



Representation of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle:
Perfect and Imperfect Women

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Abstract

Media reports often shape public opinion of celebrities and public figures. In particular, those with influence are subject to consistent and occasionally harsh portrayals. One group of people who have been described and judged *ad nauseum* in mass media is the British Royal Family, especially the female figures such as Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle. This thesis aims to examine the representation of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle and investigate whether there are any similarities and differences in their portrayal in *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. The data collection method is textual analysis, where I divided the newspaper into two categories: family and royal etiquette concerning fashion. The findings show a massive difference in how Meghan Markle is portrayed. Meghan Markle is described negatively in all themes, whereas Catherine Middleton is portrayed positively. There is also a massive comparison between the royal women throughout all the themes. The results may influence the representation of women in the future.

Keywords: Representation, Catherine Middleton, Meghan Markle, Family, Royal Etiquette and Fashion

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Introduction

British Press and Royalty — Interdependence

This section discusses the relationship between the British press and the Royal Family and its interdependence through multiple aspects. This relationship is complex and multilayered and has been for very long. One crucial aspect of the relationship between The Royal Family and the press is its dependence on the media and its visibility within mediums such as TV and newspapers. Additionally, visibility exists through the monarchy's coronations and weddings. The interdependent relationship means the monarchy needs the press to remain relevant and visible to the public. The monarchy tries to control the narrative and image, while the media sometimes wrecks that image by disclosing scandals.

One must first introduce the monarchy to examine the relationship between the monarchy and the media. The definition of the term monarchy is “a form of government with a monarch at the head” (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2024). The UK has the longest-reigning monarchy in the world, with King Charles at the head (*Britannica*, King Charles III, 2024). The previous monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, was emblematic of the British Royal Family and contributed to many of the values currently associated with the Royal Family. Once she died in 2022, King Charles ascended the throne and is still King today. During her 70 years on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II set standards of etiquette and rules and even shaped the Royal Family's image to make them closer to the public (*The Sun*, 2018). During the time frame this thesis investigates, the reigning monarch was Queen Elizabeth II.

The Royal Family has been the subject of comprehensive media coverage throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. “The British press is over 400 years old, and regular-day newspapers have been a staple in our culture ever since. “The contribution of British journalism has been huge to our social and political culture” (Temple, 2008, p. ii). “Great newspapers from *The Times* to the crusading *Daily Express* and the campaigning post-war *Daily Mail*, and on to the present with *The Sun* and *The Independent*, have informed and entertained us, as well as enriched public debate” (Temple, 2008, p. ii). “Newspapers have a vital component of the public sphere, informing and entertainment” (Temple, 2008, ii). In other words, newspapers are essential to culture and influence the public sphere.

The British press is not a new phenomenon, and neither is this co-dependent relationship. The relationship between the monarchy and the media has existed almost as long as the government has. The relationship with the Royal Family is one of dependence, which means that it is mutually beneficial in terms of the monarchy communicating with their subjects while the media has used the monarchy to attract readers and viewers (Taylor, 2021, *BBC News*).

The aim is to attract readers and viewers, which helps the media, or the press, control the image of the Royal Family through media such as TV and newspapers. The aim is to portray the Royal Family through the lens of the press. One important aspect when discussing the representation done by the media is that it is often subjective. Although the press tries to remain neutral in its representation, it is not. The press's inability to remain objective could also be where the friction between the monarchy and the press stems because the monarchy believes that the media, particularly tabloids, have an agenda when they report (*BBC News*). The idea led to the media controlling the monarchy's image. In other words, this means that news creates the representation of the Royal Family, and simultaneously, so does the Royal Family (*TheRoyalUK*).

On the one hand, it helps create and manufacture their image; on the other hand, the news holds them accountable. Furthermore, accountability is their profession and one of the guidelines for being a journalist, which means they still aim to be objective in their presentation.

One crucial aspect of the monarchy is “to maintain power, the monarchy must both reproduce its lineage and reproduce itself in the public imagination (and as photographs of the Cambridges (Prince William and Catherine Middleton) demonstrate, these processes are interlinked).” (Clacy, 2021, p. 171). In other words, this means that the monarchy has essentially two jobs: to have children and to continue to uphold their perceptions; this is why images and publicized photographs of them are vital. Additionally, the images result in the monarchy being and needing to be visible to the public through the media. In summary, the representation of the Royal Family helps them be perceived as they want while remaining in control of that representation through multiple royal correspondents.

Royal Correspondents are journalists specializing in reporting on the monarchy (Clancy, 2022, p. 332). These journalists are knowledgeable in the monarchy and usually have a personal relationship with the members of the Royal Family. The monarchy decides who could and should be hired. One crucial aspect of being a royal correspondent is the matter of class, and if

one is not part of the same elite social class, one cannot become a royal correspondent (Clancy, 2022, p. 338). Due to the relationship with the monarchy, there is a sense of loyalty, resulting in them remaining silent when appropriate (Clancy, 2022, p. 339). These relationships with the royal correspondents help and contribute to the construct and control of the narrative to a certain degree because they decide what is public and what is not. It is rarely the members of the monarchy themselves that make statements on their own, and it is done through their royal correspondents. For instance, some of those statements are when Queen Elizabeth II hosted a garden party or Meghan Markle and Harry decided to step down from their royal duties (*Royaluk*). The statements are also filtered massively through numerous media departments. Recently, the Royal Family has also turned to social media platforms such as Instagram to curate their image (@theprinceandprincessofwales, 2024). To summarize, the monarchy has royal communications that help the monarchy organize and arrange for media to cover certain royal events and news.

One of the ways that the Royal Family curates its image is through its visibility in the media, and one of the examples of that is through coronations and weddings. Some spectacles are intensively staged, and there is a lure because intimacy is promised to the viewer (Clancy, 2021, p. 70). This is one of the first instances where the public got a glimpse into the world of the monarchy in a real way, and this is crucial because it helps the Royal Family tell their history and control their narrative while simultaneously posing as more genuine to their spectators. However, this has proved to be immensely difficult because there is a constant imbalance between portraying the royals and following royal etiquette while remaining visible to the public in a seemingly authentic way.

In the UK, reports of the Royal Family are favored over other news. “Obsession with royal events is a routine British media habit, even over minor misdemeanors by the Princes Edward or Harry” (Blain & O’Donnell, 2004, p. 2). This means that the press has also been interested in the monarchy’s activities; there is a fascination there. Furthermore, this is common in the news and is called “a reference to elite persons” (Allan, 2016. p. 73). This term refers not only to the monarchy but also to famous and rich celebrities and politicians. In other words, this refers to how the activities done by the monarchy are usually far more interesting than ordinary people.

One of the aspects of reporting on “elite persons” is scandals. The press has reported numerous scandals on the monarchy. One crucial aspect of understanding the relationship is that the

media has consistently reported on the Royal Family and its multiple scandals from the members, such as Prince Harry playing strip billiards in a hotel room and Catherine Middleton tanning topless in a swimming pool (Finneman et al., 2014, p. 408). Another scandal happened when Princess Diana and King Charles divorced, and it was revealed that Princess Diana Spencer had been unfaithful in her marriage to (then) Prince Charles. Another example of scandal is when it was revealed that King Charles was having an affair with Camilla (now Queen, formerly The Duchess of Cornwall). One common thread in scandals is the media's response and the fact that they report. Members of the monarchy were criticized and scrutinized because of their actions. A hierarchy exists in choosing news, which can be problematic (Allan, 2016, p. 72). The news plays a massive part in shaping people's perceptions of the Royal Family. In conclusion, the press is fascinated by the monarchy's activities, leading to them reporting on numerous scandals.

