmes, The Later Middle Ages, 1272-1485, New York, WW Norton & Company, 1966, p.36

many academics, but officially law never accorded to guilds the right to monopolize markets, in the modern definition of this process.[51] Even if guilds received the right to regulate apprenticeships, working conditions, type of raw materials and the quality of the merchandise produced, the law never allowed the official control over competition and the ability to exclude producers and merchants from a market. They were only allowed to monitor the factors mentioned for the members of the guild, in order to guarantee certain standards of the products that were marked.[52]

The first evidence to confirm this point is that guilds had the control over the merchandise produced in the local context, but the surplus was then part of the long-distance trade. In this broaden context, guilds did not have the power to control other merchants, rather they often competed against other guilds' who produced similar products. An example is provided by the common law in England, which prohibited the manipulation or prices and quantities and so the unfair competition. [53] The second evidence is that the concepts of monopolies, patents and copyright, in their modern definition, were born at the end of the Middle Ages.

Patents are the first tool conceded by the law, that regulated and granted monopolies. A patent can be defined as a "limited legal monopoly granted to an individual or a firm to make, use, and sell its invention, and to exclude others from doing so".[54] A product or a service can be patentable only if they possess certain characteristics. First of all, it must be an invention that has particular features different from all the other products already present in the market. Moreover, the invention must be usable and non-obvious. Patents for invention give the exclusivity to the innovators to produce and sell the product for a limited period of time, depending on the type of product and the country of origin. To receive patents, there is a strict procedure which varies from country

[51] Richardson, Guilds*, laws, and markets for manufactured merchandise in late-medieval England,* cit., p.2
[52] *Ibidem*
[53] Ivi, p. 13
[54] Business Dictionary, s.v. "patent", http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/patent.html, consultation date 25th August 2017

to country depending on the national laws and international agreements. Innovators must submit a request to the national office responsible for the release, by disclosing all the details of the products and demonstrating their authenticity. Patents are recognised as a cornerstone and a form of intellectual property.

The earliest notion of creating a patent to protect an achievement has arisen in Italy in the early fourteenth century. In 1421, the Florentine commune granted the first exclusive patent to the architect Brunelleschi to award the invention of a ship used on the Arno river to transport marble.[55] Since that time, inventors who submitted their ideas to their communes, used to be awarded from the Venetian republic with long term credits and facilities, but never with a granted right of monopoly.[56]

Although, the first regulated administrative system of granting patent was introduced in Venice in 1450, thanks to the release of the Venetian Patent Statute.[57] The award of monopoly patents was regulated and inventors, after been registered and confirmed, had sole benefit of the product or service for ten years, and infractions were punished.[58] The aim was to preserve and guard the most important craft for the Italian city, namely glass-making. Since the city was born it was one of the main activities of crafts-men and it was vital for the population. With the diffusion of counterfeiting, the need of preserving the products and demonstrating their quality and uniqueness was crucial for the producers. For this reason, patents were regulated and well diffused in Venice since the 16th century.

Freedom of trade and the emigration of Venetian glass-makers facilitated the diffusion of the new concept firstly across Europe and later on in other countries. To demonstrate the importance of the diffusion of Italian craftsmen

[55] P. O. Long, "Invention, Authorship, Intellectual Property, and the Origin of Patents: Notes toward a Conceptual History", Technology and Culture, 32 (1991), 4, pp. 878
[56] C. MacLeod, Inventing the Industrial Revolution: The English Patent System, 1660-1800, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 1988, p.10
[57] M. Frumkin, "The Origin of Patents", Journal of the Patent Office Society, 27 (1945), p. 145
[58] C. MacLeod, *Inventing the Industrial Revolution,* cit., p.11

and their products around Europe in the process of spreading the concept of patents, is the fact that six of the first nine patents released in Europe, found in the Archive of Brussels, have been granted to Italian glassmakers.[59] Moreover, merchants trading frequently with Venice, were the first to adapt to the idea in Europe, the German states are an example.

In particular, focusing on the English market, patents came to the Great Britain around the sixteenth century, under the reign of Elizabeth I.[60] The queen's chief minister, William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, introduced the issue of patents mainly to obtain a "superior Continental technology"[61]. In other words, England aimed to attract foreign artisans to emigrate there and starting producing and selling their products. In this way, England could broaden its capabilities, introducing new technologies without the need of importing them, therefore reducing costs and boosting the economy.[62]

Therefore, the Crown started gaining great profits from the institution of patents. First of all, because of the huge number of craftsmen that started moving inside the country. Moreover, because of the fees that artisans had to pay for the release of the patent, and also for the royalties that they were asked to pay if they wanted to continue using the grants to sell and improve their products.[63]

According to this, at the beginning patents were issued mainly for foreigners and for innovation. But later on, always more products were granted even if they were already existing products.[64]

Anyway, in England, the fact of granting a product was not a concept born with patents. Even if the official concept of patenting a product was regulated in

[59] *Ibidem*
[60] Frumkin, *The Origin of Patents, ci*t., p.145
[61] C. MacLeod, Inventing the Industrial Revolution, cit., p.11
[62] *Ibidem*
[63] Richardson, Guilds, laws, and markets for manufactured merchandise in late-medieval England, cit., pp. 21
[64] *Ibidem*

the sixteenth century, the association of a determined product with the Crown is almost "as old as the monarchy"[65], with the creation of the Royal Warrant.

The King and his court in England, have always had to be provided of all types of goods, and what his suppliers received was not only a monetary compensation, but also an important grant improving their reputation all over the Country.[66]

The Royal Warrant withstand many changing throughout its history, adapting to the political and social context and developing a new form of intellectual property. But also, thanks to the development of the grant, it transformed the way through which people conceived the concept of a product or service being granted from the Crown itself, becoming not only a symbol of the quality of the product, but conferring to the product a certain type of personality.

Finally, patents contributed in a crucial way to the creation of the concept of brand. If marks can be seen as the first step to communicate the identity of the producer and the quality of the product, patents are the second step. Through the regulated warranty of the sole production and sell of a product, artisans were able to freely realize their goods or services and selling them without the continuous fear of counterfeiting ad unfair competition, while focusing always more on transmitting their product and brand identity.[67]

Therefore, the development of the Royal Warrant, the main demonstration of the representation of the British Royal family as a brand, has to be analysed through the development of trademarks and intellectual property, from a mark to a brand.

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[65] T. Heald, By Appointment: 150 Years of the Royal Warrant and Its Holders, London, Queen Anne Press, 1989, p. 11

[66] *Ibidem*

[67] C.M. Belfanti, "Imitare, copiare e contraffare nell'Europa preindustriale", in Id. (a cura di), Contraffazione e cambiamento economico: marche,imprese, consumatori,Milano, Egea, 2013, pp. 15-36

# CHAPTER 2

# THE ROYAL APPOINTMENT: THE CREATION PROCESS OF THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY WARRANT

## 2.1 The Great Wardrobe, at the basis of the Royal Warrant: from the 12th to the 18th century

The concept of "warrant" is often connected with the document issued from the police to arrest someone. However, long before it assumed that meaning, the word "warrant" as always been defined as "a document that entitles the holder to receive goods, money, or services"[68], being in this sense a dialect or corrupt form of the word "guarantee"[69].

Focusing on the meaning of the concept in the United Kingdom, a more precise definition is given related to the term "warrant holder". The Oxford Dictionary describes the Warrant Holder as "a tradesman who has written authority to supply goods to the household of the King or Queen or a member of the Royal Family".

With the main aim of granting the quality of the product, being it supplied to a member of the Royal Family, the Warrant serves as a certificate of prestige for the supplier. The peculiarity that nobody can apply for a Royal Warrant, but it only can be granted "by appointment" to the Queen or a member of the Royal Family, highlights the privilege of products possessing one.

The first evidences of commercial relationships with the English Royal Family dates back to medieval times when charters, particularly trade guilds, started being awarded and recognised for their loyal services.

[68] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "warrant", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/warrant, consultation date 05th September 2017

[69] T. Heald, A Peerage for Trade – A History of the Royal Warrant, London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 2003, p. 7

The earliest written and formal royal document found is the award written by King Henry II to the Weavers' Company in 1155[70].

***Fig. 5*** *The earliest surviving Weavers' Charters, granted by Henry II in 115, attested by Thomas Becket.*

Granting a Royal Charter to a guild, was not aimed at protecting the service of a single person to the Crown, but at acknowledging an organisation of experts in their work. That group of people did not only serve the Royal Family: the main aim was also to promote the excellence of their services and products and to ensure they could maintain high standards and increase their business.

Even if the idea behind the modern definition of the Royal Warrant is "as old as the institution of the monarchy itself"[71], with the evolution of the Crown comes the formal royal recognition of individuals and not group of specialists, and the institution of well-established rules, which have been adapted and modelled throughout the years.

[70]The Warshipful Company of Weavers, http://www.weavers.org.uk/history, consultation date September 2017

[71] Heald, *A Peerage for Trade*, cit, p. 12

The main pillars, which remain at the basis of the Royal Warrant system through all these centuries are those of excellence and of service.[72] This underlines the fact that the two main rules which have served as foundations for the institution of all the others, have been the excellence and the high quality of the product or service being granted, and the premise that the company must be a supplier of the Royal Family.

Relating to the service pillars, it is easily understandable that, since the first Crown was established, the King and the Queen and the court in general required a support system.[73] When speaking about suppliers of the Royal Family, the first connection goes to the appearance of the King and his family, and so to all those people which were engaged in clothing, jewellery and in general in all those products and services related to the appearance of the Royal Family. Being a King has always meant also being a symbol of magnificence, and being compared to other Royals. For this reason, since the beginning, the best providers of crowns, jewellery, sceptres and robes have always been selected.

However, the needs of Royal Family were not only related to fabrics and jewels, but even more on basic commodities and services essential for the everyday life. The role of the Royal Warrant Holder and their ancestors has, therefore, always consisted in supplying all the royal needs, from the basic everyday necessities to the mundane desires.

The earliest organisation of royal household administration which has been recorded is known as "The Great Wardrobe", created in the early thirteen century.[74] After the sudden expansion of the organisation, the Great Wardrobe has soon been recognised as an official department of the Royal Household, part of the group of servants and official which supported the Royal Family in its everyday needs and duties[75]. At the beginning, it was mainly responsible for

[72] *Ibidem*
[73] *Ibidem*
[74] Ivi, p. 13
[75] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v."royal household", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/royal_household, consultation date 20th September 2017

"sourcing, purchasing, storing and distributing non-perishable goods[76]" to the King and his family, such as clothes, furniture, furs, medicines and groceries. Before long, its tasks and responsibilities started increasing, with more commodities to be supplied (such as jewels, plate and horse gears), but also with more freedom and independence. By the fourteenth century, the Great Wardrobe was in charge of its own "Keeper" who was appointed by patents, and it moved out of court in a house in the north of London, bought expressly by the King Edward III in 1360[77].

The accounts of purchases of the Great Wardrobe are the earliest written records of transactions between the Royal Household, once represented by the Wardrobe, and the traders and craftsmen. Therefore, this organisation can be identified as the predecessor and the model for the foundation of the modern Royal Warrant Holders Association and royal patent system.

The duties and functions of the Great Wardrobe, and in general of all the Royal Household, have been subjected to changes and adaptation throughout the ages and during the reigns of different Crowns, always respecting the main aim for which the Wardrobe was created. An example is the language used for the accounts. During the first years, until the reign of Edward IV, they were drafted in Latin, but my 1480 they were all composed in English[78]. Another example of evolution of the Great Wardrobe is given by the number of employees: from the few dozens of officials in the early thirteenth century, to 669 employees during the reign of Edward I at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[79]

The succession of a new Monarch, meant the challenge for the royal suppliers for being confirmed as a servant. Depending on the new King or Queen the preferences and the needs changed. An example is the vast and sophisticated

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[76] Lexis of Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Royal Wardrobe Accounts, "The Great Wardrobe", https://medievalroyalwardrobelexis.wordpress.com/the-great-wardrobe/, consultation date 20th Semptember 2017

[77] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 13

[78] Ibidem

[79] Ivi, p. 14

wardrobe of Elizabeth I, who reigned from 1558 until 1603. The Queen gave an enormous importance to her appearance, meaning that clothes were for her essential to maintain her "Gloriana" image[80]. Queen Elizabeth I required a great quantity of sumptuous clothes and jewels, and for this reason, a specific department of the Great Wardrobe, called the Wardrobe of Robes, was in charge of the supply and the selection of the clothes, jewels and all the necessary for the image. Being she famous for her habit of losing and giving away much of her robes and jewellery, the work of supplying her wardrobe was great and for this reason a specific team was appointed.

The naming and the type of relationship between the Monarch and the suppliers are two other factors that changed through the ages. An example is Oliver Cromwell, an English military and political leader who governed from 1653 to 1658 with the title, that he chose, of "Protector". During his govern all his employees were described as "servants of His Highness" and Cromwell was keen on displaying his Coat of Arms and asked his servants to do the same.[81]

Another difference in the naming, was given by the distinction between the "tradesman" of the Lord Chamberlain and the "purveyors" of the Lord Steward. The department managed by the Lord Chamberlain, the official in charge of the royal household[82], was the one dealing with life "above stairs" whereas the one entrusted to the Lord Steward, the head of the Board of Green Clothes in charge mainly of auditing the accounts of the Royal Household, dealt with life "below stairs". Basically, the Lord Chamberlain was responsible for all the artistic and entertainment activities, the Wardrobes, Chapels, Housekeepers and the other related duties; whereas the Lord Steward looked after the more practical offices such as the kitchen, the garden, the wood and the coal yards and the other related activities.

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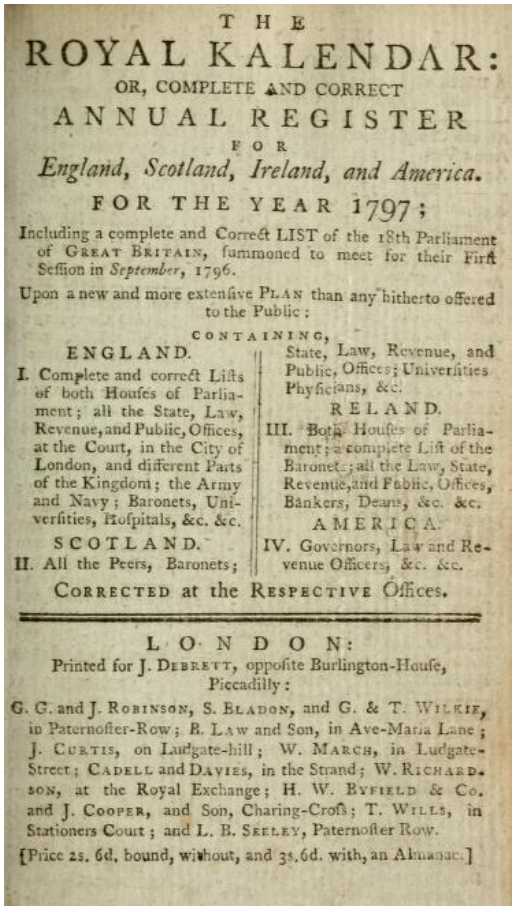
[80] *Ivi*, p.15
[81] *Ivi*, p.16
[82] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "lord chamberlain", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/lord_chamberlain, consultation date 25th September 2017

Until the late 18th century, this distinction persisted, even if, as documented by the surviving seventeenth-century petitions, all the employees had to swear in as "His Majesty's servants", no matter if they were Lord Chamberlain's traders or Lord Steward's purveyors.[83] Nowadays, the difference may seem only semantic, but at that time it was a proper distinction related to function and perceived as significant.

In any case, they were all identified as "servants" and this lead to the fact that they were not considered just as outside-of-the-court merchants supplying goods and services to the Royal Family, but more as proper members of the courts. Therefore, they benefited from particular advantages, but it is not properly document which they were. For example, it may seem that servants perceived a regular salary from the courts, but this is not proved.

During these first centuries of the Great Wardrobe, it is also unclear if the servants of Royal Family could also be engaged in trades outside the court.[84] It is clear that, being appointed supplier of the Crown, gave particular advantages in the common commercial world, but during these early ages, it is not demonstrated if there were particular rules for the traders or if they had complete freedom.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OR, COMPLETE AND CORRECT
ANNUAL REGISTER
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Including a complete and Correct LIST of the 18th Parliament of GREAT BRITAIN, summoned to meet for their First Session in *September*, 1796.
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***Fig. 6*** *The Royal Kalendar published in London in 1797*

The eighteen century saw a general increase of knowledge and growing technology throughout Europe. This changes in the general cultural background reflected in some improvements also in the Royal Household system, that started becoming more and more

[83] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 17
[84] *Ibidem*

sophisticated and organized. More and more servants were also being employed from a Great Wardrobe, which started listing all the Royal Tradesmen in an annual "Royal Kalendar"[85] (fig. 6).

A practice that became common during the eighteenth century is the payment of fees to become a Warrant Holder. As being a servant of the Crown generated advantages in earning new clients outside-of-the-court market, starting from the late 1700s, if a merchant wanted to be granted as a Royal Trader he had to pay a fee for the privilege[86].

The payment of fees, consequently, generated new opportunities for corruption. An example is the fee of five guineas asked by the Clerk of Stables to every new servant of the Royal Mews until 1831[87]. Actually, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all the departments under the Lord Steward's control asked to all the new Warrant Holders to pay "fees upon appointment"[88] to supply all kind of goods. Depending on the difference Monarchs and also from the different officials, different rules and policies succeeded until the late nineteenth century when the Lord Steward's fees were officially abolished, without any official explanation.

As mentioned before, the eighteenth century was a period that symbolized growth, improvements and openness. This was reflected inside the English court with more extravagant and sophisticated Monarchs, more careful about their appearance and wealth. This lead to an increasing budget spent with the Royal Tradesmen and also more servants to the Court.

The types of commodities and services required became wider and thanks to a boost in the international trade, more exotic and particular item entered the court. These changes increased the importance and the pride given to a Royal

[85] T. Heald, By Appointment: 150 Years of the Royal Warrant and Its Holders, London, Queen Anne Press, 1989, p. 16
[86] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 19
[87] *Ibidem*
[88] *Ibidem*

Warrant, and for this reason the display of the Coats of Arms became common, as if was an established rule[89].

By the late nineteenth century all these changes in the type of products, number of servants, budget spent and also the type of relationship between the traders and the monarchs, resulted in the need of a structured and formalised organisation.

## 2.2 The constitution of the Royal Warrant Association: Queen Victoria's reign during the 19th century

With the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, the United Kingdom saw a lot of changes, including the organisation and the bureaucracy. The Royal Warrant was not excluded and the 64 years of Victorian Britain were crucial to the process of modernisation of the granting of a warrant in the United Kingdom.[90]

Two months after Queen Victoria came to throne in 1837, she began issuing her own Royal Warrants. The form and the style of the warrants were similar to those issued before by Charles II: they were dated and Lord Chamberlain had to sign them before giving them to Her Majesty's Gentlemen Usher in Daily Waiting. This had a solemn role, that is administering an Oath to the grantee saying: *"I hereby solemnly swear that I will be a true and loyal servant to our Sovereign Lady Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, and that I know nothing that may be hurtful or prejudicial to Her Royal Person, State, Crown or Dignity but I will hinder it all maybe in my Power, and reveal the same to the Lord Chamberlain of the Queen's Household or one of the Most Honourable Privy Councillors. That I will serve The Queen truly and faithfully in the Place and Quality of [*role*] and will obey the Lord Chamberlain at all times"*[91].

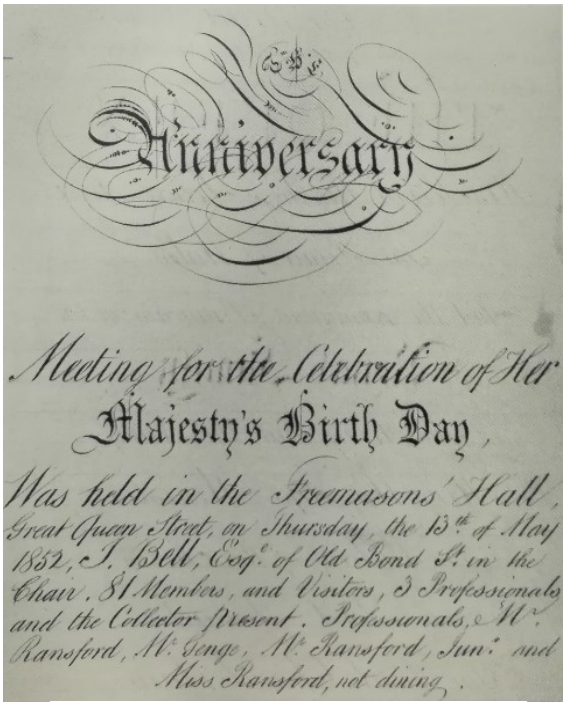
[89] *Ivi*, p. 21
[90] *Ibidem*, p.25
[91] Heald, By Appointment, cit, p.21

All the new Warrant Holders had to swear on the Bible except from Quakers who affirmed and Jews who swore on the Old Testament.[92] This is a demonstration that being a Royal Warrant Holder started to mean being more than a simple supplier, instead obtaining a grant influenced impressively on the reputation and the identity of the grantee and of the brand itself.

An example of a pioneer of the Victorian Royal Warrant, which is one the most historical warrant, known also in modern times, is Twining. Richard Twining obtained a warrant to supply tea to the Queen the 2nd September 1837 and still possesses a Royal Warrant today, evidence of the importance attributed to the Warrant[93].

The boost of the number of Warrants and the relevance that they had, raised the need, as mentioned before, of creating a structured association. As a consequence, in 1840, in the circumstance of the Queen Victoria birthday, the first primitive form of organisation was established with the name of "The Royal Tradesmen's Association for the Annual Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday"[94].

It is known that some form of organisation between Warrant Holders was already present, because tradesmen used to meet in some common places around Windsor, such as the Freemason's Hall and the Thatched Tavern to toast the Monarch in honour of his or her birthday.[95] The proof and explanation of the institution of the Royal Warrant Association is contained in the original minute book, preserved in Buckingham


Anniversary

Meeting for the Celebration of Her Majesty's Birth Day,

Was held in the Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, on Thursday, the 13th of May 1852, T. Bell, Esq. of Old Bond St. in the Chair. 81 Members, and Visitors, 3 Professionals and the Collector Present. Professionals, Mr. Ransford, Mr. Genge, Mr. Ransford, Jun. and Miss Ransford, not dining.

***Fig. 7*** *Record of the dinner for her Majesty birthday held in 1852*

[92] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 25
[93] Heald, By Appointment, cit, p.21
[94] *Ibidem*
[95] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 28

Palace, still perfectly legible.[96] The foundation of the association is announced in the first page, describing the moment when, throughout a usual dinner at the Freemason's Tavern on the 25th May 1840, during the toasts the chairman proposed the formation of the association.[97]

At the beginning it had the form of a dining club. Membership was restricted to men, who had to be suppliers of goods to any department of the Royal Household or to the department of woods and forests. They could all attend the annual dinner, the main event of the association, by paying a guinea.[98]

The first year, the Association presented twenty five members[99], but in 1841 the membership was around eighty and remained for the next ten years.[100] In 1851 the members felt they should broaden their dinner and they association, therefore 300 letters of invitation to all the gentlemen who supply goods to the Crown, asking them to participate to the dinner in honour of the Queen's birthday and to enter in the association as well. Tradesmen who did not reply to the invitation were personally called from one of the Stewards, who had the role of explaining them the importance of participating to the dinner and to the association, almost if it was an order from high, from the will of the Queen, especially because they used the expression "to obey Her Majesty's Commands in celebrating Her Majesty's Birthday". Despite the attempts, the


Her Majesty's Dinner,
TUESDAY, 22ND JUNE, 1897.
Potages.
Bernoise à l'Impératrice.
Parmentier.
Poissons.
Whitebait.
Filets de Saumon à la Norvégienne.
Entrées.
Timbales à la Monté Carlo.
Cailles à la d'Uzelle.
Relevés.
Poulets à la Demidoff
Roast Beef.
Rôt.
Poularde farcie.
Entremets.
Pois sautés au beurre.
Pouding Cambacérès
Pain d'Oranges à la Cintra.
Canapés à la Princesse.
SIDE TABLE.
Hot and Cold Roast Fowls. Tongue.
Cold Beef. Salade.

***Fig. 8*** *Menu of Her Majesty's Dinner from the 1897 Diamond Jubilee*

[96] *Ibidem*
[97] Heald, By Appointment, cit, p.23
[98] *Ibidem*
[99] Royal Warrant Holders Association, https://www.royalwarrant.org/, consultation date October 2017
[100] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 29

number of participants was less then what expected. [101]

All Victorian Royal Tradesmen's dinners were represented by a specific selection of luxurious food and drinks. Dinners were extravagant, accompanied by multiple toasts, the first always directed to Queen Victoria, and by music. During all the Victorian Crown, the annual banquet was the most important moment for the Association, and all the printed material, some of them still preserved such as the menu, are evocative to describe the style of dinner which perfectly reflected the Victorian England.

Basically, during its first years of foundation, the main role of the Royal Warrant Association was being a dining club celebrating the biggest event of the Queen's birthday. However, because of the growing number of members and the modernisation of processes, the Association started changing and adapting to the new needs.

Some discontents began to spread among tradesmen, related to the differences between members of the Association and the other traders but also concerning the importance that the diners achieved and the luxury of it. Moreover, some tradesmen were willing to sell their products or services to the Royal Household at prices below the going rate and the payment of fees became again quite common. For example, all purveyors had to pay a quite expensive fee to the Master of Household to be granted a Warrant until 1845, when the Treasury urged the Lord Chamberlain to definitively abolish fees[102].

Other substantial changes in the process of granting Warrants occurred during Queen Victoria's reign. One of these is the establishment of the rule defining that if a trader went bankrupt, he automatically lost the Warrant. This procedure remains active nowadays[103].

Another issue was the one concerning the transfer of Warrants. Since the beginning of the eighteen century, trades were conducted between single

[101] *Ibidem*
[102] *Ivi*, p.33
[103] *Ibidem*

individuals, therefore warrants were granted to a precise person. The concept of a company composed by multiple individuals who traded under a single name was born towards the end of the eighteenth century, or at the beginning of the nineteenth. Anyway, the procedure of grant did not change. The Warrant remained related to a single person, or more individuals inside the same company, but the concept was connected to the trust and the personal relationship that a Warrant Holder embodied because "holding a warrant is a source of corporate pride but in vesting the title in a particular person"[104] inside the company itself. According to this, the transfer of Warrants from a person to another was not admitted. Instead in case of death, the successor had to submit a new request by appointment.

Complexity happened to occur when a company lost his member possessing the Warrant, because consequently the corporate identity and reputation suffered from negative reflections and adverse publicity. It was better for a company never getting a grant, than losing it.

The more complex, expensive and advantageous it became to possess a Royal Warrant, the more traders started pretending they could act as if they had one but without actually obtaining it. The practice of simply hanging sets of Royal Arms at merchants' shop fronts without permission became common and diffuse throughout the United Kingdom.

At the end of the nineteenth century the members of the Royal Warrant Association started being seriously concerned about the situation, as the more the unauthorised use of Royal Arms became diffused, the more the fact of possessing a warrant lost importance. The fraud could only being prevented by officially making it illegal and by continuously monitoring merchants.

Two solutions were adopted. Firstly, the members asked for a law, which was passed in 1883 inside the "Patents, Designs and Trade Marks Act" that said: *"Any person who without the authority of Her Majesty or any of the Royal Family*

[104] *Ibidem*

*assumes or uses in connection with any trade, business, calling or profession, the Royal Arms, or Arms so nearly resembling the same as to be calculated to lead other persons to believe that he is carrying on his trade business, calling or profession by or under such authority shall be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds"*[105]. The act was also confirmed four years later in the Merchandise Marks Act in 1905 and the Trades Mark Act in 1907[106].

The second solution, adopted in 1895, was applying to the Lord Chamberlain to get the permission of forming an incorporated association, which was duly approved. This was a fundamental step in the history of the Royal Warrant, because the Association stopped being simply a social group and became an official body, with the purpose of monitoring and suppressing the practice of unauthorised exhibiting Royal Coat of Arms throughout England[107].

At the end of the nineteenth century, the recapitulation of all the improvements inside the Association reflected the time of great change during Queen Victoria's reign. Firstly, traders were no more only local and gathered around St. James in London, Windsor Castle and in Edinburgh, but they were now spread thanks to the acquisition of new Royal Palaces, such as the Castle of Balmoral and Highgrove[108]. As mentioned before, also the original informal association focused on organising the Queen's birthday diner, was transformed in a structured and official organisation. The foundation in 1894 of the Edinburgh Association and in 1898 of the Windsor & Eton Association[109] is a demonstration of this. These two associations already existed in an informal way, to support and share the big amount of tasks that the Royal Association now had, and manage them in their areas.

The result of all these changes was the final institution of a proper structure to the Association, which drew up a constitution, declared a Secretary

[105] *Ivi*, p.36
[106] *Ibidem*
[107] *Ibidem*
[108] *Ivi*, p.38
[109] *Ibidem*

and a Committee and other apparatus to move from a simple social club to a trade association[110].

Warrant Holders and their Association were therefore the reflection of the age in which they lived and worked. Queen's Victoria was ruled by innovation, diversity and renovation, as proven by the fact that the population moved from 25 to 40 millions, the National Revenue from 52 to 112 millions and foreign trade from 125 to 738 millions[111]: it was a century of opportunities for Britain.

## 2.3 The 20th Century: towards the modern Warrant

As the Association evolved, also the name underwent to some changes. Since 1840, when the official organisation was founded for the Queen's birthday, the name used was "Royal Tradesmen Association". In 1895 it became "The Incorporated Association of Her Majesty's and Other Royal Warrant Holders Limited", officially substituting the word 'traders' with 'warrant holder'. Another modification was done in 1902, when the name turned into "The Warrant Holders Association Limited". Finally, the definitive name, still in use, was given in 1907: "The Royal Warrant Holders Association".[112]

The Presidency of the Association saw an evolution, as the organisation itself. The first President of the new era of the Royal Warrant Association at the end of the Victorian Age, deserving a note because firstly inscribed in gold in the honours board still hanging in the Association's London office, is T. Simpson Jay, elected in 1896[113] (Fig. 9).

[110] *Ibidem*
[111] *Ivi*, p.39
[112] Heald, By Appointment, cit, p.28
[113] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 41


***Fig. 9*** *The Honours Board hanging in the Council chamber of the Royal Warrant Holders Association*

During the beginning of the new century, the leaders of the Association were physically situated around Buckingham Palace, operating in a growing and sophisticated city.

With the beginning of the Great War, the social and cultural context underwent to some changes, mainly reflected by the new presidents. In 1914, at the beginning of the War, the elected President was Mr Thorn of the Panton Street gun makers 'Charles Lancaster & co', whereas in 1916 the first president reflecting the new age because producing an innovative product was William Wise, manufacturer of daylight reflectors[114], as a demonstration of how the development of the Association adapted to the evolution of the context in its background.

The location was another improvement. The Association had always been managed from the office of its President, until in 1905 a property was acquired and the official office was establish in a suite at 8 Hanover Square, in the West End of London[115].

The 1920s represented a step of even more modernisation. The Presidents represented manufacturers of always more innovative products,

[114] *Ivi*, p. 43
[115] *Ibidem*

such as radiator tablets (Boilerine Ltd) and motor cars (Herbert Scott and Rolls Royce)[116]. Moreover, the Association started providing Presidents with a title, so a duke, a viscount, two lords and two knights, symbols of the importance that the Royal Warrant had acquired.

The two main concept introduced in the Association representing the turning points of the twentieth century had been the diversity and the increasing number of large companies. Starting from the reigns of George V (1910-1936) and Edward VIII (1936), the coexistence of merchants of simple and common products from London and traders of exotic and elegant goods from all over the worlds, began to be normal and usual, as it was in the market outside the Court. Related to this, the introduction of important national and international companies inside the Royal Warrant Association[117].

Even if the Association still remained a middle way between business and pleasure with numerous banquets and luncheons, the main and most relevant actIvity at the beginning of the twenties century was 'Policing the Warrant"[118]. Unfortunately, the Merchandise Marks Act and the Trades Marks Act, mentioned before, were not effective and did not solve the problem of abusing of Royal Coats of Arms. In 1905, the Secretary of the Association, Samuel Holman, reported to the Select Committee on Trade Marks that 213 cases of improper use of the Coats of Arms had been detected, but they had great difficulty in the process of identification and suppression of all the infringements[119]. The process was time expensive because, every time a violation was drawn to the attention of the Association, the Secretary started with writing an official warning note to the offending party. Then, if the letter was not sufficient, the Association went to Court and had to demonstrate that the company was deliberately trying to convince its clients to possess a grant[120].

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[116] *Ibidem*
[117] *Ivi*, p.44
[118] *Ibidem*
[119] *Ivi*, p.25
[120] *Ibidem*

The number of cases of abuse rapidly increased with 300 violation in 1907 and 400 the following year, a demonstration to the inappropriateness of the existing legislation. A big issue was the non-autonomy of the Association that could not exercise proper control within its own house. Moreover, at that time there was not a way of having an overall control of all the Warrants granted. Grantees were not forced to enter in the Association and, even if the Lord Chamberlain used to publish a list in the *Gazette*[121], this did not contain all the Warrant Holders and there was not a way to control who the others were[122].

Other few questions worried the Association's Secretary, Algernon Graves, in 1910 during the first year of King George V reign[123]. Firstly, the habit of the Royal Family of granting Verbal Warrants, that worsened the already reduced ability of controlling the Warrants.

Secondly, Graves was concerned about the Way of Advertising the Warrants[124]. In 1905, the Trades Mark Act had tried to warn merchants about the improper and unauthorised use of the Royal Coat of Arms, with very few results because there was no regulations explaining what the usage of Royal Coats meant and therefore, traders could find proper excuses, pretending they did not use Royal Coats to convince buyers they possessed a Warrant. With the Merchandise Marks Act in 1907 the Association saw another failure in trying to manage the improper use of Royal Warrants[125].

Few other attempts were made to solve the problem with no results, except from a positive outcome given by the Companies Act of 1929[126], which forbid the registration of companies with the words 'Royal' or 'Imperial' included in the name, as they could suggest the patronage of a member of the Royal Family.

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[121] One of the official journals of record of the British government
[122] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 46
[123] *Ibidem*
[124] *Ibidem*
[125] *Ivi*, p.48
[126] *Ibidem*

Despite the laws were not effectively supporting the control of violations, the Association never stopped monitoring the constant abuse of the Royal Arms because, in addition to the protection they gave to the Royal Family, they also defended their own rights and privileges.

The problem was widening even more abroad, because the use of Royal Coat of Arms was getting more diffused but it was not possible to control from London. Therefore, starting from 1920 the Council of the Association began reporting to the Board of Trade the case of abuse outside England, that in turn asked for an official action in the Country concerned[127].

Foreign abuse was observed not only in the English Empire, but cases were detected even in Uruguay, Japan, Egypt, Peru and others Countries[128]. The Council was suggesting the need for further more surveillance, as demonstrated in the report of the Association in 1936 saying that "a growing tendency in foreign countries to obtain the advantage of British prestige by embodying in such registrations British Royal Emblems or references to British Royal Patronage"[129].