To counteract these scandals and navigate the public's perception, the monarchy has a Public Relations (PR) staff; the late Queen Elizabeth II, and King Charles have one, and so do the two princes, William and Harry. The PR staff or The Royal Communications are in charge of covering royal visits, events, and news so that they can provide accurate, timely, and informative coverage to their audience (*Theroyalfamilyuk*). One important note about the staff is that all of them are skilled in their knowledge and are skilled journalists (Clancy, 2023). These positions and staff members change rapidly (Clancy, 2023). The role of Royal Communications is simple; it upholds this notion of royalty and does not criticize it. Usually, the Royal Communications office has connections to Sony, Channel 5, and Sky (Clancy, 2023). There are also different departments, such as the Royal Communications and Communication Secretaries. To summarize, a PR department for the monarchy is used to cover royal events and construct their image.

This is an aspect that scholars Blain and O'Donnell discuss in *Media, Monarchy, and Power*:

More truth-claims are made about the British Royal Family: only a proportion of propagators of royal facts have an interest in accuracy, and many of the media outlets retailing these facts are notoriously uninterested in accuracy. Royal publicity machines have become better and better at controlling public understanding, aided in Britain by the royal family's strong links with a supportive landed class which sees protecting royal family interests as part of its hereditary duty and privilege (Blain & O'Donnell, 2003 p. 67).

In other words, the Royal Family has immense power and utilizes strategies that aid them in controlling the public's perception through press releases, official photo releases, correspondents, interviews, and selected journalists they trust. Some newspapers have early access to news that comes from the Royal Family. These are crucial components in not solely having power but also continuing to have power for decades. To conclude, the monarchy, like the media, has multiple strategies to control its representation, which helps it maintain power nowadays.

The relationship with the media benefits both parties in multiple ways, for instance, economically and culturally (fueling the interest of the Royal Family) and helping the public feel closer to the monarchy. One aspect of how it benefits economically is through selling newspapers. Some news outlets include *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, and *The Telegraph*. These news outlets generate revenue through internet articles and newspapers, and they have formed a dependence on the monarchy through the exploitation of their stories for clicks and financial gain. While the Royal Family gets public attention and a recurring image of popularity in the media, the news sources gain much-needed revenue and become a source for future stories on the subject. Historically, many of these stories have drawn scrutiny to the Royal Family, and certain members have been criticized and popularized in the media. In summary, the monarchy and media are mutually beneficial in this partnership.

To conclude, this chapter discussed the connection between the British press and the Royal Family and how complicated it is due to the media's desire to report on the monarchy and help curate its image. The monarchy and the media have always had an interconnected relationship. Both depend on the monarchy's visibility to the public. Princess Diana Spencer is one of the subjects who has shaped and embodied this interdependent relationship.

Diana Spencer

One of the most discussed royal members is Diana Spencer. Diana Francis Spencer (Her Royal Highness, Lady of the Isles, Princess of Wales) was born on July 1, 1961, at Park House in England, at one of Queen Elizabeth II's estates (*Britannica*, 2024). Princess Diana Spencer married King Charles (formerly Prince of Wales) in 1981 and divorced him in 1996 after their marital struggles (*Britannica*, 2024). They had two sons named Harry (Prince of Wales, then changed after marriage to the Duke of Sussex) and William (Prince of Wales, the Duke of

Cambridge). She was seen as a fashion trendsetter because of her multiple choices of hairstyles and fashion decisions, which fueled the media's fascination with her. At one point, Diana was one of the most photographed women in the world. After her divorce from Charles, she used her status and power for good, such as charity organizations about children's issues and AIDS (*Britannica*, 2024). She was the first humanitarian royal and contracted some previous royal behaviors. She talked to people who had AIDS in hospitals and not only spoke to them but also shook their hands. When Diana Spencer became a part of the Royal Family, she also became the subject of the media.

Princess Diana was the epitome of interdependence through her approachability and rapport with the journalists. Furthermore, Diana was a master at charming the media and journalists to benefit her by striking up conversations with them. There were instances where she would feed them information about her life. The interdependence existed through Diana Spencer's dependence on the media and their dependence on her. This is why Diana Spencer, to an extent, welcomed their attention. The second aspect of interdependence is the construction of who she was and her image. It was a double-edged sword. However, the press overstepped multiple boundaries of what was acceptable through harassment. She was "the human face of royalty, the first glamorous and media-friendly British royal" (Coward, 2008, p. 128). One could argue that she was one of the most famous celebrities of that period. The media referred to Diana as "one of the people " and "a saint," which led to a primarily positive representation (Coward, 2008, p. 128). Princess Diana was the first royal member liked by the media because of her behavior towards them and the emotion she showed during interviews. One of the most famous interviews is the Panorama interview, where she opens up about her life after Prince Charles (*BBC*, 1995). There were rumors that Princess Diana even befriended journalists and gave them more insight into her daily life, which helped shape this real person who was considered warm and kind. One example is when she met Kent Gavin, a former editor-in-chief at *Daily Mirror*, who spoke to Princess Diana in a theater where Diana stated that Prince Charles would not attend William's first day of school the following day. In the break of that play, Kent Gavin calls the newspaper *Daily Mirror* to run that story, and Kent states that "Diana giggled" after being told that he had called his job. This example also confirmed that Diana knew there would be a story. She used that to her advantage and even liked it (Angel, 2021, 2:18:00). Kent Gavin continued to be friends and photograph her until her death (Angel, 2021, 2:18:00). Their friendship benefited both. Princess Diana could control the media, and Kent was employed.

Princess Diana's relationship with the media helped fuel her personal and private persona into someone viewed as warm and genuine while simultaneously having control. Because of this, she was immensely different from the rest of the Royal Family up until her death. However, one crucial aspect of her media coverage is that it was not solely positive. The media had "monstrous and incontinent desires to capture her" (Angel, 2021, 2:18:00). The media's desire to capture her every moment furthers the idea that the media is obsessed with the Royal Family. To summarize, Princess Diana was a special woman due to her relationship with the media and their relationship with her.

One of the most salient aspects of Princess Diana's death is its magnitude in its depiction by the media. Princess Diana died in a car accident on 31 August 1997. "Press coverage of her death received more columns per week (following the first two months of her death) in British papers than did World War II" (Chancey, 1999, p. 162). This was the first televised funeral of the British monarchy. "The news was great at depicting this collect shock, grief and anger over the death" (Joke & Noordhuizen, 2024, p. 82). It was portrayed as a huge loss for the whole nation, and everyone in the UK was mourning her (*Britannia, Princess Diana*, 2024). However, the scholars Blain and O'Donnell found that different news sources constructed the public's reaction through rhetorical argumentative ways, such as the language used and expressions by the reporters on BBC One. The multiple rhetoric ways help create numerous emotions: "community, national unity, compassion" (Blain & O'Donnell, 2003, p. 47). The journalists asked leading questions to the citizens to construct this idea of grief (Blain & O'Donnell, 2003, p. 47).

Furthermore, the journalists are torn between their agenda and their responsibility to cover the event (Blain & O'Donnell, 2003, p. 82). However, knowing that all the journalists staged this to control the narrative is crucial. Furthermore, these insights and rhetoric tools created a false view of the event and, thus, a false view of the monarchy itself.

In contrast, the media's representation of Princess Diana shifted after her death, and the media did not report anything bad or good. They tried to be neutral or objective instead in their reports. That could stem from the allegations from the Royal Family and Diana's brother, who blamed the press for the accident (Kuenssberg, 2024, *BBC News*). This also led to regulations and rules that the press had to live by afterward and an ongoing discussion about privacy. In addition, her death also points out the question of privacy and whether one of the Royal Family members is entitled to it. In summary, Princess Diana was the beginning of a change.

Her death sparked a public debate about blame. The media, or the paparazzi rather, were blamed for her death once it was revealed that they followed her car. However, the media or the press did not report on Diana unless it had to do with who was to blame for her death with various explanations as to why she died (Hindman, 2003. p. 675- 679). There were three aspects that the media did after her death. The first was blaming everyone within the press, such as photographers and journalists. The second aspect was to blame the driver, and lastly, to blame it on the turbulent relationship between the monarchy and the press (Hindman, 2003 p. 680). This created an even more estranged relationship between the Royal Family and the press. To summarize, Princess Diana's death is a primary example and the catalyst to a shift in the relationship between the media and the monarchy, hence why she was, and still is, crucial.