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Royal Warrant Holders Association spent the majority of its time and forces to protect and policing the Warrant. As it happens in modern times with several laws protecting companies' and brands' identity all over the world, also avoiding the improper use of the Royal Coats meant for the grantees, protecting their reputation and identity, that were based on the concepts of prestige and high quality confirmed from the Royal Family.

Despite the great effort spent policing the Warrant, the Association continued focusing also in the social activities which remained important for the members. Beyond the organisation of the prestigious annual banquet, the Association undertook also some special projects. In 1935, for example, to

[127] *Ivi*, p.49
[128] *Ivi*, p.50
[129] *Ibidem*

celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of King George V, the Association decided tribute him with the construction of the "King's House"[130], which should have been a residence available to the King for any person he thought worthy. The building of the structure was for the Royal Warrants a way to demonstrate their strong ability and the excellence of their products, as, naturally, all the services and materials would have been supplied by Royal Warrant Holders. After few proposals, the approved site was in Burhill, Surrey. The House should have been officially presented during the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1935, to demonstrate to all the population the capabilities of Royal Warrant Holders, but it was completed only after King George's death and was directly delivered to King Edward VIII[131].

After a period of brightness for the United Kingdom and consequently for the Royal Warrant Holders Association, the period of the Second World War represents a moment of break and difficulties. In particular, the office of the Association was moved outside London, in Buckinghamshire[132]. The Secretary and the Council continued to carry out the main tasks, to reduce the complexities that the War could cause, pausing special projects and new developments and focusing on the fundamental activities, waiting for the arrival of better times.

In 1947, the Royal Warrant Holders Association moved back to London, installing in a new office at 7 Buckingham Gate. The organisation was unreformed, and the new office represented the prestige and elegance of the Association.

In 1950, Princess Elizabeth moved with his husband the Duke of Edinburgh to Clarence House and began to grant for the first time her own

[130] *Ivi*, p.53
[131] *Ivi*, p.55
[132] *Ivi*, p.57

Warrants[133], causing a great increase of the number of Holders and, consequently, of the work of the Association.

The fifties and sixties, represented quite important years for the Association. The Council continued managing cases of misuse of the Royal Coat of Arms, trying to become more efficient also abroad. The Royal Family became wider and in 1956 also His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh became a Grantor, producing a great list of Warrants which was not approved by all the population[134].

An important achievement for the Association was in 1967, when Queen Elizabeth accepted the invitation to join the members at the special event organized at the Guildhall to honour the 60th anniversary of its Royal Charter Incorporation: for the first time a reigning Monarch attended an Association's event.

During the presidency of Sam Twining of Twinings Tea, the oldest tea firm in the world and one of the oldest Warrant on record, in 1972, another important accomplishment was settle. To commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Queen's wedding, it was decided to establish a "Joint Silver Anniversary Trust", providing money to build retirement homes for former royal servants. The land where to construct the houses was donated by the Queen and they were consigned from the Association in 1974[135].

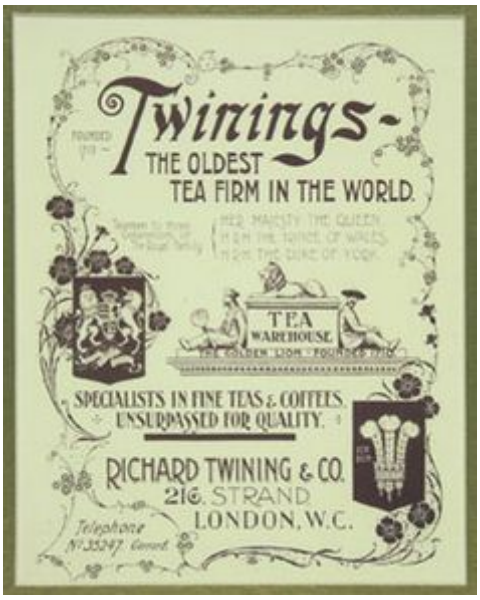

***Fig. 10*** *Twining's advertisement in 1913*

These decades were the confirmation of the relevance the Association had gained and of the influence of the Royal Warrant in the consumer choices as

[133] *Ivi*, p.59
[134] *Ivi*, p.61
[135] *Ivi*, p.64

more and more large national and international firms applied for a Warrant and the Association continued to grow larger.

### 2.3.1 The 150th Anniversary of the Royal Warrant Holders Association and the foundation of The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust

The seventies ended with the appointment of Hugh Faulkner as Secretary of the Association in 1979. Two were the main issues of that period: the financial situation, which was not very brilliant, and the lack of contact between the board and the members of the Association.

Faulkner started working on the second problem, changing the traditional scheduling of the Secretary's week because he felt that "a day at the office was a day wasted"[136], whereas it was fundamental to get to know the members and understand the basis of their business. Therefore the Secretary began visiting the firms of the Warrant Holders, with a positive response from the members and also from the other local Associations in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, which Faulkner was always keen to meet.

The atmosphere of the Association was being adapted to the modern era, starting from the banquets. The Association focused on organizing three annual social events, to which wives began to be invited. The Sandringham Warrant Holders formed, for the first time, their own Association, symbol of the development of the Royal Warrant Holders.

A demonstration of the modernisation of the Association occurred with the presidency of John Riddell-Webster during the organisation of the commemoration for The Queen Mother's eightieth birthday. The Association raised £86,000[137], as for other occasions to be honoured. For the first time, the money was not invested in a gift for the Royal Family itself, but to install a hydrotherapy pool in the King Edward VII Hospital for Officers in London. Even

[136] *Ivi*, p. 68
[137] *Ivi*, p.69

if the hospital was a privately funded institution reserved for officers and their relatives, this represented a delicate shift in the charitable enterprises of the Warrant Holders' and of the Association as well.

Starting from this first step, the philosophy of the Association changed and became more and more focused on helping those people who needed it the most, not only honouring the Royal Family.

In 1990, two essential anniversaries had to be celebrated: the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Association and The Queen Mother's ninetieth birthday[138]. Many people were involved to propose and examine different projects, to make sure to properly commemorate the anniversaries. Few offers arrived to the Council, including that of Hugh Faulkner, the Secretary of the Association. His proposal was to establish a fund, managed by the Association, and to gather money for a brand-new scholarship scheme. In spite of some disagreements, the idea was approved and in 1990, "The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Fund" was established. It was agreed that, one-third of the money raised would have been given to the charity that The Queen's Mother chose, and the other two-thirds would have established the new Trust[139]. Notwithstanding this agreement, The Queen Mother decided to give her third to the Trust as well.

The Association raised more money than expected. With the plan of delivering the first awards at the Association's annual luncheon in June 1991, by autumn of 1990 the money had risen to more than £700,000, meaning the possibility of gIving six scholarships of £42,000[140].

Apart from the Scholarships, other plans had to be organised for the celebrations, entrusted to a special Committee, which was appointed in 1987 and continued meeting until the official event.

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[138] *Ivi*, p.72
[139] *Ivi*, p.73
[140] *Ibidem*

The 150th Anniversary of the Royal Warrant Holders Association's foundation was celebrated also with a commemorative book, celebrating the hundreds of different Tradesmen who held the Royal Warrant, a rose and a plate.

***Fig. 11*** *"By Appointment" roses*

Some members of the Council, together with their wives, visiting the Harkness Rose Gardens[141] in 1988, chose "an elegant apricot coloured floribunda" which was named "By Appointment" as the book. A bouquet of "By Appointment" roses was donated by the President of the Association to The Queen at the Chelsea Flower Show[142].

The third element of commemoration was the anniversary plate. Designed by Royal Doulton, only 1000 limited edition plates have been produced, with the Royal Coat of Arms in the centre and drawings representing various crafts of the Warrant Holders in the rim.


***Fig. 12*** *Royal Warrant Holders Association 150th anniversary plate*

In addition to these symbols, the anniversary was celebrated with numerous events, above all at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party on the 17th July 1990. The Queen invited a sample of Warrant Holders to participate to the banquets with some representatives of their team with the spouses, in order to represent the company in their whole. Since the 1930s, when the Prince of Wales had participated to the annual banquets, no other members of the Royal

[141] Garden Center in Hitchin
[142] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 74

Family attended one of the Association's events[143], reason why this occasion was even more important and appreciated from the members.

Despite the numerous and sumptuous events and souvenirs prepared for the celebration of the 150th anniversary, the main achievement that represented the evolution of the Association was the foundation of The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, symbol of the new identity and focus of the Royal Warrant Holders.

Another evolution in an other side of the Warrant occurred in 1990. On the 8th November, The Prince of Wales undersigned "Business in the Environment", an organisation part of "Business in the Community", of which The Prince was the President. The point was convincing the owners of firms to be committed to the environmental cause and act as responsible citizens. In particular, concerning the Royal Warrant he asked to "all future applicants for my own particular Royal Warrant to meet various environmental criteria, in addition to other requirements"[144]. This modern commitment of the Royal Family to environmental practices transformed the Royal Warrant which became also a declaration of environmental intent, boosting the importance of being a Warrant Holder in modern ages.

Since 1990, firms had to develop an environmental policy appropriate for their own activities. Moreover, they had to draft an "Annual Environmental Report", which had to be part of the company's report but also had to be delivered to The Prince's Private Secretary[145], who had the role to check the effective behaviour of the company.

The Prince of Wales confirmed the relevance he gave to the Association by attending to the annual banquet in 1993, when The Queen Elizabeth Scholarships were officially presented and awarded[146].

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[143] *Ivi*, p. 76
[144] Business in the Environment, 1990
[145] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 78
[146] *Ibidem*

The crowning moment of the process of modernisation of the 1990s occurred with the election of Margaret Barbour, the chairman of J. Barbour & Son, as President of the Association in 1995[147]. Margaret was the first lady President representing the final shift from a Gentlemen's Club, as the Association was born, to a modern and open-minded organisation focused on new purposes, coherent with the outside context.

## 2.4 The 21st century: The Way Ahead Committee and the analysis of the Royal Warrant Holders Association's Identity

The retirement of Hugh Faulkner as Secretary, in 1996, marked another step of modernisation inside the Association. For the first time, the new Secretary was chosen on the basis of a research conducted by a professional head hunting agency according to scientific principles, instead of the previous habit of intuition and networking techniques used by the Council[148].

Moreover, Christopher Pickup, the new Secretary, belonged to a brand-new and modern generation of serviceman, raised in the technological age. Consequently, he renovated the job of the Secretary, no more focusing on the visits to the members, but establishing the contact thanks to the new technologies, with a modernisation in the Association's organisation.

Since the foundation of the Royal Warrant Holders Association the changes and the evolution inside the organisation had been significant. A crucial issue, which emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, was the need to take stock and examine the actual identity and aim of the Association, in order to recapitulate what the Royal Warrant Holders Association was in 2000[149], for the benefit of the external people who wanted to understand more of it, the members and also the new companies that wanted to enter.

The "Way Ahead Committee" was established, chaired by Victor Watson and composed by other four members, who were already Warrant Holders. The first

[147] *Ivi*, p.79
[148] *Ivi*, p.81
[149] *Ivi*, p.83

analysis they were asked to do was to answer to the crucial question: in 2000, was the Royal Warrant Holders Association mainly a club focusing on its social function or more a trade association working to safeguard the interest and the rights of its members[150]? The changes since the establishment of the Association, which at the beginning, as already mentioned, was mainly focused on social events and banquets, until the modern adaptation of it to the political, cultural and social context, made the analysis complicated, but crucial to define the new identity.

The Committee concluded the analysis of the dilemma with a final definition of the Association as both a social club and a trade organisation, with a special emphasis on the second point. The core point remained the same that was at the time of the 1907 charter, but the scope of the definition was broadened and the basic aim of the Association was defined as follows: *"to unite in one body all those who hold a Royal Warrant of Appointment: to serve the members of that body by promoting and when necessary protecting their interests to the best of its ability, subject always to the maintenance of the highest standards of craftsmanship and service"*[151].

To achieve the newly defined aim, the Way Ahead Committee set five main objectives. Firstly, to continuously ensure that people recognize the Warrant as a "treasured and respected institution"[152], and assist the Lord Chamberlain, who was committed in the process of safeguarding the reputation of the Warrant. The Association should always be the link between the Royal Household and the members and should represent the holders and the Warrant to the media and the world outside of the Court. Finally, it had to stimulate the training of new craftsmen and encouraging the learning of new skills, through the management of The Queen Elizabeth Trust[153].

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[150] *Ivi*, p.84
[151] R. Jobson, Queen & Commonwealth: 90 Glorious Years, London, The Royal Commonwealth Society, 2016, p.130
[152] Heald, A Peerage for Trade, cit, p. 84
[153] *Ibidem*

It is not possible to scientifically demonstrate the commercial value of holding a Royal Warrant, but there is no doubt that it is conceived as a help to trade, particularly in the export market[154]. The 2001 President of the Association confirmed how "holding a Warrant governs the whole way in which you do business"[155], as the most rigorous standards are imposed, resulting to be a guarantee of superior quality. Consequently, the influence of the Warrant in the identity of a brand is obvious.

One of the objects of the Way Ahead Committee was related to the identity of the Royal Warrant itself, as it wished to "project a public image which both supports and reflects the character of its member firms, namely: excellence, quality, reliability and discretion"[156]. This meant that the Warrant did not serve anymore only like a certificate of quality, but wanted to implement the guarantee of the excellence with the conception of the possession of the Warrant as a brand that creates a direct idea in the consumer mind of superiority of the superiority of the product or service, helping the decision-making process.

To assure and maintain the image and the importance of the Warrant, it had to be policed even more, and with a broadened control the cases of transgression diminished greatly compared with the early twentieth century[157].

The Association serves more and more also as an advisor for the members, to assist them in the subjects related to the communication of the Warrant. Members were allowed to display the Royal Coat of Arm in their offices but, in modern times, also the disposal in the packaging was more relevant. Therefore, the board of the Association helped members to respect the rules of publishing the Coat of Arms, to avoid misunderstandings and improve the communication to the customers.

The changes in the process of modernisation of the Royal Warrant have been numerous and significant, but always with the essential function of representing

[154] *Ivi*, p.88
[155] *Ivi*, p.93
[156] *Ibidem*
[157] *Ivi*, p.95

the Crown at its basis. Starting from being a patent issued to English Tradesmen, the Warrant represents today a proper communication tool to demonstrate how the quality of a brand is approved by the Royal Family, with the overall demonstration of the excellence of the product but also the environmental sustainability of the company itself.

Possessing a Warrant today does not only mean being an official supplier of the Royal Family, but is a symbol of being part of a selected group of companies, belonging to a particular brand, that of the Royal Warrant Holders Association.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY AS A CORPORATE BRAND WITH A HERITAGE

## 3.1 Monarchies as corporate brands

Monarchy is and has always been a worldwide spread phenomenon, with public interest and curiosity not only inside national borders where they are present, but from people all around the world which are fascinated by monarchs and monarchy[158].

A Crown is a symbol for the nation, representing the monarchy, and as a symbol it can be seen as a corporate brand, with different characteristics corresponding to those of great global brands.

Corporate brands nowadays represent an important profile builder for organisations and a fundamental navigational tool for a variety of stakeholders[159].

A key attribute often used to identify corporate brands is longevity, as it is easily identifiable in global brands such as Coca Cola, Ford and Johnson & Johnson, that have been present in markets for decades. Exactly this attribute helps demonstrating that there have been impressive corporate brand institutions long before global brands have been recognised as corporate brands, that is monarchies[160]. As a matter of fact, even if not established as corporations, monarchies can be analysed as brand-like institutions, with some crowns existing for over one thousand years, such as Japan and Sweden, presenting a demonstration of how longevity can be an effective characteristic of corporate brands.

[158] J. M. T. Balmer, S. A. Greyser, M. Urde, "Monarchies as corporate brands", Harvard Business School, Working Paper Series 05-002, 2004, p.6
[159] *Ivi*, p.4
[160] *Ivi*, p. 5

To explore the peculiarities of the monarchy as a corporate brand, in the first place it is necessary to define the concept of corporate brands with its main characteristics.

### 3.1.1 A definition of corporate brands

The importance of corporate brands in the business environment of the twenty-first century is irrefutable, as they influence daily stakeholders decisions[161].

However, the notion of "corporate brands" emerged around the early 20th century, when branding and communication advisors started assessing and focusing on the concept of "company brands". The leading difference recognised between a product and a company brand was that the latter required a multidisciplinary approach[162], as the responsibility of the brand image and management resided in the organisation's chief executive, with a vital role played by the human resources department[163].

After the first attempts to define company brands, in 1995 branding consultants widened the concept recognising a deeper and more strategic-sounding label: the "corporate brand".[164] The higher level of definition represented the complexity of the field, as brands are not limited to the overall organisation. Instead, there is a variety of different corporate entities possessing brands, such as corporations and group of companies, but also countries, regions and cities, as particular but existent type of brands.

The importance of the CEO and of staff in general was even more emphasised in corporate brands than in company brands, as the culture of the brand was at the basis to build a reputation. The chief executive was finally

[161] J. M. T. Balmer, E. R. Gray, "Corporate brands: what are they? What of them?", European Journal of Marketing, 37 (2003), 7-8, p. 972
[162] S. King, "Brand building in the 1990s", Journal of Marketing Management, 7 (1991), 1
[163] Balmer, Gray, *Corporate brands: what are they? What of them?,* cit., p.974
[164] *Ivi*, p.975

recognised as brand manager, with a multidisciplinary approach seen as essential.[165]

The definition of the concept of corporate brands represent an evolution in the branding and communication literature and also in the brand management system, with the creation of new opportunities and new challenges to be taken.

Indeed, when acknowledging the existence of corporate brands, it must be recognised that first of all corporate brands are different from product brands, because of the type of management and of their different scopes; furthermore product brands have a customer instead of the multi-stakeholders orientation of corporate brands; finally the traditional marketing framework is not adequate for the new type of brand and therefore need to be modified[166].

To give a detailed definition of what corporate brands are, there are five characteristics[167] which have been recognised by literature and develop the concept and highlight its uniqueness.

1. *Cultural*: corporate brands have strong "cultural roots". One of the sources of the organisation's distinctiveness resides in the important mix of subcultures present in this kind of brands, which can be of different types such as corporate, national, professional or other sorts of cultures.
2. *Intricate*: in its nature as the brand has an impact to many stakeholder groups and methods, because of its multidisciplinary approach and of its multiple channels of communications.
3. *Tangible*: corporate brands include different tangible factors such as product or service quality, architecture, logos, business scope, profit margins, etc.

[165] *Ibidem*
[166] *Ivi*, p.976
[167] *Ivi*, p.977

4. *Ethereal*: beyond tangible aspects, corporate brands also encompass elements such as "lifestyle" or "style of delivery" and brand associations, which often provide emotional responses that are intangible.
5. *Commitment*: corporate brands require commitment from all personnel. Senior management needs to provide sufficient resources and communication support, but also the different stakeholder groups have to demonstrate constant commitment.

Even though the peculiarity of the characteristics identified as a pillar for corporate brands, they are sometimes seen to be analogous to product brands. However there are crucial differences, illustrated in Table 1[168].

From the marketing perspective, the traditional focus on external environment, controlled branding, communication and image research, was intended for a product-level strategy, but no more effective for a corporate-level concern, reason why scholars began to define the main differences where to focus to improve the management of corporate brands[169].

The key difference resides in the brand values. Corporate brand values are grounded "in the values and affinities of company founders, owners, management and personnel"[170]. On the contrary, product brand values are usually unnatural and planned around the product itself by marketing and advertising specialists.

[168] *Ivi*, p.978
[169] J. M. T. Balmer, "Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing - Seeing through the fog", European Journal of Marketing, 35 (2001), 3-4, pp.281
[170] Balmer, Gray, Corporate brands: what are they? What of them?, cit., p.979

| | Product brands | Corporate brands |
|---|---|---|
| Management responsibility | Brand manager | Chief executive |
| Functional responsibility | Marketing | Most/all departments |
| General responsibility | Marketing personnel | All personnel |
| Disciplinary roots | Marketing | Multidisciplinary |
| Brand gestation | Short | Medium to long |
| Stakeholder focus | Consumers | Multiple stakeholders |
| Values | Contrived | Real |
| Communications channels | The marketing communications mix | Total corporate communciations<br>Primary: performance of products and services; organisational policies; behaviour of CEO and senior management; experience of personnel and discourse by personnel<br>Secondary: marketing and other forms of controlled communication<br>Tertiary: word of mouth |
| Dimensions requiring alignment | Brand values (covenant)<br>Product performance | Brand values (covenant)<br>Identity (corporate attributes/sub cultures)<br>Corporate strategy<br>Vision (as held by the CEO and senior management) |
| | Communication<br>Experience/image and reputation<br>Consumer commitment | Communication<br>Experience/image and reputation<br>Stakeholders commitment (internal and external constituencies) |
| | Environment (political, economic, ethical, social, technological) | Environment (political, economic, ethical, social, technological) |

***Table 1**. A comparison between product and corporate brands*
***Source**: Balmer, Gray (2003)*

The role of the employees represents another essential difference among brands. If product brands have their main focus on product characteristics, corporate brands invest in teaching their personnel how to transmit brand's values and become the "heart of the corporate branding process"[171]. Employees become brand ambassadors and act as the connection between the internal and

[171] *Ibidem*

the external environments, gIving to the recruitment of personnel and to the human resources a fundamental role inside the organisation.

A third main difference is related to the concern of the management of the brand. When product brand management responsibility resides mainly on the marketing department within the brand manager figure, for corporate brands it is clearly a senior management concern, on the top with the responsibility given to the chief executive[172]. Therefore, corporate brands are now considered by the managers while drafting strategic plan, in order to catch consumer interest and consequently boosting economic benefit.

As the main goal of corporate brands is transmitting and sharing values to stakeholders, at the core of the brand strategy there is an explicit covenant between the organisation itself and its stakeholders group[173]. This covenant has the function of a "promise" made by the organisation, in order to explain to consumers and other stakeholders what are the values represented by the brand and will be the main focus on the chosen strategy. This function as a warranty, and it is often described with a three-to-five-word phrase capturing the brand functions and essence of the brand positioning with an emotional sprit[174]. Some examples include the famous "fun, family, entertainment" of Disney, "authentic athletic performance" of Nike and "ultimate driving machine" of BMW[175].

The corporate brand covenant has to be promoted through different channels of communication and through staff behaviour, in addition of being discovered and experienced in products and services. It may be compared to a contract agreed from the organisation, that has to demonstrate over time it is

[172] *Ivi*, p.980
[173] *Ivi*, p.982
[174] K.L. Keller, "Brand Mantras: Rationale, Criteria and Examples", *Journal of Marketing Management,* 15 (1999) , 1-3, pp. 43-51
[175] New Kind, "Kevin Keller's five favorite classic brand mantras" http://newkind.com/kevin-kellers-five-favorite-classic-brand-mantras/, consultation date 28th December 2017

keeping true to its corporate branding promises. Brand name and logo are usually exploited to create awareness and to assure consumers[176].

As impacting in the strategic management of the organisation, it is fundamental that the corporate brand covenant, recognised as a distinct identity type, aligns with the other five identity types, namely actual, communicated, conceived, ideal and desired[177].

The increased importance obtained by corporate brands and their management, resulted also in new developments related to corporate brands architecture[178]. To answer to the needs born because of the new complex relationships among and between product, company and corporate brands, new branding categories have emerged. A greatly extended branded architecture has been established to manage the more intricate and complex challenges, with the identification of six new categories[179] as follows:

1. *Familial:* when two entities within the same sector share the same corporate brand, sometimes with a geographical distinction;
2. *Shared:* as the previous but with the difference that the entities operate in different or related markets, with usually no geographical distinction;
3. *Surrogate:* when products or services of a single organisation are branded as that of another with the form of a franchising.
4. *Supra:* a brand used to supra endorse different other company brands, to exploit "virtual" qualities;
5. *Multiplex:* a corporate brand with multiple uses and multiple ownerships among different entities in a variety of different markets;

[176] Balmer, Gray, Corporate brands: what are they? What of them?, cit., p.982
[177] *Ibidem*
[178] *Ivi*, p.983
[179] *Ivi*, p.984

6. *Federal:* when a new identity is created thanks to the joint venture of more companies, creating a new corporate brand to exploit the different resources.

After having defined the increasing importance of corporate brands through their main characteristics, a further demonstration of their long-lasting value is given by their accomplishment to the resource-based view of the corporation[180]. This theory, as analysed in details in paragraph 3.2.2, explains how firms possesses heterogeneous resources and capabilities, which can be better exploited for a superior performance if the meet specific criteria. Namely the resource has be rare, durable, inappropriable, imperfectly imitable and imperfectly substitutable to meet the criteria. According to this theory, a corporate brand meets all the criteria, providing a sustainable value[181].

Summarising the characteristics and the functions of corporate brand, we can easily notice and demonstrate how it is not only an outstanding element developing by itself, but it is part of a wider phenomenon together with the concepts of corporate reputation and image, corporate communications and corporate identity[182], widely diffused in the 21st century.

### 3.1.2 The management of monarchies as corporate brands

After having described above the concept of corporate brands, it is now demonstrable how the Crown may be conceived as a corporate brand, first of all because possessing the following characteristics[183]:

1. Monarchy is a trademark because the Crown is commonly and easily recognised from stakeholders as a mark of quality and sovereignty, a powerful visual symbol for products and services.
2. The management of the Crown requires a number of indIvidual as happens to all corporate brands. Even if there is an indIvidual

[180] *Ivi*, p.983
[181] *Ibidem*
[182] *Ivi*, p.993
[183] Balmer, Greyser, Urde, cit., p.8

monarch personifying the Crown, numerous people are required and involved.

3. Additionally, the brand is not associated with a single monarch, but with the institution itself, as when a king or a queen pass away, the organisation continues working, similarly to a company.
4. Connected to previous characteristic, the monarchy is an institutional brand, as different crowns (for example British and Spanish) produce different expectations on people and specific characteristics of that particular institution, depending on the cultural, social and historical context. Therefore, the structure of the brands is identical but they produce different facets, as happens to all corporate brands.
5. Another similarity to a corporate brand is that a monarchy has to meet the demands of various stakeholder groups.
6. As mentioned before, usually corporate brands have a covenant, that is a tag line to describe the core of the brand itself. In the same way monarchies present mottos, different for all the Crowns, which describe the promise of the monarch to his people. As an example the Swedish motto of King Carl XVI Gustaf "For Sweden – With the times".
7. Moreover, as all other organisations, Crowns use visual and verbal endorsement to gain prestige. One of the most common and diffuse visual and symbolic support is the granting of a Royal Warrant, as described in Chapter 1, so the use of the Royal Coat of Arms as a warranty to the quality of the product or service. In addition, a verbal form of endorsement is the use of the prefix Royal to highlight the connection of the product with the Crown, such as Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Royal Dutch Airline, and the granting of Royal Charters to institutions such as Universities.
8. Finally, as all type of organisations, the Crown has an important final value to be managed and preserved.

In summary, there are multiple characteristics and features that prove how the monarchy can be perceived as a firm, with a unique capability of originating public emotions, that constantly surround the Crown and the "brand heritage" of the monarchy[184].

As monarchy evolved in order to adapt to new epochs and context, there are now different monarchical types, which have to be described to better

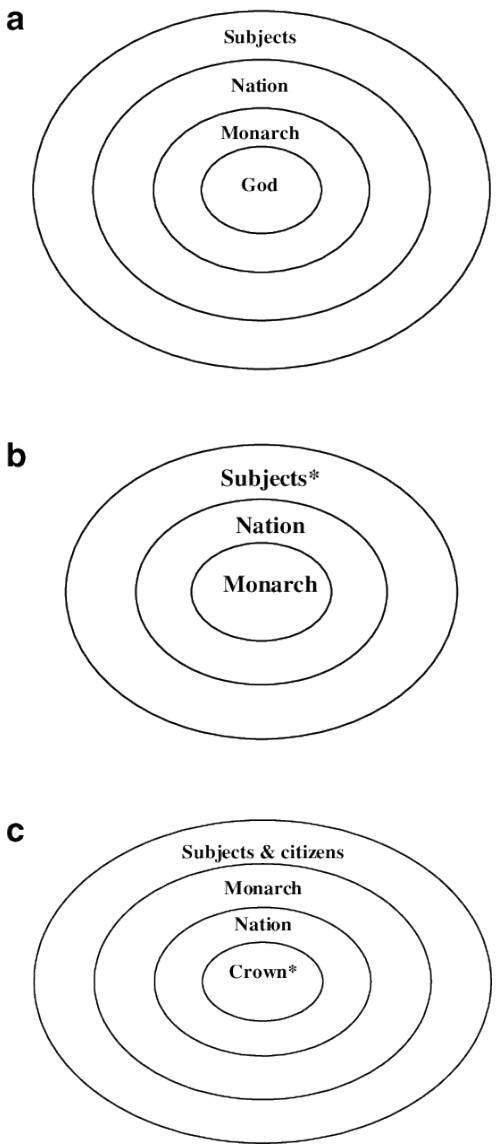


***Figure 13***. *The three stages of the monarchy's evolution.*

*a) Divine*

*b) Dynastic*

*Parliaments as representatives of people

*c) Symbolic*

*The Crown at the centre because of the permission of people through Parliaments

[184] *Ivi*, p.9

comprehend the different facets of various monarchies. In particular, three different evolutionary stages have been delineated by analysing the western tradition of monarchy. They underline the changes that occurred in the relationships among the Crown, the monarch, the nation and the people[185].

The main stages are represented by the three main circles in figure 13, named as DIvine, Dynastic and Symbolic, which describe the metamorphosis from the Crown as an institution where monarchs derived all their power from God to a modern organisation where monarchs' authority is defined by a constitution, or rather by the population's delegates, the Members of Parliament[186].

Each stage is defined as follows:

I. *Divine*: represented by figure a, is the oldest type of Monarchy, where dynastic monarchies are legitimised only by the Catholic Church, which symbol stands on the apex of the crown. The service of a king or a queen starts with the coronation ritual, when the monarch swears to be at God's service and is anointed with Holy Oils by a spiritual authority. After the ceremony, the monarch have absolute power. An example of an actual divine monarchy is the British Crown, whose motto captures the religious sprit: "Dieu et Mon Droit" ("God and My Right")[187].

II. *Dynastic*: starting from the 15th century, the temporal succession of monarchs began to achieve more importance than the spiritual rights. As shown in figure b, the individual power of the dynasty and therefore the Monarch, stands at the centre of the institution, with Parliaments emerging as representatives of the subjects. The motto of Emperor Frederick III of the former Austro-Hungarian

[185] *Ivi*, p.10
[186] *Ibidem*
[187] *Ibidem*

Empire sustains this stage: "Austria Est Imperare Orbe Universo" ("All the earth is subject to Austria")[188].

III. *Symbolic*: during the period following the First World War, lasting monarchies reduced their powers, enforcing the role of symbol of state, nation and culture, with less political roles. With the new evolutionary kind of monarchy, the "constitutional monarchy", the idea is that the power resides on people and no more on the monarch himself, as the population elects the parliament that through a constitutions establishes the Crowns rights[189]. As a result, "the monarch reigns but does not rule"[190] but the institution of the Crown is fundament for the nation to exist and differentiate from republics.

The relevance of each institution has changed across the different stages, with the strengthen of the power of people through parliaments. Still, the "Crown" as an institution has remained a focal point to the establishment of constitutional monarchies, because of the idea and the value that this represents and transmits to people, as a corporate brand does[191].

Communication plays a key role for the Crown, as it does for the majority of corporate brands[192]. The Royal Family needs to gain public support, by conquering people's trust and respect through daily behaviour and a communication strategy.

The interest of the image of the Crown is, in the modern age, of great interest in many countries, not only inside national borders. This also thanks to mass media and modern forms of communication, that enable brand awareness to increase in a worldwide market[193].

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[188] *Ivi*, p.11
[189] *Ibidem*
[190] *Ibidem*
[191] *Ivi*, p.13
[192] *Ivi*, p.22
[193] *Ibidem*

Media interest in royals is at the same type a powerful communicating tool as a treat for the Crown. In fact, media attention serves the monarchy to communicate its values and identity, but is also focused on the indIviduals, looking for rumours, news and scandals to gain attention. This is an important part of the communication strategy that has to be managed by the Royal Family, in order to cover possible outrages and make sure to pass the right messages to people[194].

In any case media attention is fundamental for modern monarchies, as "*the Royal Family is dependent on media. How long would the modern monarchy survive without media interest? How could some modern media exist without personalities as Royals?*" (Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg)[195]. Consequently, this two-edged sword needs to be handled with caution from the Crown, to create a positive media presence (visibility) with a correct presentation (content)[196].

Despite of this, communicating on behalf of the Crown differs from ordinary communicative vehicles used for corporate advertising and public relations, as building and safeguarding the monarchy as a brand include major challenges[197]. The first advertising tool exploited is gaining free media coverage, above all through royal events. This gives the opportunity to reach significant national and international attention, and is compared to a common advertising campaign, with the difference that no costs are charged.

One of the major challenge for the Royal Families while communicating their values, is to right balance between transparency and uniqueness[198]. People are attracted by monarchies because of the magic and exclusive symbols that it represents precisely because it is a world characterised by dreams and secrets, therefore a veil of mystery must last. At the same time, Monarchs have to attract people making them curious about their lives, by disseminating some episodes

[194] *Ivi*, p.23
[195] *Ibidem*
[196] *Ibidem*
[197] *Ibidem*
[198] *Ivi*, p.24

and curiosities of their everyday life, always remaining politically neutral. Managing the balance is essential, reason why each single communication needs to be planned and perfected and setting the agenda is a crucial issue[199]. As it happens while scheduling the activities for a chief executive, managing the agenda of the Royal Family is for the monarch and the managers at the Court is a complex daily activity, as it affects the image of the Crown[200]. The selection of events, ceremonies, speech venues and also the right words to use depending on the audience, the time and the situation is always made with the aim of achieving the fixed communicative goals of presence (visibility) and presentation (content) avoiding traditional advertising[201].

So if the Court's role is compared to corporate brand management, accountability and communicating core values, that of the monarch is to act as a "brand custodian", who has to safeguard the continuity of the Crown[202]. Managing the symbols of the Crown is an important part of the corporate brand management, as they are fundamental manifestation of the monarchy's value and image and therefore brand identity[203].

Differently from other brands, there are two additional actions that the Crown can undertaken to increase brand value: business development and endorsement through royal warrants[204].

As explained in chapter 2, the granting of royal warrants is a long term tradition for most of the monarchies. Even if this has always been defined as a support for trade and industry, it is also part of the brand-building strategy. For brands, possessing a warrant means demonstrating quality and safety as a member of the Royal Family uses that product or service, therefore increasing sales and profits. For this reason, many brands are willing to get a royal warrant

[199] *Ivi*, p.25
[200] *Ibidem*
[201] *Ibidem*
[202] *Ivi*, p.26
[203] *Ibidem*
[204] *Ivi*, p.28

to improve their businesses and the Court's management has to scrutinize and assure the issuance to preserve the identity of the Crown as a brand[205].