Additionally, several news outlets and journalists blamed the paparazzi following Princess Diana's death for years afterward (Edwards et al. 1999, p. 156). However, the French investigation ruled out the possibility of causing the crash to happen. The reason for assigning blame was a direct response to anger from the journalist's side and the readers (Bishop, 1999, p. 93). The reason for assigning blame was done strategically for two reasons. The first was that the newspapers did not want to lose the trust of their readers, so they tried to mimic their anger. The second reason was to live in a discord with The Royal Family. To maintain that, the journalists had to assign blame because otherwise, there would not be a beneficial relationship anymore (Biskop, 1999, p. 93).

Furthermore, there has become a divide between journalists and paparazzi, where the journalists believe that paparazzi do not report objectively (Bishop, 1999, p. 93). Princess Diana altered the relationship between the press, tabloids, and the Royal Family. The most vital consequence is privacy laws, such as The Protection of Harassment Act (HPA). The Royal Family became strict on images and being able to take photos of The Royal Family" in particular Harry and William (Samuelson, 2017, *Time Magazine*). Princess Diana is the primary aspect of the shift between the Royal Family and the press. In summary, one of the primary aspects of discussing Diana is her death, which furthers the notion of the media's role in her life and The Royal Family's.

In conclusion, Princess Diana is crucial when discussing the interdependent relationship between the Royal Family and the press. She was the first to embrace and take advantage of attention from the media to help create an image. However, it is not as straightforward as that because the media had a central role of being intrusive and harassing her while simultaneously

benefiting her in the process. Her death bartered the portrayal of the future representation of the Royal Family because of its magnitude. This furthers the idea of an immensely complicated, interdependent, and beneficial relationship and how that is crucial for the monarchy's survival and the construction or, instead, reconstruction. Princess Diana embodied the relationship and changed the media's role for future royal women such as Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle.

Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton

Similarly to Princess Diana, Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle have been massively represented in the media. While still peaking the public fascination, these two women have been represented in ways that normalize their image with the public. In addition, comparisons have brought up the issues of family background and physical image.

The first royal woman to be introduced is Catherine Middleton (Princess of Wales, Duchess of Cambridge, Countess of Strathearn, and Baroness Carrickfergus). She was born on 9 January 1982 in Reading, Berkshire, England, and is the oldest of three siblings (*Britannica*, 2024). Catherine Middleton was first linked to Prince William in 2002 and eventually married him (*Britannica*, 2024). She married Prince William (formerly Duke of Cambridge) in 2011.

The second subject who will be investigated is Meghan Markle. Meghan Markle (Duchess of Sussex, the Countess of Dumbarton and Baroness Kilkeel) was born on 4 August 1981 in Canoga Park, Los Angeles, USA. She has two siblings from her father's marriage (*Britannica*, 2024). Markle is famously known as an actress from the TV show *Suits*. In 2018, she became part of the monarchy by marrying Prince Harry (formerly Prince Harry of Wales, Prince Henry Charles Albert David, Duke of Sussex, Earl of Dumbarton, and Baron Kilkeel). The representation of Meghan Markle in the media has been of particular interest to the public and spurred the motivation for this research.

Research Aim

This thesis investigates how two women, Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle, have differences and similarities in representation and how they are represented in media, specifically in the British press, from 2015 to 2018. and aim to understand how they are

represented differently and similarly and why through the categories of family and royal etiquette. My research question is:

How are Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle represented in *The Guardian* and *The Sun*?

Literature Review

This literature review will investigate the representation of women in the media and help examine the representation of Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton. This review will discuss the previous research on the representation of women in general and then focus on the representation of royal women and royalty in the media. The most prominent aspects of the representation of women are stereotypes, objectification, and social expectations. The element introduced is the notion of family, more specifically, the notion of family in royal families. The sources in this literature review will help establish a comprehensive analysis of how media helps shape views of women in the public eye and contribute to the research question to answer how the representations of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle differ or are similar in

their portrayal. The sources showcase insight into the perception of royal women in media and highlight the literature gap in feminist studies.

General Representation of Women

Media is crucial when introducing the representation of women in society. Byerly and Ross (2006) argue that media is vital in influencing the public view of women's places and opinions. The news discourse and media had a habit of objectifying women in the news and reducing them to their body parts and not their character and personality (Byerly & Ross, 2006). On the other hand, Byerly and Ross (2006) claim that the representation of women has evolved tremendously and improved with the help of the media. There has been a shift in TV and fiction with the help of numerous feminist theorists. Another aspect is that multiple objections still occur in news outlets and magazines. The objectification reduces the women to solely their bodies. In summary, Byerly and Ross argue that gendered representation has been used throughout history in contemporary research about how media depicts women, which creates a basis for how newspapers portray their subjects. Their key finding is that there has been progress in representation in TV and advertisements.

Stereotypes as Portrayal of Women

Another aspect that is clear about the portrayal of women is stereotypes. Women are underrepresented, and when there is representation, it is in the form of stereotypes of how they should behave and diverse gender roles (Tuchman, 1979). The aspect of stereotypes is more frequent when portraying women than men. Santoniccolo et al. (2023) argue that women are more represented (than men) in objectifying and sexual ways and their bodies. Both scholars concluded that the depiction is filtered through the lens of stereotypes (Tuchman, 1979; Santoniccolo et al., 2023). This furthers the notion that the representation of women is filtered through an idealized view.

Ozer (2023) claims that there is gender bias in sports, which is related to more submissive gender roles for women. Ozer writes, "Women and femininity are stereotyped as nurturing and compassionate, with women placed into more supportive societal roles" (p. 296). Ozer discusses the notion of gender roles, how the media has a crucial role in enforcing that view, and how that is common in portraying women. This focuses on the difference in portrayal, which lays a foundation for how Meghan Markle is represented in media and both women's gendered representation in media.

As seen through the previous research, the following point is frequently represented by women in fashion. Additionally, women have been described as having to be slim and focused more on traditional beauty ideals. Fashion is a common theme concerning bodies when discussing media representation. Goodman et al. (2021) discuss the representation differences between these two magazines and the themes in the papers. The difference he mentions is the evolution of beauty ideals and the different ways of viewing bodies nowadays. This foundation is imperative because Goodman analyzes the representation, and it points out different focuses and reporting in diverse papers. After all, it is similar to a newspaper and has similar components as a tabloid.

Hirdman (2017), like Goodman et al. (2021), argues and examines the body shame that comes from gossip magazines due to the beauty ideal. Hirdman claims that there is a connection between the image in a news magazine and one's own body. The connection is about the feelings of one's body and comparisons. Furthermore, Hirdman (2017) brings up the problematic notion of images and how they contribute to shame about one's body due to the magazines because of comparisons. Another crucial point that Hirdman brings up is the beauty ideal, which furthers the notion that one of the many common themes in portraying women is fashion: the beauty ideals further the idea that magazines are interested in portraying bodies in their text.

Many feminist scholars, such as Byerly and Ross (2006), claim that the representation of women in the media is problematic. Byerly and Ross (2006) claim that print and television news are simply problematic, especially because they have shifted toward celebrities and lighter content.

Tuchman (1979) writes that the media portray women in stereotypical roles such as sexual objects, homemakers, and subordinates to men. Tuchman introduces the term symbolic annihilation, which refers to how women are often ignored in media narratives and the effects of that. This concept frequently used in feminism theory. Tuchman criticizes how the media determines the image of women and how that depiction differs from class.

Women as represented in Fashion

Research about the representation of women highlights topics such as fashion and beauty ideals. Kausturi et al. (2023) introduce this in their paper; they focus on color in fashion trends

in a different method. Their paper discusses the effect that fashion trends have on the audience. However, this is not directly related to the representation of women but to fashion and fashion trends, which is one of my categories within this thesis.

Flood (2019) writes about the correlation between celebrity and intertextuality and how there is a difference in representation and the norms depending on women's race. This article contributes to the research on celebrity culture and the complications of beauty ideals and norms. There is a correlation between intertextuality feminism and celebrity culture, and Flood examines that connection with Solange Knowles to exemplify it. Additionally, Flood (2019) criticizes celebrity culture and its ties to intersectionality. To conclude, Flood investigates the evolving celebrity culture and the values that stem from that intersectionality.

Royalty and Media

Lastly, this review will introduce the representation of royal women and royalty. One clear aspect of the representation of royal women is the societal expectations and how they must navigate their image and behavior in the public eye. Widlak and Guillament Lloveras (2017) argue that Queen Sofia of Spain epitomizes femininity and raises the issue of womanhood. One aspect seen through the representation of not only women but also royal women is that the key findings are that the image of royal women is crucial and that they are represented as primarily mothers and have a traditional view of being portrayed. This portrayal indicates how the royal image is vital, and their findings help contribute to the gender representation of women in media and the societal expectations these women go through. It also helps narrow the focus from the representation of women to different royal women in the same context as the two subjects. Their conclusion provides an understanding of the representation of Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton.

Both the academics Barstow (2000) and Tullis (2024) examine the historical perspective of the royal women's challenges. Some of the challenges relate to the social behaviors and expectations that the public puts on them. Barstow (2000) introduces Queen Victoria's evolution in the representation of gender issues and how she transformed from a traditional housewife to more empowering. Moreover, Queen Victoria used her power to challenge social expectations. Tullis (2024), on the other hand, examines royal power in royal marriages. Tullis (2024) discusses the numerous aspects of the visibility of royal marriages, which help them

stay in power. One crucial aspect of staying in power is through a good relationship with the public. There is a similarity between the scholars concerning how they are perceived.

One key finding is the devotion between the wife and the husband, and more importantly, for the public. The scholar Tullis (2024) mentions the importance of good relationships and dynamics. Lastly, Tullis (2024) mentions how royal couples use their power through their reputation, which is relevant to this thesis regarding public image and the relationship with the public. In summation, the insights from both Barstow and Tullis provide an understanding of royal marriages and their relationship with the public and societal expectations. Even if my thesis is not about the relationships between royal relationships, there is still valuable insight into how these relationships are perceived for my thesis.

Reilly (2006) explores the relationship between magazines, tabloids, and celebrities. In her paper, she introduces multiple topics regarding representation, such as pregnancy and size. One of her findings is that the thinner the celebrity is, the better. This finding shows that fashion and beauty ideals are striking in the representation of women. Moreover, this indicates that tabloids focus on the appearance of the subjects. The second finding was that the tabloids focus on pregnancy a more significant deal when reporting on female celebrities. This also provides an insight into key themes in tabloids. To conclude, Reilly (2006) touches on appearance and fashion as key themes, which helps justify the inclusion of fashion as one of the categories.

The final point about the representation of royalty and the Royal Family is family. Numerous scholars, including Marilyn Morris, discuss this idea and explore distinct explanations for how the public should view the Royal Family. There is previous research about the royal family, mainly regarding royal marriages, but it still needs to be on family structure. Morris (1996) discusses the connection between the royal family, royal marriages, and the press in eighteenth-century England. One of the key findings in this paper is the relationship between the royal family and the media and the desire for the press to disclose and portray the Royal Family.

In summation, Morris describes the change from a harmonious ideal unit family to a patriarchal family in the late nineteenth century. Morris and other scholars have investigated royal marriages. However, family dynamics have yet to be researched to the same extent.

Chambers (2000), as Morris proposes, investigates the idea of family and family values in British popular media. Moreover, she suggests that family is represented as an idealized view.

One way that occurs is through the notion of a white nuclear family and how the public perceives that.

In addition, Chambers investigates how the media enforced traditional family values and how the notion of family ingrained the societal expectation of family and family structures. One aspect that Chambers mentions is how the idea of family has changed from a traditional and patriarchal one to a more inclusive one. This evolution is crucial because it helps us understand the family structure concerning the subjects. In summary, Chambers's analysis of family values has transformed because of the press.

To conclude, this literature review discusses numerous aspects, such as objectification, the sexualization of women, societal expectations, and gender roles. To understand new research, one must first know how the representation of women has changed. The representation of women has evolved from submissive roles to diverse and intersectional roles and representation. Lastly, it investigates how royal women are portrayed and how the family has been crucial throughout history concerning The Royal Family and royal women.

Previous research used discourse or textual and content analysis as their method (Widlock et al., Reilly). This literature review examines the media representation of women and aims to fill the literature gap through textual analysis and feminist media theory.

In the following section, I will provide a theoretical framework for feminist media theory and intersectionality and explain why feminist media theory is necessary to analyze the representations of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle.

Theoretical Framework: Feminism Theory of Media

This section will introduce and examine feminist media theory and intersectionality to investigate the representation of the subjects. The theoretical framework will provide an understanding of media portrayals and add a foundation for the analysis. To analyze the representation of Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton, one must use feminist media theory. The media feminist theory aims to answer the research question through their difference in portrayal in the media. Additionally, this theory mentions the effect that media has in portraying diverse values and perceptions of women. Another reason why this theory is the most applicable is because it examines the expectations and gender roles of women in society. This theory emphasizes the need for intersectional perspectives and portrayals of women.

The reason for choosing feminist media theory is because it challenges media narratives and the portrayal of women. Moreover, it discusses the use of stereotyping and representation of royal women, how the public views them, and intersectional aspects, all elements presented within the theory. This theory has numerous key concepts, such as media processes, power dynamics, and stereotypes. It also contributes to a contemporary portrayal of women. Media feminist theory is crucial because it not only applies an answer to the research question but also applies a richer perception of women. The second reason why feminist media theory is applicable is because it explores the way media has an influence on the public and, thus, societal expectations and values. Media feminism theory, as opposed to feminism theory, aims to understand the media's impact on gender biases and focuses on the media's role in the gendered aspects, which is relevant in newspapers such as *The Sun* and *The Guardian*.

The researcher Linda Steiner (2014) writes that feminist media theory stems from feminist theory. This theory aims to represent women in diverse mediums. Steiner (2014) writes that “gender intersects with other dimensions of identity such as race, class, ability, nationhood, and sexual orientation, as well as with the relations of subordination or domination that these categories carry along” (p. 359). In other words, a prominent aspect of the theory is presenting gender through numerous categories. These are all crucial categories in representing women and in feminist theory.

Feminist media theory connects to cultural studies because of the idea of representation. Feminism media theory is a combination of feminism and media studies that examines how gender, specifically women's roles and representation, are constructed in media. This theory

implies that one cannot have gender without class and race. Moreover, it is not about feminism and the media as separate entities. Instead, it combines them and investigates the complex aspects of media content, media processes, and societal expectations. These three aspects are connected. One aspect of media feminist theory is stereotypes and media narratives. Ott et al. (2019) argue that one of the common aspects of representing women in media is sexual objects.

Stereotypes are frequent in media portrayals when discussing race. Ott et al. (2019) claim that one of the most common aspects of media feminist theory, especially with people of color. Ott et al. propose a feminist study that examines how representations of gender reinforce or challenge traditional gender stereotypes. Ott et al. (2019) explain how stereotypes are even more complicated when one introduces race. It adds a different layer of complexity and intersectionality. Additionally, feminist media scholars concentrate on revealing the limiting nature of media text that reinforces dominant social understandings of sex and gender.

Intersectionality must be used as a theoretical framework in this thesis due to the prominent themes of social class, race, and gender in the analysis. Social class is also one of the themes in the analysis, where it is the focal point of the two subjects and their families. Steiner (2014) writes that an aspect common to media feminist theory is intersectionality. Intersectionality is related to social class, race, and gender, and the discrimination experienced by people of color is analyzed with the help of the critical concept intersectionality.