After the strategic and planning parts, the performance of each brand needs to be measured, to understand the points that issues, achievements and potentials. There are no financial measures to assess monarchies' performance, beyond the Crown's symbolic dimensions which are quantifiable but cannot be subjected to an economic translation[206]. Therefore it is necessary to measure corporate image and reputation, translated in public approval and support[207]. The assessment of awareness and familiarity, favourability and support to the Crown is relevant for the components of the royal family to have the possibility of improving and working to communicate the better image of their brand.

The monarchy, as an institution, is therefore very similar to a corporate brand. The management of the Crown requires strategies and attentions that are also needed while managing corporate brands with a heritage, with distinctive traits particularly in the forms of advertising and in the use of symbols.

## 3.2. The British Royal Family as a corporate brand

The British Monarchy is one of the most famous and attractive phenomenon, with an international profile and a great familiarity to the worldwide population[208].

Philip Kotler stated that *"Everything is a brand"* and "*a brand is any label that carries meaning and associations*"[209]. The British Crown absolutely demonstrates these characteristics in a global context.

[205] *Ivi*, p.29
[206] *Ivi*, p.30
[207] *Ibidem*
[208] J. M. T. Balmer , "Corporate brands, the British Monarchy, and the resource-based view of the firm", International studies of management and organisation, 37 (2007), p. 3
[209] P. Kotler, "Brands" in Marketing Insights From A to Z, New York, John Wiley, 2003, p. 8


***Figure 14**. The royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom.*

Presenting many branding credentials, the British Royal Family can be analysed through branding lens, to demonstrate how it can be treated as a corporate brand but also how it must be managed to maintain and assure its brand identity.

### 3.2.1. The British Monarchy's credential as a corporate brand

The British Monarchy is a global phenomenon with a temporal and geographic presence and a wide stakeholder base. For this reason it is similar to other kinds of contemporary organisations and the British Royal Family itself identifies it as "The Firm"[210].

Organisations are usually distinguished between those with a utilitarian role, with a functional aim, and those with a normative one, characterised by an emotional and symbolic purpose[211]. The British Crown presents a peculiar situation, as it is clear that it presents both roles, forming a dual identity: as head of state, government, judiciary and Church of England, the monarch as a clear utilitarian role; at the same time he plays an important normative role in transmitting his emotional, expressive and symbolic position to the British population, focus on the branding explanation of the Crown.

It is thanks to this second function of the Monarchy that it is often perceived as a key reference point in a changing world from indIvidual and societies, compared to a guiding star[212].

[210] Balmer, cit., p.8
[211] Ibidem
[212] *Ivi*, p.9

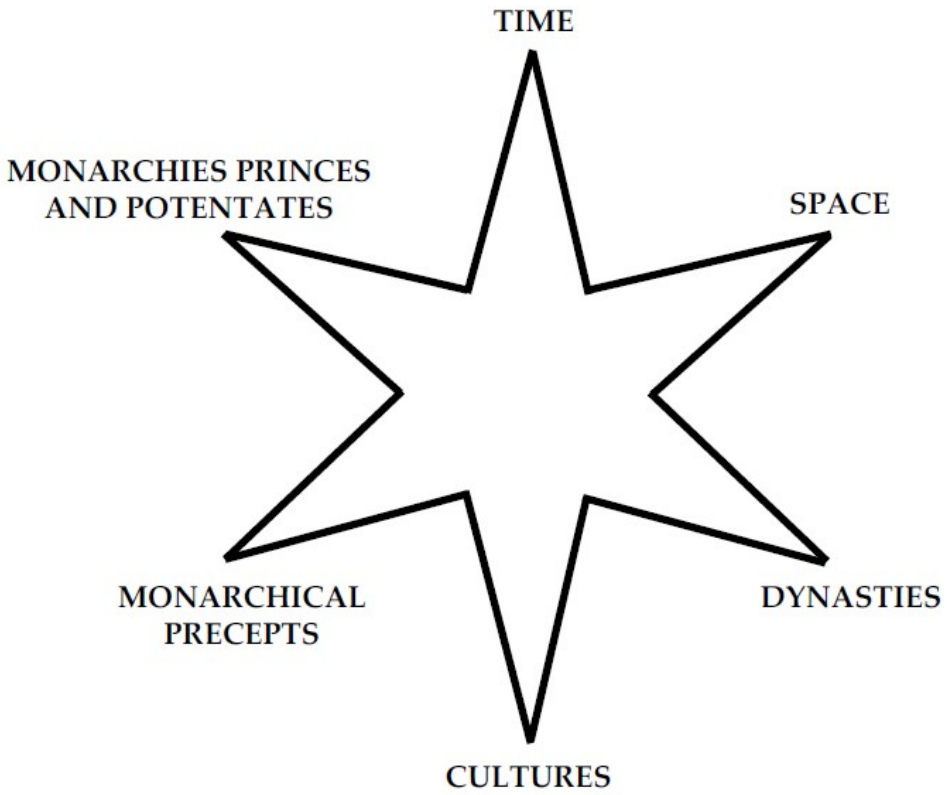


***Figure 15**. The significance of the Crown through a six-sided guiding star*

The value of monarchies can be depicted exactly by a six-sided star, as illustrate in figure 15, valid for the past, the present and the future as it transcend time, space, dynasties, cultures, precepts and individual monarchs and potentates[213], and which is effective for the British Monarchy as well.

- *Transcending time:* monarchies, as an organisational form, have been around for a long time and survived to different eras and political environments.
- *Transcending space:* the institution of monarchy is a global phenomenon[214], as 44 nations in the world have now a monarch as head of state[215], as examples: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Luxembourg, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Thailand.

[213] *Ibidem*
[214] *Ivi*, p.10
[215] Wikipedia, s.v. "Monarchy", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy#Current_monarchies, consultation date 02nd January 2018

- *Transcending dynasties:* the institution of the Crown does not depend on dynasties and monarchies, as it has remained the preferred constitutional form of many nations over time, as for example in England.
- *Transcending religious and cultures:* the fact that in Britain the monarch has also the role of head of the Church of England, does not exclude a constant adaptation to the religious and cultural environmental changes. Throughout the decades there have been various transformations in the Kingdom, never affecting the existence of the institution.
- *Transcending monarchical types:* as explained in paragraph 3.1.2, over time there have been different evolutions in the monarchical types, from the original divine stage when the powers are conferred directly through God, to the dynastic to the symbolic institution where the monarch is at the service of his population, that owns the power. Nevertheless, the change of monarchical types have never affected the choice of nations of maintaining the institution of the monarchy[216].

Having defined the important value of monarchies and in particular the English Crown, it is fundamental to analyse its branding credentials, in order to understand how to manage and treat it as a corporate brand.

In its legal nature, the Crown is often defined as a "corporation aggregate akin to a company"[217], therefore similar to a modern business corporation with comparable rights and duties. But the similarities do not stop at the legal level.

Six are the criterions generally used to verifying general branding credentials from scholars, and will below examined to confirm the British Monarchy brand references[218].

[216] Balmer, cit., p.11
[217] J. Alder, General Principles of Constitutional and Administrative Law, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p.291
[218] Balmer, cit., p.13

1) *Marks denoting ownership*: a brand is designated by a name, a logotype or a trademark, which denote ownership by an entity[219]. This criterion is met from the British Monarchy because of the deep use of the worldwide recognised icon of the Crown of St. Edward's.

2) *Image-building devices:* branding has been affiliate to corporate image building[220]. The British Crown has been capable of exploiting ceremonies and architecture to maintain its image and its mystique. Example are found in the Coronation ritual and in the majesty of the Royal Residences such as Windsor Castle (fig. 17).

***Figure 16**. St. Edward's Crown.*

3) *Symbols associated with key values:* in modern literature the importance of brand value is emphasised. The Crown perfectly meets this criterion, as the monarch personifies the nation and the state, giving a sense of stability and continuity[221].

4) *Means through which constructing individual identities:* from consumer-oriented perspective, the consumption of brands defines who people are, wish to be and how they want to appear. The importance given to English Royal Warrants to products traded all over the world, confirms this parameter as people feel to get a particular status while consuming Royal endorsed brands[222].

[219] *Ibidem*
[220] *Ibidem*
[221] *Ivi*, p.14
[222] *Ibidem*

***Figure 17***. *Windsor Castle: a royal residence in the English county of Berkshire.*

5) *A channel by which consuming enjoyable experiences:* consumers choose brands because they want to get pleasurable experiences. The conformity to this criterion from the British Crown is demonstrated by the great attraction and participation of the Royal events, also in terms of media coverage[223].
6) *Positive associations to heritage and nostalgia are evoked:* as mentioned before, brands have to provide a sense of continuity and reassurance also in uncertainty periods. English Monarchy has been able to always get a wide consensus from its people throughout different historical periods, reinforcing the value of the brand.

These concepts confirm the brand-like character of the English Monarchy, and unfold the following step of assessing the corporate brand essence of the Crown, identified in six credentials[224].

A corporate brand is:

I. *An Institutional wide phenomenon*: corporate brands are found in institutions with different possible sizes, forms and shapes, with no defined restrictions. The British Monarchy is therefore a corporate

[223] *Ivi*, p.15
[224] *Ivi*, p.16

brand, as it endorses products, services and institutions through Royal Warrants.

II. *Relevant to a variety of stakeholder groups*: corporate brands have to be relevant to different stakeholders, not only to consumers. This is true for the British Monarchy, as royal endorsed products and services are considered valuable not only inside the national borders but also in the global market where the Queen is not sovereign, having England a wide economic importance to businesses[225].

III. *the symbol of an informal contract between the organisation and its brand community:* as explained in chapter 3.1.1, usually corporate brands present a "brand covenant" that acts as a promise from the firm to its stakeholders. The expectations of people from the English Crown are widely known, at the point that some duties and responsibilities of the monarch are well defined and registered.

IV. *Depending on not only marketing but also corporate communications:* whereas product brands are reliant only upon marketing communications which responsibility resides in the marketing manager, a corporate brand requires a corporate communication strategy, that include all company members. Communications for the British Monarchy include different channels and levels, and are similar to corporate ones.

V. *Necessarily linked with corporate identity:* product brands only need to be linked to product identity, as it can change from product to product within the same organisation; instead corporate brands have always to be connected with its identity, namely the distinctive attributes of a brand[226]. This credential is effective for the Crown, because the brand covenant directly derives from the royal status and therefore the identity, and cannot be unlinked.

[225] *Ivi*, p.17
[226] *Ivi*, p.18

VI. *Dependent upon the senior management*: if product brands are usually entirely managed by the marketing department, corporate brands directly depend upon the chief executive. The Crown is a suitable example, because no less than the monarch has the responsibility of the brand, helped by his private secretary[227].

Thanks to these credentials, it is possible to confirm the corporate brand credential of the British Monarchy. The analysis proceeds with a deeper economical examination of the British Crown as a brand.

### 3.2.2. The brand of the British Monarchy and the resource-based view of corporate brands

The resource-based view of the firm (RBV) provides an important framework used to explain and predict an organisation's competitive advantage and performance[228].

The theory integrates the economic with the management perspective and it is based on the assumption that internal resources and capabilities of a firm improve a firm's profit potential[229].

The resource-based view provides a demonstration of why corporate brands can impart long-lasting value, as an organisation's heterogeneous resources can generate a superior performance if they meet six criterion: value, rarity, durability, inappropriability, imperfect imitability and imperfect substitutability. All criteria are analysed as applicable to corporate brands and compared to the British Monarchy, to found a further demonstration of the correctness of treating the British Royal Family as a brand.

1) Value. A corporate brand has the role of helping its stakeholder to identify the brand and connoting a high level of quality and consistency of performance. Consequently, it acts as an umbrella of

[227] *Ivi*, p.19
[228] I. V. Kozlenkova, S. A. Samaha, R. W. Palmatier, "Resource-based theory in marketing" in Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 42(2014), 1, pp. 1
[229] *Ivi*, p.3

trust for an institution to help distinguishing and differentiating the organisation in stakeholders' minds[230].

The criterion is met in the case of the British Monarchy, because the Crown has a widespread public support and it has the role of differentiating the United Kingdom from all other countries and monarchies. Although the UK is a medium-size nation, it has in its monarchy a global brand[231], as thanks to the British Crown, Great Britain is acknowledged with great prestige and status, which it then accords to institutions via visual and verbal endorsements, building up its brand's identity and value.

2) Rarity. A corporate brand is rare because it derives from a unique historical pattern which results in a palette of characteristics, which are both functional in terms of quality and performance, and also ethereal, as brands possess elements rich in image and symbolic terms[232].

   The British Monarchy represent perfectly this criterion, because of its uniqueness, deriving from a historical development as a meaningful institution since time immemorial. Today, it is the last remaining of the great imperial monarchies of Europe[233], with a global special status as the Queen is the head of the Commonwealth and is sovereign of other nations such as New Zealand. This helps associating the British Monarchy with high standards of quality, non comparable to other head of states[234].

3) Durability. Corporate brands usually have grater longevity compared to product brands and other types of resources, as demonstrated by brands such as Coca Cola and Oxford or Sorbonne Universities. If a superior product brand can have great competitive advantages in a particular context, it strictly depends

[230] Balmer, cit., p.20
[231] *Ibidem*
[232] Balmer, Gray, cit., p.987
[233] Balmer, cit., p.21
[234] *Ibidem*

on a short life-cycle, as product technology presents a rapid evolution[235]. Instead the value associated with a corporate brand is long lasting, and does not depend of the evolution of products.

One of the most distinctive trait of the British Crown is exactly the durability. Even if monarchs and dynasties change, the Crown remains, maintaining its main features only adapting to the environmental evolution[236].

4) Inappropriability. This means that a valuable resource cannot be lost because of a bargain with other entities. Therefore, the main resources of corporate brands, value and reputation, cannot be lost or bought[237].

   The British Crown, as a brand, do not face any direct competitors and its resources, as non-financial assets, cannot be acquired or stolen by other institutions[238].

5) Imperfect imitability. A corporate brand is impossible to imitate, firstly because the brand signifiers (logo, name, colours etc) are usually protected by patents, and moreover because the fundamental substance of the brand is intangible and therefore difficult to replicate[239]. Valuable and intangible resources are also protected by a combination of two mechanisms, which make it impossible for competitors to imitate a corporate brand. Those are social complexity, as only few individuals have the knowledge of understanding all the interrelated elements of the brands, and causal ambiguity, as in the organisation process there are multiple cause-and-effect relationships that go unrecognised[240].

   As mentioned before, the British Monarchy possesses a unique identity which is difficult to replicate. The only treat in the case of

[235] *Ivi*, p.22
[236] *Ibidem*
[237] *Ibidem*
[238] *Ivi*, p.23
[239] Balmer, Gray, cit., p.989
[240] *Ibidem*

the Crown would be a superior substitute, that would manifest in the case of a Presidency, change that would be likely to happen only in the cases of reprehensible behaviour of the monarch or a compromise to the institution of the monarchy[241].

6) Imperfect substitutability. A corporate brand could be vitiated or upstaged by a competitor[242]. The solution of this threat is for an organisation to continuously innovate and improve its brand in order to differentiate from the competitors.

   Concerning the British Crown, this criterion is the only difference with other corporate brands, as there are no possibilities for the Crown to be vitiated or upstaged from another monarchy[243].

The result of the analysis of branding and corporate branding credential of the British Monarchy is a confirmation that the Crown has to be treated as corporate brand, with its peculiarities and uniqueness.

The next step is defying a possible framework useful to understand how to manage the British Monarchy as a corporate brand, named "The Royal Branding Mix"[244].

[241] Balmer, cit., p.24
[242] Balmer, Gray, cit., p.990
[243] Balmer, cit., p.24
[244] *Ivi*, p.25

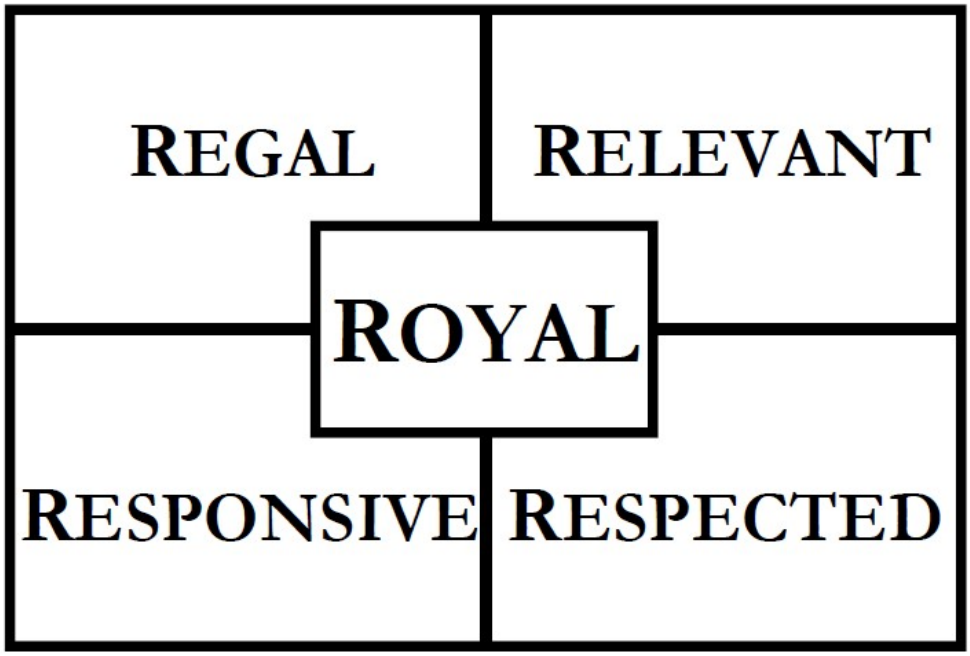


***Figure 18**. Royal Branding Mix*

There are five elements composing the mix which have to be considered while managing a monarchy, to treat it as a distinct and unique corporate brand adapted to its own traditions and people and differentiate it from all other monarchies. There is a distinction between elements useful to define the Crown's brand identity, Royal and Regal, and those relevant for the brand community, Relevant, Responsive and Respected.

These five elements are also defined as the "royal five R's"[245] and require the strategic planning and dynamic orchestration from managers and members of the Royal Family.

- Royal: inevitably, any monarch is "royal", as the head of a monarchy consequently then belong to the Royal Family. Being Royal means possessing a distinct status, above all the other countrymen. This unique status used to be conferred during the ceremony of the coronation, as the monarch gets anointed with holy oil from senior prelates of the Church of England. However, in the modern form of monarchy, the status is also accorded through a written

[245] Balmer, Greyser, Urde, cit., p.13

constitution. It is not necessary to descend from the Royal Family to be Royal, as one can achieve the status for different reasons, such as through marriage or for different causes. The manifestations of the royal status are various, such as the use of titles such as "Your Majesty" and "Your Royal Highness", the possibility of granting Royal Warrants and the use of crown jewels[246].

- Regal: it describes how the aptitude and behaviour of monarchs have to be[247]. As the King or the Queen are the representation of the Crown as an institution, their actions and activities should be regal, in order to strengthen and transmit the value and the image of the monarchy as a brand. This helps explaining the great importance linked to ceremonies, differently from non-monarchical nations. As Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlbers, who used to be press secretary to the Royal Court of Sweden, declared, "*acting regal is based upon experience*" and "*is about what to do and not to do*"[248], meaning that being regal can be subjected to slight differences, deriving from the country's history, traditions and culture[249].
- Relevant: the Crown, has all corporate brands, needs to be significant and able to communicate to the different stakeholders, to be respected and appreciated. As a national and constitutional symbol, the British Crown needs to demonstrate its relevance to all British citizens, of all ages, social classes and religions[250], demonstrated for example from the great effort of the Royal Family in fundraising and non-profit organisations.
- Responsive: as the political, religious, social, economic and technological contexts in each nations are constantly changing, the Crown needs to be able to respond with evolutionary changes, to

[246] *Ivi*, p.14
[247] *Ibidem*
[248] *Ivi*, p.15
[249] *Ibidem*
[250] Balmer, cit., p.29

assure an institutional continuity adapted to the environment[251]. Again from a comment of Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg: "*Responsive implies flexibility, in terms of doing what the people want their head of state to do*". Examples of responsiveness of the British Monarchy are the Queen that pays taxes, the choice of decreasing the expenses for the Royal Household, the ethical and environmental requirements established from the Prince of Wales in order to receive a Warrant and the openness to websites and other new communication tools[252].

- Respected: the more the institution of the Crown derives from people consent through Parliament with less relevance of the attribution of powers directly from "God", the more monarchs have to gain the population respect, to assure public support[253].

Despite the substantial changes in the younger models of monarchies, these five attributes remain at the basis, with the possibility of combining them in different ways, to better shape the corporate brand as it better adapt to its stakeholder groups.

This theoretical perspective finally confirm the branding credential of the British Crown and demonstrate how it presents many characteristics associated to corporate brands, proved also by the economic theory of the resource-based view. Consequently, an effective corporate brand management for the British Monarchy is dependent on the comprehension of the brand identity, constant attempt to meet stakeholders needs, multidisciplinary management approach and a careful agenda for the Royal Family[254].

[251] Balmer, Greyser, Urde, cit., p.15
[252] *Ibidem*
[253] *Ivi*, p.16
[254] *Ivi*, p.36

## 3.3. Corporate brands with a heritage and the multiple heritage identities of the British Monarchy

*"All brands have a history. Some brands have a heritage."*[255] And some of these brands have transformed their heritage in a corporate asset.

Heritage is a connection to the past, to people, places and traditions that that have been passed down from previous generations[256]. Heritage causes particular kind of emotions to consumers, such as nostalgia, familiarity and comfort, reason why it is often associated and exploited by brands to increase brand identity and provoke customers.

The origin of the word "heritage" resides in the verb "to inherit"[257], highlighting the link with history and past. Heritage can concern objects, monuments, places, skills, symbols and, in general, is a key identity element of a social group.[258] The most special characteristic of heritage is its capability of elucidating the past and making it relevant in the contemporary context, providing anchors that are valid in moments of uncertainty and provide a sense of continuity and security[259].

Brand heritage can be defined as a particular dimension of the brand's identity, not compulsory in all types of brand, that can be recognised by the presence of five major elements[260].

The five elements are represented in a framework (figure 19), all surrounding brand stewardship, that is considered an essential management attitude for nurturing and protecting brand heritage.[261]

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[255] M. Urde, S. Greyser, J.J. Balmer, "Corporate brands with a heritage", Journal of Brand Management, 15 (2007), 1, p. 9
[256] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "heritage", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/heritage, consultation date 05th January 2018
[257] *Ibidem*
[258] J. M. T. Balmer, "Corporate heritage identities, corporate heritage brands and the multiple heritage identities of the British Monarchy", European Journal of Marketing, 45 (2011), 9-10, p. 1383
[259] *Ibidem*
[260] Urde, Greyser, Balmer, cit., p.9
[261] *Ibidem*

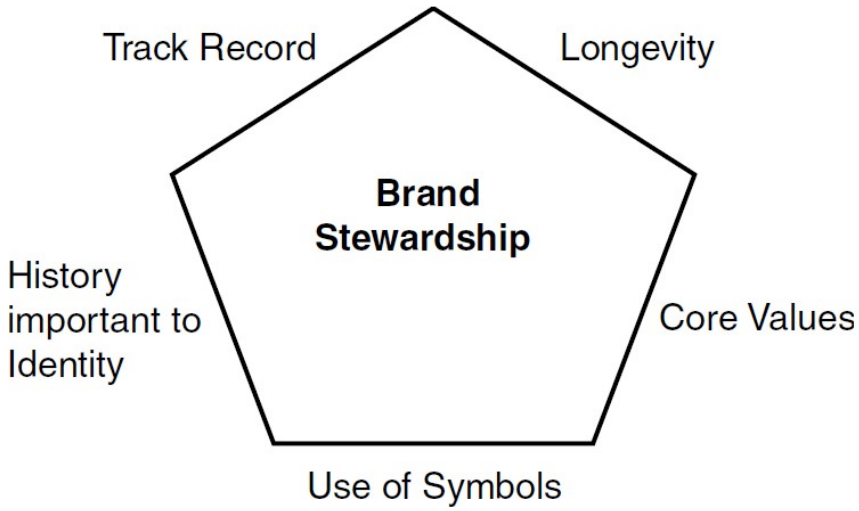


***Figure 19**. The five main characteristics of brand heritage*

The characteristics are described as follows:

- Track record: is a proof to demonstrate that a brand has lived up to promises and delivering value to customers over time, resulting in accumulated credibility and trust.
- Longevity: it is reflected in the maintenance of the other heritage elements under many generations of brand owners, CEOs for companies and monarchs for Crowns.
- Core values: the continuity of long-held and articulated core values act as an internal guide for the corporate strategy and behaviour, and form the base for the positioning expressed through the covenant. As an example, dedication is a long-held core value for the British Monarchy, as expressed by Queen Elisabeth II on the 25th anniversary of her coronation: *"When I was 21, I pledged my life to the service of our people, and I ask for God 's help to make good my vow. Although that vow was made in my salad days when I was green in judgement, I do not regret or retract one word of it"*[262].
- Use of symbols: the communication of a brand meaning and heritage through a large use of symbols, not only in the form of

[262] *Ivi*, p.10

logos and other designs, but also through mottos and habits. Monarchies are again a great example, together with remarkable brands such as Nike or Tiffany.

- *History important to its identity:* for heritage brands history is fundamental to identity and influences how they decide to manage it today, and also the future choices.

The more these five elements are recognised, the more heritage is potentially found in a brand and is important to the internal organisation and external communication to stakeholders.

*"If we want things to stay the same, things will have to change".* The proposition taken from Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard,* perfectly embodies both the power and the paradox of corporate heritage identities[263].

Corporate heritage identities should be defined as a link to identity change, continuance and the different identities of time. So, they are an identity category, that is both constant and variable, because even if symbolism and identities may appear to be the same over time, the meanings consumers give to them may change, a phenomenon called Relative Invariance[264].

Corporate heritage brands and corporate heritage identities need to be distinguished. The latter represent the invariable institutional attributes and qualities, which define an organisation's corporate identity. Whereas, corporate heritage brands symbolize institutional covenants and stakeholders expectations, associated with the brand name and marquee[265].

When analysing the institutional characteristics that can draw on the past, in addition to corporate heritage identities and corporate heritage brands, other eight constructs have been recognised as salient[266].

[263] Balmer, cit., p. 1381
[264] *Ibidem*
[265] *Ibidem*
[266] *Ibidem*

- Traditions: fixed behaviours and conventions that are rooted in the past;
- Custom: behaviours which, differently from traditions, are flexible and evolve from the past;
- Nostalgia: positive associations embedded in the past, that give a sense of security;
- Melancholia: the seeking of sadness embedded in the past;
- Iconic branding: brands which are culturally dominant and distinctive thanks to the past;
- Retro branding: brands that reinterpret a particular and meaningful era of the past in the present;
- Heritage marketing: brands that celebrate and represent a particular era;
- Heritage tourism: identifiable places of the past commemorate in the present;
- Corporate heritage identities;
- Corporate heritage brands.

Each construct implies the use of the past and history in the organisation's identity, with different strategies and methodologies.

Corporate heritage identities therefore, have different impacts for an institution. At the macro level, they influence corporate activities, purposes, competencies, philosophies and strategies; at the micro level they affect design heritage, communication and advertising heritage, architectural heritage etc.[267] The person in charge of the management of a corporate heritage brand has consequently to commit to the corporate heritage identities, as first thing, to make sure to maintain brand salience and consistency in the future.

Monarchies are an example of a traditional authority, corporate heritage brands whose legitimacy derives from tradition and history. Nonetheless, the British Monarchy perfectly demonstrate its invariable identity, as proved from

[267] *Ivi*, p.1386

the old exclamation "God save the Queen/King", but at the same time monarchs are aware of the constant political and environmental changes which need to be sustained from an adaptation of the Crown's brand, maintaining its heritage identity as the focal point[268].

Thanks to the impressive breadth and depth in institutional, philosophy and branding terms, the British Monarchy represents a great model of corporate brand exploiting its heritage. With explicit stakeholders, CSR, societal and ethical orientation, the Crown is perfectly mindful of the present but even more of the past and the future[269].

The "Royal Branding Mix" framework explained in paragraph 3.2.2, useful to understand how to manage a monarchy as a corporate brand, has therefore to be revised considering the corporate heritage identity[270].

In the centre of the updated framework (figure 20) the focus on the notion of bi-lateral trust, that should at the basis of all kind of relationship, both institutional and with stakeholders, of heritage identities[271]. So trust strictly depends on the dynamic equilibrium between authenticity, in terms of the organisation's ability of maintaining corporate heritage features, and affinity, on the side of stakeholders as heritage identity has to remain meaningful for them.

[268] Ivi, p.1382
[269] *Ibidem*
[270] *Ivi*, p.1388
[271] *Ibidem*

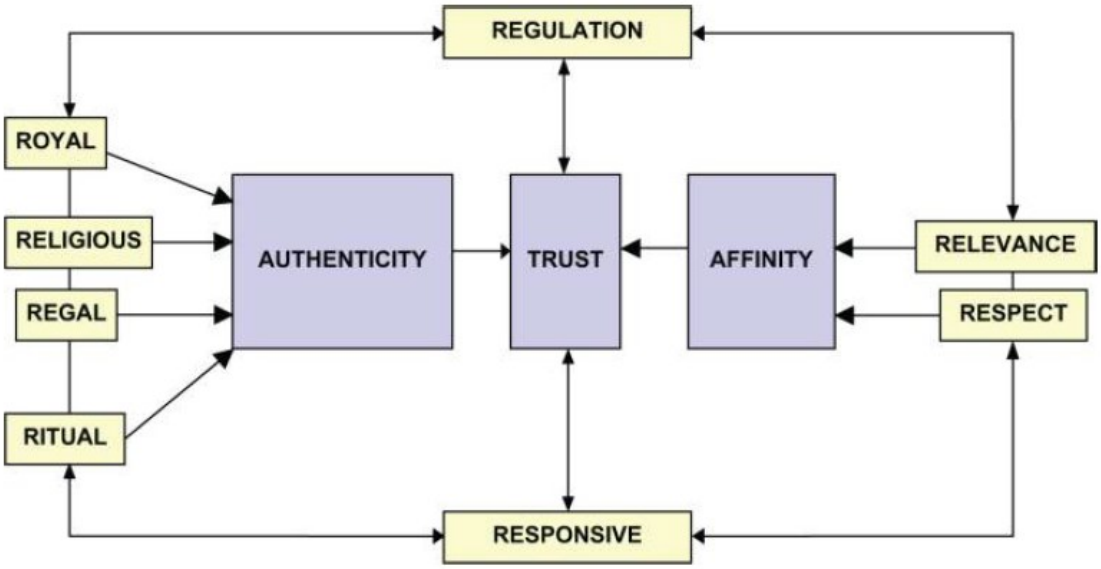


***Figure 20**. The revised Royal Branding Mix framework*

The "royal 8RS" present now three new elements and beyond Royal, Regal, Responsive, Relevant and Respected, a corporate heritage brand should also present the dimensions of Religious, Ritual and Regulations, which perfectly suites in the case of the British Monarchy.

- Religious: this elements permeate the British Monarchy with spiritual, sacred and ethereal identity characteristics. The three religious dimensions identify the Crown as a heritage brand with transcendental attributes[272].
- Ritual: monarchical symbolisms and ritual are not insubstantial, on the contrary they provide a legitimising effect. Rituals and symbolisms are fundamental to define the Crown, foster beliefs and value and create a sense of affinity and identification[273]. Ceremonies and organisation of great event are a crucial part of the communication strategy of the British Royal Family brand.
- Regulation: to ensure the maintenance of the corporate heritage identities of the brands regulations are a prerequisite. The

[272] *Ivi*, p. 1396
[273] *Ivi*, p. 1397

stewardship of the corporate heritage identities is not only in the hands of the monarch, but also of the responsibility of the Royal Family, including private secretaries and members of the Royal Household, the Prime Minister and the Government[274], reason why it is treated like a business and regulations are at the basis to ensure a positive commitment.

The British Royal Family Brand, as a corporate heritage brand, is therefore special in that it is a fusion of continuity, with its rooted history, and change, adapting to the new environment, always maintaining and demonstrating its heritage identities, which all together form the Crown's identity. The peculiarity resides in the ability of sharing, communicating and preserving this special identity.

[274] *Ivi*, p. 1398

# CHAPTER 4

# THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY AS AN ICONIC BRAND

## 4.1. Cultural branding: definition and axioms

Characters, real people, places, objects and brands: "Cultural icons dominate our world"[275].

Icons are defined as people or things "regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration"[276] and are recognised from people as anchors, worthy of admiration, and symbols to rely in their everyday lives.

Cultural icons have always been part of the society, but the creation process saw a transformation in the 19th century. During the pre-modern era, until the late 18th century, icons were mostly religious, shared and diffused through storytelling , with few written documents and more word of mouth as per traditions.[277] Since the mid 19th century, with the time of new mass communications, thanks to the circulation of books, magazines, television and films, the sharing and diffusion of cultural icons became one of the main economic activity worldwide.[278]

Icons, therefore, became a tool through which representing a particular story: an identity myth to address consumers' anxieties and desires that emerge at a given historical moment.

As a company introduce a new product, it is represented by a name, a trademark logo, a specific packaging and usually other unique design features, which are the brand material markers.[279] However, without a history markers

[275] D.B. Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2004, p.1
[276] *Oxford Dictionaries,* s.v. "icon", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/icon, consultation date 23rd May 2018
[277] Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, cit., p.2
[278] *Ibidem*
[279] *Ivi*, p.3

are meaningless, and the brand does not truly exist until these are filled with customers' experiences.[280]

A brand is formed thanks to the cooperation of various authors, mainly companies, culture industries, intermediaries and customers, who collect, create and share stories that become established in everyday life, influencing customers' choices[281].

Products are valued and consequently purchased both for their quality and utility, and for what they symbolise for customers. Considering brands such as Coke, Apple, Budweiser, Nike and Volkswagen, consumers value brands mainly for their identity values, as they link brand stories as valuable tools to build their identities and facilitate their self-expression[282].


***Figure 21**. Identity value to create iconic brands*

Stories are fundamental to raise the level of identity construction, as expressed by some examples in figure 21. The most successful brands in communicating brand stories become icons. Finally, at the top expression of

[280] *Ibidem*
[281] *Ibidem*
[282] *Ibidem*

identity value are found cultural icons, which become consensus expressions of specific values favoured by society members[283].

Identity value does not affect all types of brands, as more suitable for products and less for business-to-business, low-involvement and highly technical categories. Therefore, in particular cases, identity values can play a key role in these brands success, as for example happens for IBM and Virgin Airways[284], that were not particularly appropriate for values campaigns, but obtained a great success.

So, cultural brands, which belong to different categories, can influence customer value differently compared to other types of brands, and consequently need a new and specific branding model, to define the management system required[285].