Additionally, it brings up terms and themes such as privilege concerning whiteness. The advantage of including intersectionality is that it helps portray a complete representation of women and their identities, depending on one woman's race or identity, this representation is different.

I chose media feminist theory and intersectionality specifically because Meghan Markle is biracial, and intersectionality adds a layer of discrimination and privilege to Markle and Middleton's representation. Moreover, it adds a different layer of stereotyping that is vital to examine. Intersectionality, a key term in feminist media theory, helps to portray a more nuanced perspective of women. It broadens the representation of solely white upper-class women and brings a more rounded interpretation and analysis of women. The dual concept is beneficial because it offers a richer representation perspective. To summarize, media feminism theory provides a theoretical framework for representing Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton by focusing on media narratives, stereotypes, and intersectionality. The following

section will introduce textual analysis as the chosen method and explain the data collection of *The Sun* and *The Guardian* to analyze the representation of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle.

Methodology

The qualitative research designs typically indicate the study of social phenomena that are better investigated with conversations rather than statistics (Tracy, 2019, p. 4). Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 24). In other words, this method aims to analyze content. One of the ways in which one can use content analysis is through coding certain themes (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 24).

The units of analysis for this thesis are newspapers from *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. At the beginning of the data collection process, Catherine Middleton was featured in 2000 issues of *The Sun* and 82 issues of *The Guardian*. Meghan Markle was written about in 2141 issues in *The Sun* and 161 issues in *The Guardian*. To limit the material, the time frame that was chosen was between the years 2015 to 2018. However, I quickly realized that specific themes such as social status, family, royal etiquette, and fashion patterns were prominent to answer the research question. The process of coding the themes was in terms of the language used in the headlines and analyzing prominent themes. The language of the representation in the papers of the women was essential in this method.

I did not include all of them to narrow down the process and the number of newspaper articles. Newspaper articles were excluded if they were duplicates of the same paper and if they focused on themes and content different from the ones I had initially chosen. One excluded theme was politics in relation to Meghan Markle in *The Guardian*.

Moreover, the exclusion was made due to different themes outside this thesis's scope. The initial plan when collecting data was to have three categories: work, gender, and fashion. The categories were chosen because I came up with them. There was one newspaper about work in relation to Catherine Middleton's mother, which changed the categories due to that finding.

However, it was clear quickly that the material and the subjects were not described within those specific themes. This was decided after skimming through the headlines in both *The Sun* and *The Guardian*. The categories chosen were family and royal etiquette concerning fashion. The search process for the word family was "Family AND Meghan Markle," and the same for Catherine Middleton. The search process and keywords were Fashion AND Meghan Markle,

the same for Catherine Middleton from 2015 to 2018. The reason for “AND” in capital letters is that it is used to narrow down the search in the database.

Another aspect when I specified the topic was that it did not include 2019. I would not choose 2019 as part of the time frame because most newspapers report that Meghan Markle and Prince Harry are starting to leave the monarchy. The reasoning is that the focus would be immensely different, it would not have answered the research question or the scope of the thesis, and it would be a vastly different thesis with a distinct focus entirely. The initial plan was to use visual analysis as the method, but it had to be altered because of significant issues in accessing the images from *The Sun*. One central issue throughout this thesis was the inability to access the material. This is also why there will be no images within this thesis, and I will focus on textual analysis of the chosen content instead.

When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text. We interpret texts (magazines, advertisements, clothes) to try to understand how people make sense of the world around them. (McKee, 2003, p. 2)

One crucial aspect of this methodology is not to do any value base when analyzing text (McKee, 2003, p.2). The reason is not to become subjective and add one’s opinions to the analysis. In other words, a researcher needs to remain objective. I followed general ethical considerations such as plagiarism, and I did not need to think of the informed consent of research participants because I did not use human participants in my research. Because the data analysis method is textual analysis, I did not use consent forms, autonomy, anonymisation, or confidentiality. The data collected was publicly accessible documents, so there was no need to request access to documents or sign forms for the de-identification or anonymisation of participants (2017, *ALLEA Code of Conduct for Research Inquiry*).

I deliberately chose *The Sun* and *The Guardian* because I was interested in them and because these two newspapers differ in their reporting and have different audiences. Since their reporting differs, this would contribute to a grounded representation analysis. The difference also helps cultivate a different perception of these women because of the texts. By choosing these two newspapers, there is a limitation that exists through excluding other ways of reporting. The limitations of these two newspapers lead to not capturing the complete broad perspective of media representation and media narratives, which limits the understanding of

the media representation of women. Another disadvantage of only choosing two newspapers and its limitations is the editorial biases and framing events from each newspaper.

The first newspaper that will be introduced is *The Sun*. *The Sun* started as *Daily Herald*, a British tabloid newspaper (Allan, 2016, p. 129). *The Sun* and *The Daily Mirror* are the third most popular tabloid newspapers. One vital piece of information to note, typical for all the tabloids, is that it usually needs to be “provocative” to be popular and reach its audience. Tabloid newspapers can also be referred to as “red tops”. Tabloidization is a relatively new term in academia. Still, certain features determine whether a newspaper is a tabloid, and that is seen through the form and content that it discusses. One of the features is how they tend to lean into the emotional aspect when reporting. Usually, there is lighter content and soft news, such as entertainment (Allan, 2016, p. 129). This is seen through the style, form, and language used in *The Sun*. Additionally, *The Sun* is a right-wing conservative newspaper. In summation, *The Sun* reports on the events emotionally.

The Guardian is one of the leading newspapers in the UK (*Britannica*, 2024). There are differences between the two newspapers. Additional points of comparison include differences in respective sizes, news values, mode of address, language (both written and visual), readership, and price, all of which inform distinct strategies of representation (Allan, 2016, p. 125). In other words, there are numerous differences between these two publications, which is one crucial aspect to consider when analyzing the two categories.

Categories

The leading concepts are correlated with the categories of family and fashion. This first section will explore the idea of family, how *The Sun* and *The Guardian* portray Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton’s family members, such as Thomas Markle Sr, Thomas Markle Jr, Samantha Markle, and Philippa Middleton, and the themes portrayed through the numerous subjects. There is only one subject with Middleton because the newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Sun* focused mainly on her sister and not the rest of her family. These four subjects are prominent in the family section. The reason for choosing these two categories is because the material is stored in that direction. The main focus within *The Guardian* and *The Sun* was on family, fashion, and different variations of those two themes. To summarize, two categories were chosen for the analysis; the first one that will be investigated is family, which is concerned with stereotypes. In the following section, I will analyze the representation of Meghan Markle,

Catherine Middleton, and their family members in themes such as criminality, dysfunctional father-daughter relationships, drama, and social class, discussed in *The Sun* and *The Guardian*.

Criminality

An aspect and theme that stands out is how some newspapers focus on illicit substances and substance use and their relation to Meghan Markle, which is why this section is called criminality. I will begin by analyzing the representation of Meghan Markle's family members. This theme can only be examined from a feminist media theory about Meghan Markle and her family. Steiner's (2014) view on intersectionality is highlighted through *The Sun*'s focus on illicit substances and racial stereotypes within this theme.

One central theme when analyzing Meghan Markle, her father, Thomas Sr., and half-siblings Thomas Jr. and Samantha, Meghan Markle's nephew, is illicit substances and drug use. *The Sun* brings up marijuana in numerous newspaper articles with headlines such as "Meg's Nephew: Make Pot Legal." (Hope, 2018, *The Sun*). Within this paper, *The Sun* writes about how Meghan's half-nephew used to smoke marijuana and depicts Meghan Markle as someone who frequently uses substances. Media coverage of drugs has historically vilified racial and ethnic minorities" (Vuilo et al., 2021, p. 942). Meghan Markle's nephew is even described as "Meghan Markle's cannabis farmer nephew has called on the UK to legalise the drug after *The Sun* revealed his aunt wanted to serve it at her first wedding." By portraying one of her extended relatives as "cannabis farmer," the paper is portraying him as a criminal since growing drugs is illegal. It is also illegal to possess, distribute or grow.