Cultural brands follow a set of tacit principles entirely different from those defined in conventional frameworks of mind-share, emotional and viral branding models. These principles identify the cultural branding model, that hinges upon seven key axioms[286]:

1. *Iconic brands address contradictions in society*: they are capable of providing an extraordinary identity value precisely because they address the collective anxieties and desires of a nation[287]. Citizens construct their personal identities in response to the particular historical changes they experience and that influence the entire nation. So, even if identities are personal, at the same time desires and anxieties are common and shared between fractions of citizens.

2. *Iconic brands perform myths to address these desires and anxieties*: brands becomes icons as they perform identity myths, meaning fictions that are able to address cultural anxieties from an

[283] *Ivi, p.4*
[284] *Ibidem*
[285] *Ivi, p.5*
[286] *Ivi, p.6*
[287] *Ibidem*

imaginary world rather than the world that consumer experience every day. The aspirations expressed through myths are an imaginative expression of what is the real audience's aspired identity[288].

3. *Identity myths reside in the brand, experienced by consumers through real actions*: the more the brand performs its myths, the more the audience realizes it resides in the brand's makers, and consequently the brand becomes a symbol. As a material embodiment of the myth, every time a consumer wear, eat, drink or drive the product, he experiences the myth and feels part of it. Customers make use of the brand to lessen their identity burdens, forging tight emotional connections to the brand[289].

4. *Identity myths are set in populist worlds*: in places separated from daily life and from the realm of elite control, as often populist worlds are found at the margins of society. Identity myths exploit the intrinsic motivation that unites people, to produce credibility that their myth has authenticity as grounded in the lives of real people[290].

5. *Iconic brands perform as a leading culture*: as they encourage people to think differently, like cultural actIvists do. These brands want to address the leading edges of cultural change, predicting needs and helping people to reconsider ideas about themselves, not simply evoking benefits. For this reason, the identity values created strictly depends on how well the brand's myth fits the particular historical context[291].

6. *Iconic brands rely on breakthrough performances*: rather than consistent communications. What turns the brand into an icon are

[288] *Ivi, p.8*
[289] *Ivi, p.9*
[290] *Ibidem*
[291] *Ibidem*

not forgettable communications, but great performances where commercial medias are used only to weave stories into the culture[292].

7. *Iconic brands benefit from a cultural halo effect*: when customers find a brand useful to cement their identities, this perception of the identity value throw a halo on other aspects of the brand, as quality reputation, distinctive benefits and status value[293].

This set of tacit principles has always been guiding iconic brands, originating the cultural branding model[294].

Since the 1970s, three branding models have been dominating the market: a cognitive model, the *mind-share branding*; a model focused on the emotional and relational aspects of branding, the *emotional branding*; finally the most recent, based on the Internet era, the *viral branding*[295]. Brand owners, ad agencies, managers and brand consultancies used to work on these three branding models to draw a combination which functions as a structure to build the identity value of their brands.

If these conventional models are suitable for other types of branding, they cannot be used to build iconic brands, and therefore implicitly common cultural branding strategies have been adopted to build the main iconic brands, which are now summarised in the cultural branding model[296].

*From mind-share to cultural branding*. The earliest model of branding, mind share, has been rooted since the 1950s on the unique selling proposition of communicating a distinctive benefit of the product to the consumers. The idea was that for a brand to succeed in a moment when mass communication was extremely went beyond consumers ability to manage it, the brand must gain a

[292] *Ivi, p.10*
[293] *Ibidem*
[294] *Ivi, p.13*
[295] *Ibidem*
[296] *Ibidem*

focused position in the prospect's mind, evoking a simple benefit associated with the product or service[297].

Since the 1970s, the mind share strategy has been the most influential idea in branding, the onion model of the brand where the product or service is find in the nucleus and attached are the associations that consumers attribute to the product. The value of this kind of brand is given by the abstract associations that consumers derive from basic functional properties, meaning values and feelings that consumers link to the brand. The mind-share model has been fundamental and is still used to build successful brands, but it is necessary to consider new needs and a new role of brands, which implicitly means limits for this type of marketing[298].

If mind-share branding can be effective for low-involvement, timeless brands such as Dove, for those a simple explanation of the key benefits is sufficient to influence the decision making process of consumers; the reduction of the brand to abstract concepts is certainly not sufficient to build an iconic brand[299].

*From emotional to cultural branding.* The emotional branding model is seen as an extension of mind-share, as the basic assumptions still remain but the emphasis is on how the brand essence should be communicated. Emotions are fundamental for the communication and consequently to sell products[300].

Therefore managers should continuously work on creating distinctive associations through everything the brand does, to emphasize its personality and strengthen the intimate connection with customers[301].

Emotional branding encourage managers to give their brand a personality and consequently emphasize emotional benefits, wrongheaded strategy for

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[297] *Ivi*, p.15
[298] J.N. Kapferer, The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights and Strategic Thinking, London, Kogan Page Publishers, 2012, p.122

[299] Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, cit., p.20
[300] *Ivi*, p.21
[301] *Ibidem*

identity brands[302]. In fact, iconic brands forge emotional connections with their customers, not because of emotional communications, but because of potent identity myths that provide the audience moments of recognition from which derive intensive emotional connections[303].

*From viral to cultural branding.* Viral branding emerged in the 1990s, responding to two major markets shifts: the appearance of the Internet and the increasing cynicism towards mass marketing[304]. This approach focuses on public influence, word of mouth, diffusion of innovation and public relations, assuming that the power lies in consumers' hands, not in firms'.

Therefore, consumers discover the brand on their own, and the role of the firm is only convincing people to configure the brand to make it easy to talk about it, so that customers become influencers and spread their interest around the market[305]. Consumers, not marketers, create identity value.

However, these viral effects cannot be the reason of an iconic brand's success. Simply getting loads of people to talk about something, is not sufficient, most talks quickly fades from memory. What is fundamental and remains stuck are stories that affect the way people perceive themselves in the world. If the viral model assumes that any kind of communications is efficient as long as it's retold, cultural branding focused on the importance that people remember and use symbolically the brand in their everyday life[306].

In conclusion, all iconic brands exploit the characteristics of the three conventional brand models, but these are the consequence of a successful myth ideation, not the cause. So if these features can be used as metrics to analyse identity value, they are not a sufficient foundation to build a strategy for the iconic brands[307].

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[302] *Ivi*, p.27
[303] *Ivi*, p.28
[304] *Ibidem*
[305] *Ibidem*
[306] *Ivi*, p.35
[307] *Ibidem*

Therefore, a new cultural branding strategy is needed, based above all on three main shifts in consumers' mind-set:

- From persuasion to mythmaking: in conventional models, communications are seen as tools to influence consumers' behaviour, until they realise the advertising was created to make them believe. In cultural branding, communications are at the centre: customers' buy products only to experience the stories that the brand narrate through advertising.

- From abstract associations to cultural expressions: in traditional branding models, the brand consists of a set of abstract associations, whereas in cultural branding the brand's value is found in the specifics of the brand's cultural expression[308]: the abstract expression of the content is narrated through communications.

- From consistency to historical fit: for conventional brands, the management is all about stewardship: once the true essence is found, it must be maintained. On the contrary, revisions of the brand's myth are fundamental, as it must continuously adapt to the challenging social issue of the moment. Success depends on how well the brand adjusts to historical exigencies[309].

## 4.2. Strategic principles of cultural branding

As demonstrated above, iconic brands present a peculiar structure and consequently need a new, specific branding model to be followed when about to structure and manage identity brands. The analysis complies with the traditional framework of the branding strategy, where the different stages of the analysis are: targeting, positioning, brand equity, brad loyalty, co-branding and communications. For each phase, the peculiarities and practises of identity

[308] *Ivi*, p.36
[309] *Ivi*, p.38

brands are highlighted in order to define the systematic model at the basis to form iconic brands.

### 4.2.1 Targeting

Identity brands do not compete in products markets, but rather in myth markets, where they have as rivals other cultural products to perform myths that solve cultural anxieties[310].

The first step to create a branding strategy is always to determine the right target for the brand within a given market. Targeting the correct myth market is complicated, as they are continuously destabilized by cultural disruptions and changes. Consequently, the branding strategy must not only analyse the correct target, but also take into account that the target may be shifted when opportunities arise[311].

Successful iconic brands benefits from cultural change to gain a new target. In societies, we usually experience extended periods of relative stability, occasionally disrupted by extreme changes. As citizens lose faith in society, a shift in the common ideology occurs and a new myth markets arise[312]. The most successful myths provided to the society in these particular moments become icons.

The first step in a cultural strategy is to analyse current myth markets dominant in the popular culture and target the most appropriate for the brand. The three main building block of a myth markets, as shown in figure 22, are cultural contradiction, national ideology and populist world.

[310] *Ivi*, p.39
[311] *Ibidem*
[312] *Ivi*, p.45

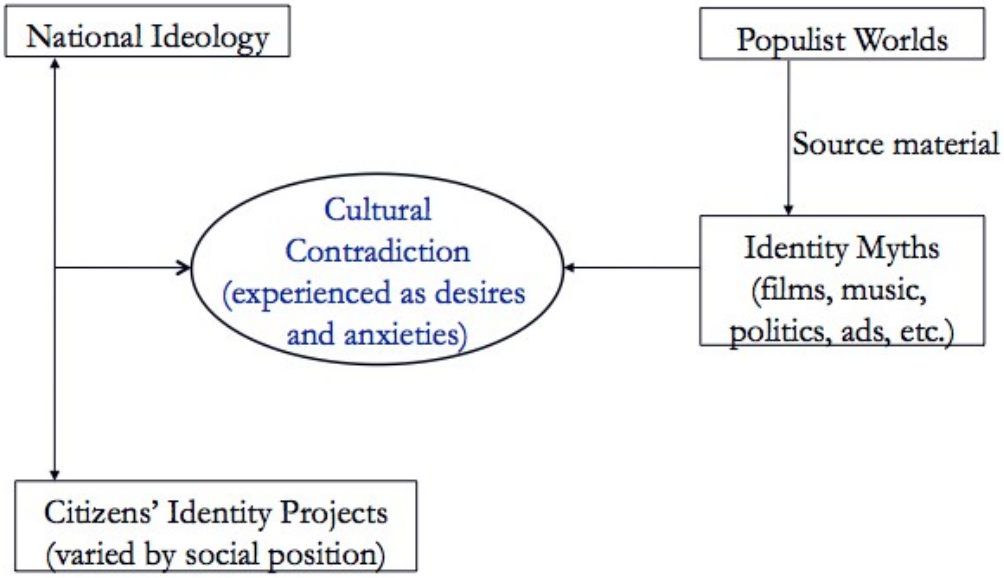


***Figure 22**. Myth markets' structure*

For a nation to properly work, it requires a moral consensus from citizens, who have to identify with it. Nations are organised around a set of moral imperatives, which people follow to pursue national goals. National ideology is therefore a system of rules and ideas that connect people to the nations.

Nation ideology is never conveyed directly, but rather through myths, that always need to be kept up to date in order to address contemporary social issues. Tracing the evolution and the presence of myths in the markets to be targeted is fundamental[313]

The second block is composed by cultural contradictions, which are the crucial point because while people aspire to the nation's ideals, they often cannot understand how to match them with their lives. Thanks to these tensions between nation ideology and individual experience, anxieties and desires emerge, with the creation of demand for a myth to solve these issues. These contradictions are more common in periods of cultural changes[314].

[313] *Ivi*, p.57
[314] *Ivi*, p.58

When a myth is established, it relies on populist worlds, that are groups which strongly express a distinctive ideology through their activities[315]. They are a powerful tool to share a myth, because people perceive their ideologies as pure and authentic and not modelled by communications. Populist worlds are places where actions are seen as motivated only by belief and not interest. For this reason, they provide a great base to create a myth, reinforcing its credibility.

Brands that want to become iconic need to continuously examine myth markets, preview changes and disruptions in national ideology and identify the populist world adapt to their targets.

### 4.2.2 Positioning

After having chosen the right myth market and which contradiction to solve, it is fundamental to decide the right myth to perform and in the right manner[316]. In cultural branding, differently from other kind of brands, the story is at the centre of the strategy, as the quality of the myth, and not some abstractions, directly derives the brand's identity value.

The positioning statement, usually the heart of the brand strategy[317], identifies the associations that the brand should own, the support to sustain these associations and the tone and personality to be used to speak to prospects. The brand's positioning statements are usually detailed in the creative brief, to be used for advertising purposes.

Cultural branding requires a brief even more detailed, as strategic directions need to be given to artists to create the right and appropriate story for the brand. Even so, the guidelines should not be strict and too focused on which benefit to sell, but should rather be interested on narrating which cultural contradiction need to be solved[318].

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[315] *Ibidem*
[316] *Ivi*, p.63
[317] *Ibidem*
[318] *Ivi*, p.64

The ideal cultural brief, that stands for the positioning statement, is composed by three main components[319]:

- Myth treatment: a briefing document used to direct the stories, defining the plot, characters and the setting. For identity myths, it represents the brand's proposed role in the culture and therefore manager must be actively involved in constructing the treatment;
- Populist authenticity: brand cannot simply seize parts of populist worlds and adapt them to their needs, but on the contrary must gain a place within these worlds through their actions. Consumers feel the brand as authentic when two qualities are delivered: fidelity and literacy.
- Charismatic aesthetic: iconic brands win over their audience when their communications radiate charisma, by adopting a distinctive and persuasive aesthetic style, modelled around the precise populist world.

In brief, brand myth are successful when they tell the right story, authentically based on the brand's populist world, executed with a charismatic aesthetic[320].

### 4.2.3 Brand equity

A brand still remains a strategic asset for a company, and while composing a brand strategy, its economic value must be taken into account. The brand equity is given by the expected future "commercial value that derives from consumer perception of the brand name of a particular product or service, rather than from the product or service itself[321]", requiring a deep understanding of the starting point.

[319] *Ibidem*
[320] Ivi, p.65
[321] Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "brand equity", https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/brand_equity, consultation date 23rd May 2018

In the mind-share model, for example, brand equity is defined by the strength of the associations to the brand and how strong the brand essence is rooted in consumers mind. In the viral model, brand equity depends on the brand's hold on influencers[322].

For iconic brands, the brand is a symbol and therefore equity does not depend on individual consumers, but is rather a collective phenomenon. Mangers have to work on the reputation created on prior myth, which is given by two main assets: cultural and political authority[323].

Customers value iconic brands on what they accomplish for their identities, to solve anxieties and desires: iconic brand's equity depends on people's historic dependency on the brand's myth[324].

Cultural and political authority do not automatically generate brand equity, but rather these two assets should always be reinterpreted to align with changes occurring in society to optimize brand equity by reinforcing the collective memory[325].

### 4.2.4 Brand loyalty

Customers of iconic brands value them in a differently in respect to all other kinds of brand, depending on how these brands are used in everyday life, maintaining allegiances over time[326].

As shown in figure 23, iconic brands grow three interdependent constituencies: followers, feeders, insiders[327]. Each of them uses and values the brand differently, consequently establishing a different relationship to the

[322] Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, cit., p.95
[323] *Ibidem*
[324] *Ivi, p.111*
[325] *Ivi, p.125*
[326] *Ivi, p.131*
[327] *Ivi, p.139*

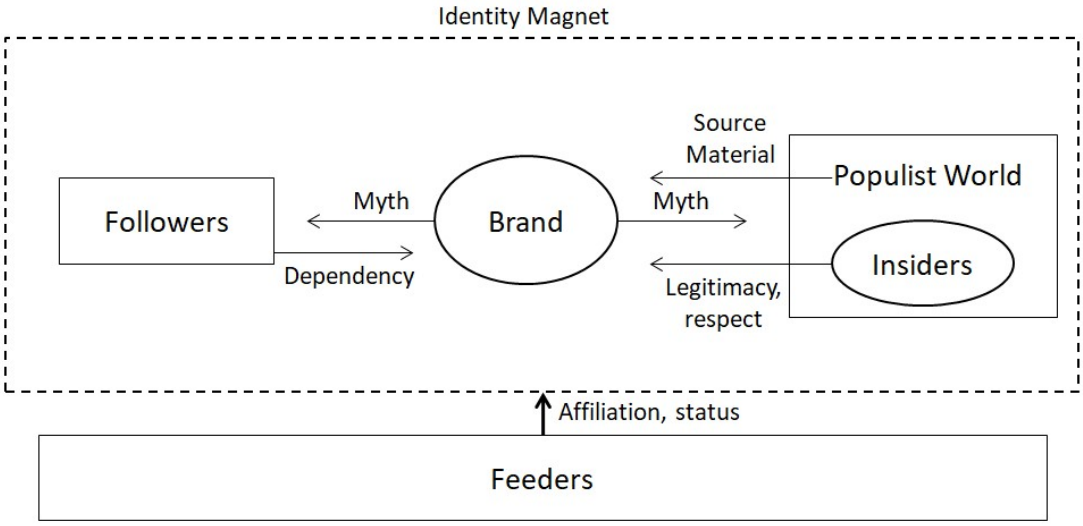


***Figure 23**. Iconic brands' loyalty*

brand. The overall loyalty is a product of the above social network, thank to the relationships between the constituencies[328].

In particular:

-Followers: are the consumers that mostly identify themselves with the brand's myth. They strongly rely on it to solve their desires and anxieties, becoming devoted to the performer of the myth, namely the brand, as it responds to identity needs. Followers are the nucleus of the consumer base, the brand's magnet[329].

-Insiders: even if usually fewer than followers, they have powerful influence as they work as gatekeepers to the brand's assertion on the populist world. Insiders are crucial to the brand as they have considerable influence on followers, lIving the real culture of populist world[330].

-Feeders: are the majority of the customers, who join from the identity value that icons produce for their insiders and followers. They are attracted from the

[328] *Ivi, p.140*
[329] *Ibidem*
[330] *Ivi, p.143*

status produced by the brand and connect superficially with it, just to build social solidarity[331].

Brand loyalty depends by the relationships between these three constituents, which are interdependent. Managing an iconic brand requires controlling and nurturing relationships across the network[332].

### 4.2.5 Co-branding and communications

Iconic brands are built with advertising, produced under the guide of the brand owner. But there are other two, implicit author of the brand which contribute to create the myth: culture industries and populist worlds[333].

A brand cannot be directly copied, but rather can take a cue from existing culture industries and populist worlds, which become the co-authors and the society's best mythmaking engines[334].

After having established a myth, the most difficult thing for a manger is to advance it, maintaining the myth relevant, provocative and inspiring. Two are the main dangers in brand's communications: milking myth's popularity and abandoning the myth to follow a totally new trend.

First of all, icons have to demonstrate integrity and commitment to pursue the values espoused by the myth. If a brand start taking advantage of its followers' allegiance to increase gains, it rapidly lose credibility and effectiveness[335]. The same results arrive as a brand, attracted by new trends, abandon its myth.

In conclusion, to build iconic brands company must reinvent their structure used to create strategies, assembling cultural knowledge and developing a

[331] *Ivi, p.147*
[332] *Ivi, p.151*
[333] *Ivi, p.183*
[334] *Ivi, p.184*
[335] *Ivi, p.189*

strategy according to the new cultural branding principles[336], as described in figure 24.

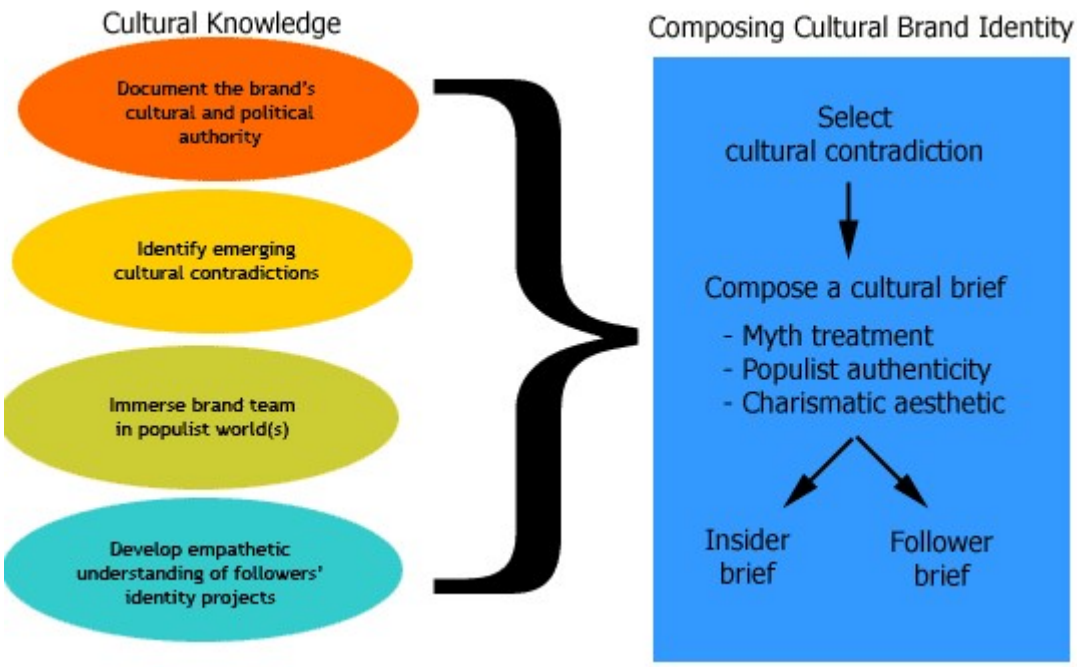


***Figure 24**. Cultural Brand Management Process*

A cultural strategy is a plan that direct the brand to a specific kind of myth and describe all stages needed to compose it. As demonstrated above, it is quite different from conventional branding strategies, which are usually structured around rational and emotional benefits.

## 4.3 The British Royal Family: an iconic brand

Having demonstrated the corporate branding characteristics of the British Royal Family, a step further consists in proving how, nowadays, the BRFB is perceived and managed as an icon.

With an estimated net worth of $530 million[337], the British Royal Family gives a great contribution to the UK economy even if its political influence has

[336] *Ivi, p.209*
[337] Business Insider, Queen Elizabeth has a fortune worth over $500 million, http://www.businessinsider.com/british-royal-family-richest-people-2017-11?IR=T, consultation date 23rd May 2018

dissipated, being replaced by a modern monarchy which performs symbolic and ceremonial functions[338].

Even if in the era of modernisation, the British Royal Family continues holding a global, commercial and cultural dominance, justified by its 53 colonies, the anglophile culture shared in America and also many royal tours to strengthen the position and gain media coverage[339]. Anyway, these may not be the only reasons.

According to the principles and characteristics described above, can the British Royal Family brand be analysed with cultural and iconic branding lens?

First of all, the seven main axioms of cultural branding must be found in the BRF:

1. *Iconic brands address contradictions in society*: yes, because the main goal of the Monarchy is to work in the interest of the common good, always acting with the main goal of addressing collective anxieties and desired, which continuously evolve in the population according to historical changes, but remain common and shared by the majority of the citizens, above all being in the same kingdom;

2. *Iconic brands perform myths to address these desires and anxieties*: yes, because the Queen or King, together with the Royal Family, functions as an icon, representing a kind of imaginary world, out of reach but an aspired reality for the citizens. It works as a fiction, an imaginative expression of what would be the audience's aspired identity to solve its anxieties.

3. *Identity myths reside in the brand, experienced by consumers through real actions:* yes, the BRF brand's markers are various, and the most suitable, in my opinion, experienced by consumers is the Royal Warrant. By purchasing and using products or services granted by

[338] C.C.Otnes, P. Maclaran, "Royalty: marketplace icons", Consumption Markets and Culture, 19 (2006) p. 2
[339] I*bidem*

appointment by the Queen or King, consumers feel they can resemble to the Royal Family and experience what the royals do in their everyday life, reinforcing emotional connection to the brand.

4. *Identity myths are set in populist worlds:* in my view, the world that the Crown targets, is exactly its population. With the aim of finding the intrinsic motivation that unites people, all citizens, they provide a myth grounded in the lives of real people, the Royal Family, which is and has always been a dreamed reality for the majority of people, as history narrates since ancient times.

5. *Iconic brands perform as a leading culture:* yes, as the Royal Family act as a cultural activist, trying to promote values and culture. A great example, to me, is the relevant amount of charity done by the Royal Family, continuously highlighted and shared through media in order to raise awareness and be a role model to people.

6. *Iconic brands rely on breakthrough performance:* yes, as the British Royal Family never create communications by itself. All the publicity derives from royal practices and performances, which attract media and public, becoming the greatest media news of the moment. Few example to show how the life of the Royal Family is always in the public eye are the latest "Kate effect", "Prince George effect"[340] and the upcoming "royal wedding effect". These are some of the greatest events, but occurrences are part of the everyday life for the Royal Family, as described in chapter 2.

7. *Iconic brands benefit from a cultural halo effect:* what more than the entire population can create a cultural halo effect?[341] The results, in my opinion, are demonstrated by the diffusion of the brand not

[340] *Ivi*, p.3
[341] The Telegraph, The Queen gets a £44bn valuation for family 'Firm' https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/the_queens_diamond_jubilee/9292607/The-Queen-gets-a-44bn-valuation-for-family-Firm.html, consultation date 23rd May 2018

only in countries guided by the English crown, but in the global market[342].

After having identified the seven main characteristics of an iconic brand inside the British Royal Family Brand, can we present a strategic iconic brand structure?

- Targeting: as mentioned above, this is probably the most intuitive part of the strategy, being the main target all the British Population. Nevertheless, the target is enlarged not only in all the British colonies, but also through the worldwide population, always more interested in Royal lives. The British Royal Family has the great ability to charm people from all nations through their culture, values and power of their decisions: the brand's influence in its target is determined predominantly in the form of soft power. The worldwide target is easily demonstrable from the international wide audience of around two billion people that followed the actual Royal Wedding of Prince Harry and Ms Meghan Markle, that took place on Saturday 19th May in Windsor Castle which has been visited by more than 100000 tourists during the celebration days. [343]

- Positioning: the story narrated by the brand is certainly clear, the story of the Royal Family, with the Queen or King and the family acting as the main characters. All products and services are associated with the British Royalty, with their customs and practises. The story of the British Royal Family is at the centre of the strategy as it happens for all iconic brand: the quality of the British Royal Family Brand directly derives from the brand's identity value.

- Brand equity: the BRFB is also known as "The Firm" for it presents an estimated commercial value at more than £44 billion[344], including royal palaces and the Crown jewels. This is certainly the main strategic asset for the British

[342] *Ivi*, p.5
[343] British Foreign Policy Group, The Royal Family: Soft Power Superpowers?, http://bfpg.co.uk/2018/05/the-royal-family-soft-power-superpowers/, consultation date 29th May 2018
[344] The Telegraph, The Queen gets a £44bn valuation for family 'Firm' https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/the_queens_diamond_jubilee/9292607/The-Queen-gets-a-44bn-valuation-for-family-Firm.html, consultation date 23rd May 2018

Royal Family, which is not planned to decrease, thanks both to incoming great family events and to the continuous halo effect[345].

- Brand loyalty: the three main constituencies mentioned above, establishing different kinds of relationships with the brand, can also be identified for the BRFB. Followers are, in my opinion, the British citizens, that live closely to the brand and feel its political and cultural influence. Insiders are those people who live closely to the Royal Family and probably interface more with the Royals, but also those business owners that sell products or services connected with the BRFB through Royal Warrants. Finally to me, feeders are the worldwide population that has less contacts with the brand but keeps an eye on what is happening to the brand and, when possible, visit places or uses products which help them experience the brand.

- Co-branding and communications: contrary to other iconic brands, the BRFB does not create advertising to build the brand. However, the two implicit actors mentioned above, cultural industries and populist worlds, are the main and fundamental players to communicate the brand. They work as co-authors, maintaining it relevant and exploiting all movements of the family. Certainly, the co-authors cannot be left completely autonomous but under the implicit guide of the British Royal Family. For this reason each single step, action and declaration of the Royals has to be studied and prepared in order to respect an implicit plot and to avoid misunderstanding. Integrity and commitment to purse values expressed by the myth are fundamental, the reason why the British Royal Family continuously make some steps to adapt to the new era, but always maintaining its values and traditions.

In conclusion, I believe that the British Royal Family Brand presents all characteristics and exploit all strategies to act as an iconic brand. The structure of people that works behind the Family to maintain and empower the brand, as mentioned in chapter 2, is one of the proof. The Royals are no more recognised

[345] The Telegraph, The Queen gets a £44bn valuation for family 'Firm' https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/the_queens_diamond_jubilee/9292607/The-Queen-gets-a-44bn-valuation-for-family-Firm.html, consultation date 23rd May 2018

as political authorities, but more as icons, as a model that embodies the power, the values and the prominence of a great nation that succeeded through the history.

I personally believe that even if a stated and structured strategy to manage the brand has never been published, it has always been unexpressed but present and taken into account.

# CONCLUSIONS

Adaptation to cultural, economical and political changes has always been at the basis to innovation and success. The British Royal Family, one of the greatest political institutions and largest monarchies of the world, had the ability to maintain its position of political authority through ages, from the Georgian to the Victorian to the Modern eras, adapting to the context but preserving the leading cultural role that allowed the British Royal Family brand to function as a source of inspiration to a wide range of worldwide citizens.

The keen interest aroused nowadays by the Royal Family derives from a path composed by small steps taken throughout the different eras by the so-called "Firm", achieved among complexities, changes and evolutions during the history of the British Monarchy.

In chapter 1, I demonstrated how marks had to evolve as guilds' role in society changed, to overcome the limitations present in the original certification mechanisms of marks and seals, to finally create patents that answered the needs of the Middle Ages economy. In England these evolutions reflected in the creation of new forms of regulations for the "Royal Appointment" grants, which developed according to the evolutions of the British history, representing one of the main demonstrations of the British Royal Family as a brand. But during all these changes, can we find a common goal in the use of seals, marks and the modern form of the Royal Warrant?

Icons, as defined in chapter 4, have the aim of being regarded as representative symbols worthy of veneration, as anchors and as reference points that can be accomplished only through a demanding path made by daily and constant actions. Since the first warrants were emitted from the British Monarchy, the BRFB wanted to prove and spread its powerfulness, trying to convince its target about how these products could help them improving their lifestyle. The implicit goal has always been that of attracting people and reinforcing their loyalty.

The importance attributed to the "Great Wardrobe" in the 13th century demonstrates that at the basis of the modern monarchs' influence stands the historical tradition of the symbol of magnificence attributed to Kings and Queens. For instance, as mentioned above, when Kate Middleton became the Duchess of Cambridge, she generated the so-called "Kate effect", that produced more than £152 million in income in 2015. This great fashion influence that nowadays each member of the British Royal Family has, and that cannot be associated to any other royal figure around the world, derives from the primitive importance that was attributed to companies possessing a Royal Warrant, because being a warrant holder influenced impressively on the reputation and the identity of the grantee and of the brand itself, as demonstrated in chapter 2.

Not only influencing through fashion icons, the British Royal Family, as a great corporate brand, has been able, most of the time and above all in the modern ages, to adapt to the population's needs, act as a guide to its nation and provide an icon to the world through its cultural influence. Charity, associations' support and fund raising have been integral parts of the British Royals' activities. As examples, the Royal Warrant Holders Associations charity fund, Princess Diana numerous activities sustaining associations and supporting various worldwide causes, the current and continuous activities of the members of the Royal Family: acting as an example and inspiring people's behaviour all around the world have been two points of emphasis for the British Royal Family as a brand, particularly evident in the greatest moments of the history and less in moments of changes and complexities, depending above all by the ruling monarch.

From a branding perspective, the active personal participation of royals through visits around the world and their support to charities and associations are tools through which, along with reinforcing political influence, strengthening brand identity, increasing brand loyalty and addressing a desire

common to the majority of people around the world: that of helping people by improving the quality of lives.

The continuously increasing production of all types of merchandising with the Royals, always updated to current facts and family members, and the tourism generated thanks to royal places and particular celebrations are further demonstrations of the great influence of BRFB, which could be worthy of a more detailed analysis regarding the tools used from the Royal Family to increase brand awareness and consequently providing a revenue for "the Firm".

Being the aim of the research that of marking the main characteristics of an iconic brand in the British Royal Family, a further research should be structured around the management of the BRFB as an iconic brand and the tools exploited, which would imply an analysis of the "Palace" management, a focus on the royal events and family member activities.

To conclude, I personally believe that, after a challenging way marked by historical developments, the importance of the British Royal Family in the cultural environment of the twenty-first century is irrefutable, as it is perceived as an icon which maintains the authority of one the greatest political institutions but influences people behaviour and decisions around the world.

In the creation process of the brand's concept, everything started with marks, the first way to communicate the identity of the producer and the quality of products, as the described in chapter 1. This first step, also thanks to its downside with counterfeiting and imitations, lead to the birth of the patent's concept, a regulated warranty focused on the transmission of product and brand identity, that in the case of the British Royal Family Brand was demonstrated through the development of the Royal Warrant.

Therefore, the Royal Warrant serves as a first proof of the definition of the British Royal Family as a brand. The development of intellectual property symbolizes the process of modernisation undertaken from the Monarchy, with the essential focus of representing the Crown by solving a trade issue.

Since the first patents were issued to English Tradesmen, as described in chapter 2, the Warrant has been representing a communication tool to demonstrate the quality of products under the control of the BRFB, and, in my opinion, consequently spreading and imposing the brand's presence around the world.

The Crown has always been considered a symbol for the nation, for its citizens and through ages always more also outside the country, acting as a corporate brand influencing various stakeholders' decisions, in particular moments with positive effects but in others also gathering negative results as it normally happens for political institutions. Having demonstrated how monarchies can easily be defined corporate brands possessing all the characteristics needed, the BRFB presents all the main branding credentials, with the Crown's peculiarities and uniqueness. A theoretical framework, useful to understand how the BRFB should be managed, has consequently been taken into account, as the Royal Branding Mix could be compared to the resource-based view theory of firms. The five R's analysis of the brand's identity is finally reinforced by the peculiar characteristics of the BRFB: the cultural heritage allows the fusion of continuity, with a rooted history, and change, adapting to the new environment. The BRFB heritage identities all together form the Crown's identity.

Being the Crown perceived as a symbol, the BRFB presents the characteristics of not only an heritage corporate brand but those of an icon, as analysed in chapter 4. As mentioned above, the BRFB serves as an icon providing a myth which addresses desires and anxieties and that can be experienced from consumers. For this reason, it should also be managed as such, with a specific analysis of its targeting, positioning, equity and loyalty to reinforce its value more and more creating an established communications' strategy. I personally believe that this part of the analysis should be further detailed with the comparison of the theory of an iconic brand's management described and how the BRFB is actually being managed.

Therefore, the value of the British Royal Family as a brand, in my opinion,

is not only given by its economical assets, but resides in its ability to perform as a myth perceived in people's mind as an imaginative world that can address cultural anxieties. The myth can be experienced by consumers through real actions, for example through the consumption of products endorsed by royal grants or through the admiration of a common American girl marrying a prince, that create strong emotional connections to the brand itself and help overcoming the times of need that can always been experienced in a brand, above all those created around a political institution.

The BRFB performs as a cultural activist, a leader with the goal of, as Queen Elisabeth II said, "finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together"[346].

[346] Queen Elizabeth II speech to United Nations in New York in 2010

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