Further in the paper, *The Sun* accused Markle's nephew of bringing a substance to Meghan Markle's wedding. "US-based Tyler, who is Meghan's half-nephew, created a strain of the drug called Markle Sparkle to mark her wedding to Prince Harry in May" (Hope, 2018, *The Sun*). *The Sun* is reporting on drug use in this manner for the sole purpose of reporting on drug use because they are non-white. Otherwise, it would not have been an issue or something vital to report. In conclusion, one of the central themes in presenting Meghan Markle's family stems from stereotypes and racism.

Another example of Markle's family as criminals is through the description of Thomas Markle Jr. All of the newspapers regarding Thomas Markle Junior, her half-brother, represent him negatively and refer to criminal activities. One example is "Meghan Markle's half-brother was

twice the drink-drive limit when he put a gun to his girlfriend's head, court papers claim." In other words, this paper not only describes how Thomas Jr. Markle was driving while intoxicated—but also assaulted his partner. Most papers describe how Thomas Markle Jr. is associated with guns.

There is also one paper titled "Meg's Stiff," where *The Sun* wrote about how Markle "put dope in party bags and left in some guests' rooms at her 2011 wedding to Trevor Engelson. In leaked emails, she was urged to buy a certain type of bag by a pal and replied: Already ordered 'em. And teeny ones for the pot" (Beal, 2018, p. 8).

Moreover, this topic only concerns Meghan Markle and how *The Sun* is saying that Markle uses drugs, or as *The Sun* describes it, "she did not smoke too much herself" (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). The paper claims that Markle buys the illegal substance, which is a felony. So the newspaper is accusing her of using and distributing on her wedding day as well by the phrase "the guests were given a bag of marijuana." In the same paper, there were references to her life before marrying Harry, and how she frequently used to smoke, and "she would take a puff from time to time" (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). This is how there is evidence of *The Sun* being racist in how they portray Markle and her family members. 11 papers refer to Meghan Markle, Thomas Markle, and even her extended family, including her nephew, as criminals. There is a vast difference in depicting Markle's family, and the difference in this sentence stems from biases about them. *The Sun* never explicitly describes Markle's racial identity. However, it highlights the substances that Steiner (2014) points out in the theory that there are power structures and how that excludes women of color. These biases and racial tendencies not only shape the public's view of them because of the media but also portray a dysfunctional relationship within Meghan Markle's family.

Dysfunctional Father and Daughter Relationship

The second theme about the representation of Meghan Markle's family is the dysfunctional relationship through Steiner's feminist media theory. The following subjects are represented throughout both newspapers: Meghan's Father, Thomas Markle Sr., and, more specifically, their relationship. Most newspapers point out the friction between Meghan and Thomas Markle. There are 501 papers written in *The Sun* that mention Thomas Markle Sr. All those 501 papers allude to the disruptive relationship between Thomas and Meghan Markle.

Additionally, *The Sun* points out how Thomas Markle Sr. feels and his perspective. The paper's title is "I could die soon, does Meg want to leave it like this? - DAD'S PLEA FOR DUCHESS TO TALK AFTER 2 MONTHS"(Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). Today, Thomas Markle makes an extraordinary public plea for his daughter to contact him because he fears he may not have long to live. The images in the article are of both Meghan Markle and Thomas Markle. Meghan Markle is smiling and wearing a white dress with her hair down in waves. He is wearing a purple shirt in the picture with Thomas Markle. Markle is continuously portrayed as Meghan's estranged father. One example of being described as an estranged father is, "That was the last call. The phone number I had been calling Meghan on is no longer picking up. I don't care whether she's p***** off at me — I want to see her. I just want to have a father-daughter relationship" (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). In this quote, Thomas Markle portrays the dispute with his daughter Meghan Markle and how she will not return his calls.

In this newspaper, Markle refers to the fact that Thomas Markle is a father and the emotional bond that family members share. The title has an emotional and expressive language which *The Sun* uses to convey a message to its audience. Thomas is leaning into the father's role in his needs and power by emphasizing, "I just want to have a father-daughter relationship." This quote also mentions family dynamics and gender roles. Another example is the following quote: "walks around her childhood home in Woodhills, California" (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). Thomas Markle discusses how they, Meghan Markle and Thomas Sr. Markle, would go on "road trips" which refers to the joy of spending time with family.

In the first half of the quote, "I don't care," there is no disregard for Markle's feelings because Thomas says he does not care if she is mad at him. It is solely about his needs and wants. This quote showcases that his desires are more important than Markle's autonomy, decisions, and feelings, and it highlights the power dynamics in their relationship.

One clear aspect is that even when Thomas Markle Sr. is talking about Meghan Markle, there seems to be a statement to either the Royal Family or Meghan because of how he phrases the sentence "Most important is I want to heal any problem with my daughter. I don't care whether that is at the expense of the Royal Family" (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). In other words, the wording of "at the expense of the Royal Family" shows that Thomas Markle Sr. does not have a good relationship with the monarchy either.

Another crucial point of this quote is the use of “father”; there is an obligation to be near her because he is her father. However, Thomas Markle Sr. is talking directly to her in this paper, saying, “If I had one message for her, it would be that I’m sorry for anything that went wrong. I’d like to put our differences behind us and get together. I miss you very much” (Beal, 2018, *The Sun*). In this quote, Markle is taking responsibility for his actions and apologizing to her.

The newspaper “*The Sun Says Mend It*” has a different perspective on the relationship. The paper argues for the friction to disappear and resolve it to benefit Meghan Markle. One citation that sticks out is the phrasing of the description of Meghan Markle. The newspaper is framed from her father’s and the public’s voices. One could also point out how there is no objective reporting. “Thomas Markle claims the ex-actress is controlling. Maybe. But if so, she must learn she is now part of an ensemble cast of bigger stars who are not fans of her ongoing family drama” (2018, *The Sun*).

Interestingly, the title almost represents the voice of the “public.” This showcases editorial biases by framing the paper in a particular manner. It is framed as the fact that Markle is the common denominator, highlighting the subjectivity in their reporting and blaming Markle. *The Sun* perpetuates the idea that there is a feud by using phrases such as “ongoing family drama.” This quote highlights how the “not fans of her” could refer to the public and the Royal Family (*The Sun, London Access News Bank*). “Bigger Stars” is an exciting expression because it also refers to a hierarchy, as she is “smaller” than the monarchy and is not seen as powerful as them. Using the word “controlling” reinforces a negative perspective on Meghan Markle. Additionally, there is a power dynamic and inequality because it is only one side of the situation. This is language frequently used in *The Sun*; the paper focused on emotion when reporting on events and expressive words for entertainment value.

It is important to note that the text ends with that section, highlighting the two separate issues: Meghan’s activities and behavior reflect poorly on others, and her family members’ behavior reflects poorly on her. Revealingly, the headline is “Mend it,” which puts the blame and responsibility on Meghan Markle, although her father is older and the parental figure. The section also highlights the power imbalance and dynamics between the father and the daughter.

The point of the newspaper is the fraught relationship between Meghan Markle and Thomas Markle. When *The Sun* mentions Meghan Markle and her family, it is always in a negative light. In particular, the newspaper reports mainly on relationships and the friction within those,

primarily concerning Meghan Markle. One of the themes in the family category is drama. The underlying theme is that Meghan Markle is creating this tension, although the paper hints at and discusses her family. No papers reference her mother being reported in either of the newspapers. It is almost as if the relatives are wrong or awful because they are associated with Meghan Markle. All the headlines written by *The Sun* are written in bold and are incredibly short. *The Sun* portrays Meghan Markle negatively or her family solely because they are *her* family. The second central theme that *The Sun* discusses is the tumultuous relationship between Meghan Markle and her family. To conclude, the representation and depiction of Meghan Markle's family is negative, which means the same for Meghan Markle.

The second paper from *The Guardian* describes the turbulent relationship between the family. Meghan Markle's Father will not attend the wedding because "he was pulling out amid allegations he cooperated with a Los Angeles-based photo agency to stage pictures of himself preparing for the wedding day" (Davies, 2018, *The Guardian*). This furthers the notion that there is a conflicted relationship between the two. This could connect to how women are perceived by Thomas Markle Sr.'s failure to support Markle added to the media scrutiny by staging paparazzi photos and leaking information about her personal life. Moreover, this act furthers the distance between the daughter and father's actions, and it is clear that this causes Meghan Markle distress because of the wording of "difficult situation." Interestingly, when *The Guardian* reports on Meghan Markle's family, there is an image of her and not the family member being presented. The article follows Thomas Jr.'s perspective of his actions. This also reinforces Meghan Markle's worth and how her public image is connected to her family.

In *The Guardian*, "The Red Tops' obsession with Meghan Markle's father is a warning of the abuse to come - Thomas Markle has been an unexpected gift for the UK's feral press. It may be rosy for his daughter now, but the honeymoon period won't last. *The Guardian* primarily discusses issues related to the subjects in its newspapers; in this case, it discussed "The Red Tops," another word for a tabloid newspaper. This includes the press's or the tabloids' obsession, overbearingness, and fascination with Meghan and her father, who was the subject of paparazzi (Williams, 2018, *The Guardian*). One example of the overbearingness and the media's fascination with Thomas Markle Sr is in the quote, "Every morning, the red tops wake up with a greater thirst for his regular-dad behaviour"(Williams, 2018, *The Guardian*). "Nobody wants their thought processes played out in real time, with photographs" (Williams, 2018, *The Guardian*). This paper discusses Markle's "overwhelming" feeling about the

media's harassment. However, evidence from a more nuanced perspective says the opposite regarding the use of media to reach Meghan Markle.

The Sun and *The Guardian* are similar in terms of the content that they report on. Both newspapers represent the estranged relationship between Meghan Markle and Thomas Markle. "It's no surprise Thomas Markle and his daughter Meghan are now estranged—criticising a woman for having boundaries is a great way to convince her to reinforce them" (Williams, 2018, *The Guardian*) *The Guardian's* headline was extraordinarily long and had more context than *The Sun's* depiction.

The picture of Meghan in a black hat with a coat on exudes control and power because she is at the center, and there is no photo of her father. The paper could also have printed a picture of Meghan because she is the subject of the text. This is the first thing that is noticeable before the text. Interestingly, there is no image of the father, although he is also one of the subjects being portrayed. The feminist theory is that Markle sets boundaries and stands up for herself. The phrase "refusing to accept the daughter's limits." Limits here could be referring to power and the patriarchal view of the relationship. The refusal to accept seems to refer to the fact that there is resistance to the situation and entitlement of Meghan Markle. By rephrasing the estranged with "estranged herself from her father," it refers to Meghan Markle having autonomy and evolving from this perceived harmonic family unit.

One interesting word with the emotional bond in this text is "boundaries." Boundaries usually have a negative connotation; however, it is favorable to have a boundary. Unlike *The Sun*, *The Guardian* does not blame Meghan Markle for the estranged relationship. The decision to write "loving father" in quotation marks hints that her father is the problem and not the opposite, that he is not a loving father, and that he does not care for his daughter. This reinforces the idea of a fraught relationship with her father. The journalist brings up the notion or the belief of what Meghan Markle's childhood seems to be. Compared to *The Sun's* depiction of their relationship, this article almost praises Meghan Markle for her behavior and actions thus far.

In addition, the journalist touches on the Royal Family. Within that paragraph in the article, the paper discusses gender and gender norms with Meghan Markle. By writing the sentence, "And now Meghan has become a high-profile example of some men's inability to understand that women are allowed to say no." This sentence explains the notion of gender and gender norms within society. "Some men" refers to her father and her actions within the monarchy and the

consequence of setting boundaries. In summation, this paper depicts a positive representation of Meghan Markle by discussing her role in her relationship with Thomas Markle and the Royal Family and praising her for standing up for herself.

To summarize, in this section, the dysfunctional father-daughter relationship points out how Meghan Markle and Thomas Markle Sr. have different perspectives on how this relationship is. On the one side, there is an urge to reconcile with each other, and on the other hand, there is a belief from *The Guardian* that Meghan Markle has the right not to forgive her father. The contrasting perspective is also evident in the newspapers. *The Sun* is leaning into the friction while simultaneously blaming Meghan Markle, and *The Guardian* has a more nuanced perspective. Unlike *The Sun*, *The Guardian* does not portray Samantha Markle in any of its papers. However, it does report on Thomas Markle and Thomas Jr. The subject described the most throughout is Thomas Markle regarding the dysfunctional relationship. However, there is not only dysfunction between Meghan and her immediate family members but also with her royal in-laws.

Drama

One of the prominent themes is the portrayal of drama, particularly between Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle, which, in media feminism theory, are stereotypes described in the contrasting portrayals of the royal women. The theme and the headline are named because the newspapers refer to them in that manner. In the newspaper headline “The unmerry Wives of Windsor - WHAT’S GONE WRONG WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY’S FAB FOUR? Kate is desperate not to put a foot wrong Dresses down and barely says a word Critics say she doesn’t doing Forceful, opinionated Hollywood go-getter Oceans apart from reserved sis-in-law Harry’s angry at ‘no red carpet’” from *The Sun*, it introduces Catherine Middleton and Megha Markle and the comparison between the two. Middleton is described as “dresses demurely and hardly utters a word, apparently desperate never to put a foot wrong. Many people admire her for it” (Wilson, 2018, *The Sun*). It is interesting how the word “demurely” is used about both the clothing and her personality and how that has a positive effect, which is seen through “most people admire her for it.” Markle is described as “forceful, opinionated and go-getting,” which seems to be a positive representation at first glance. However, the newspaper starts portraying Markle as “difficult” and “demanding” (Wilson, 2018, *The Sun*).

She opposes the norms of royal life and the precedent of a royal woman, unless she is Catherine Middleton and acts demure and traditional to British Royal values, she is seen as other to the Royal Family and to British society. Language such as “difficult,” “demanding,” or “opinionated” presents Meghan as someone ambitious and powerful. This language represents her as someone who should be considered an outsider by the public. Although Diana also opposed royal norms, she was loved because she charmed the public with her personality, and Meghan does not share that quality. The media loved Diana because she worked for them as much as she worked for the Royal Family. However, Meghan does not have the same relationship with the press as Diana does, and her behavior is seen as contrarian and selfish, whereas Diana’s opinionatedness is seen as “free thinking” and creative.

Her reputation as a demanding woman is also connected to the representation of her relationship with Catherine and William. The phrase “a growing friction and equally frosty” refers to the fact that there is already friction between the two families, Catherine Middleton, William, and Meghan Markle, on both ends. The sentence in the section is “Then came Meghan” (Wilson, 2018, *The Sun*). The decision to write “Meghan” indicates that she is the problem and the catalyst for all of this drama; the growing friction is her fault. Interestingly, there is nowhere in the paper any indication of no admiration for Markle. Usually, *The Sun* refers to Meghan Markle as “Meg,” so using her full name adds to the dramatic effect of the portrayal.

One could argue that it is only the language that *The Sun* uses; however, Catherine Middleton, or “Kate” as *The Sun* calls her, has never had her name printed in bold. This furthers the notion that mainly blaming her for issues is a tremendously common theme in *The Sun*. The most prominent is the description of princes and their wives: “two dashing royal princes and their dazzling wives.” The sentence “A growing friction between the two princes has been matched by an equally frosty relationship between their two wives” also refers to the brothers’ dynamic. Moreover, the paper discusses this dynamic in greater detail and reveals a change in the relationship. “After years of enjoying a particularly close relationship with his younger brother.” The phrasing of “enjoying particularly close” portrays Prince Harry as having a long and good relationship with his brother. The quote “Harry was annoyed that his brother had not “rolled out the red carpet” for Meghan” again refers to Meghan Markle as the catalyst of the estranged relationship. This quote also touches on the relationship between Prince William and

Meghan Markle, and he does not treat her with kindness. The paper also insinuates that the change in the brothers' dynamics is Meghan Markle's fault.

One abundantly clear aspect is the comparison between Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle and the family dynamics throughout this section. "The unmerry wives of the Windsors" (Wilson, 2018, *The Sun*). This title is also interesting because it has a double meaning; it is also fascinating because it seemingly describes the relationship between Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle and their roles as wives. *The Sun* does not elaborate on their duties as wives. This paper examines the relationship between Meghan Markle and Harry Windsor. "What Meghan says goes" (Wilson, 2018, *The Sun*) refers to how he listens to his wife, relates to her needs, and cares for her. Even if the title has "wives" in it, Wilson, the writer, does not elaborate on how Catherine Middleton is a wife. Nonetheless, it does bring up "royal duties". Still, it does not explicitly portray how William and Catherine's marriage is. However, it refers to the relationship, the continuous irritation between the families, and, more importantly, the brother's relationship. In this paper, there is an emphasis on social and gendered expectations in a relationship and a marriage. To conclude, the paragraph discusses and investigates the drama within the relationships between the Cambridges and Sussex families.

The third and final subject to be discussed and represented is Samantha Markle in *The Sun*. In the paper from *The Sun* titled "Meg Sis Rap," MEGHAN Markle's sister Samantha blasted reports she is on a police "fixated persons" watch list. The 53-year-old turned up uninvited at Kensington Palace from Florida in October and has accused the pregnant Duchess of Sussex, 37, of abandoning her family. Cops are said to have put her on a list of "obsessional" people. But MS sufferer Samantha said: "This is ridiculous as I'm in a wheelchair." Kensington Palace declined to comment."(*The Sun, Meg Sis Rap, Access NewsBank*). This paper brings up boundaries as well, in the sense of using "uninvited" in the paper. By phrasing "accusing her of abandoning her family."

This quote could refer to the patriarchal view of women and how they should be caretakers and not leave their family. It furthers the notion of *The Sun* portraying Markle's family as criminals, with the descriptions of "fixated persons," meaning that Samantha is obsessed with Meghan Markle. There is also, again, an emphasis on racial stereotypes and a need from the media to paint them as criminals. It could also refer to feelings of ill-treatment with the word "abandoned" (*The Sun, Meg Sis, Access Newsbank*). Samantha Markle might have felt

abandoned by her half-sister, which is seen as negative because of societal patriarchal norms. To conclude, the portrayal of Samantha Markle highlights the gender norms and stereotypes about Meghan Markle.

Social Status

In contrast to this idea of negative portrayal, *The Guardian* and *The Sun* refer to Catherine Middleton's family positively. One family member frequently discussed in the media is Pippa, Philippa Catherine Middleton's sister, and some newspapers covered Middleton's sister Pippa's wedding. One of the central themes about Middleton's sister Philippa and her husband, James Matthews, is social status, which can be seen in the wealth of a "hedge fund." The term "hedge fund" could also be associated with the upper class, which is one of the components of intersectionality.

Moreover, Matthews owns and is an executive chief of an Eden Rock hedge fund. Intersectionality could also be seen through the values of finding a match within the same class, which is expected within the monarchy. The term "hedge fund" indicates the luxurious lifestyle and the class differences (Pedris, 2016). There are also different expectations concerning the social class one shares.

Additionally, the newspaper also portrays Catherine Middleton's family members. However, this newspaper contrasts the women's family members and the portrayal of women in general. Consequently, Pippa is also portrayed as belittling. The newspaper compares portraying Pippa to Meghan Markle's half-brother, Thomas Jr Markle. When the paper states his mischiefs, it is based on his character, not his appearance. This shows a gendered representation between men and women, "Kate Middleton's sister Pippa was complimented on her figure in the most indelicate and impertinent way, and afterwards her party planning business was mocked" (Bradshaw, 2018, *The Guardian*). This is a clear difference in how Thomas Markle Jr is represented, "The obvious candidate here is her half-brother Thomas Markle Jr, who was arrested in January after a drunken row during which he is alleged to have brandished a gun. But then Meghan Markle isn't thought to be particularly close to Thomas, so nothing can be read into him not getting a stiff white envelope through the post". This quote also relates to Meghan Markle's behavior and how Thomas Jr. affects her. This article shows a clear difference between Thomas Jr. Markle and Philippa Charlotte "Pippa" Middleton. It showcases that even the family members of the monarchy are being compared to one another.

Interestingly, there is a description of Philippa's appearance, "complimented on her figure" (Bradshaw, 2018, *The Guardian*). This quote reduces Philippa Middleton to her body and her appearance rather than her qualifications. Furthermore, she is portrayed as less than. Additionally, a member of the Royal Family should not have a "normal job."

Still, *The Guardian* does not mention Thomas Markle Sr.'s appearance but instead repaints him as a criminal, mentioning how he was arrested. However, the paper's subject was apparently Philippa Middleton Spencer and her business. To conclude, Philippa Middleton is portrayed as less than in relation to social status and goes against societal expectations.

One central aspect of social status and class in relation to the representation of royal women is weddings. This paper starts by explaining Philippa's wedding. "Pippa wedding latest: class war over, Spencer Matthews and Uncle Gary still at large - The more we learn about the society bash of the year, the more we look forward to Spence and Gal, shirtless on the dancefloor" (Petridis, 2016 *The Guardian*). It brings up her fiancé, James Matthews's brother Spencer Matthews, and references to the brother of the Groom, "The Press is having a field day with this one," which refers to and discusses the central role that the media have in curating the image while also condemning the monarchy and their extended family. Uncle Gary's actions exemplify the contrast between the etiquette used and the social status. This newspaper brings up Catherine Middleton's naughty uncle, or rather his questionable manners, in the correlation between Middleton's uncle and Philippa's fiancé's brother. "Furthermore, something about Spencer Matthews recalls Kate Middleton's naughty Uncle Gary, whose looming presence was, by some considerable distance, LiS's favorite aspect of the last royal wedding: naughty Uncle Gary, you may recall, lived in a house in Ibiza called La Maison Bang-Bang, persisted in referring to himself as the Duke of Slough and further distinguished himself by hoofing up a load of coke in front of a tabloid reporter, then offering to set him up with £600-a-night Brazilian prostitute" (Petridis, 2016, *The Guardian*). In other words, this headline brings up different newspapers, such as Lis, and the questionable actions of the family members linked to Princess. It also means the idea of the "traditional" wedding, with a messier and raw version. The newspaper criticizes Gary's behavior and ties it back to Catherine Middleton. *The Guardian* also seemingly brings up the social status and privilege within the same article, "turning our class system on its head through a love match," and the headline "Yes, nothing says the old social order is shattered into a million pieces quite like the Duchess of Cambridge's sister marrying the chief executive of a hedge fund with a portfolio worth more than £1bn, does

it?” (Petridis, 2016, *The Guardian*). In other words, the paper explains the social class within the monarchy, the privilege that emerges from that, and the social expectations of marriage with someone in the social class, which most of the Royal Family is expected to do. The decision to write how much Philippa Middleton’s husband’s net worth is exemplifies social class and the portrayal of intersectionality.

Furthermore, this paper touches on scandals related to the family being associated with the Royal Family. In conclusion, this newspaper questions the extravagant wedding and the behavior of the males portrayed. This is not criticized in *The Sun*. Interestingly, there is no “load of cocaine,” which is a felony, but there is no suggestion or description of Uncle Gary being a criminal. It is simply glossed over and seen as “naughty.” On the contrary, there is solely a positive representation of Spencer Matthews and most of Catherine Middleton’s extended family members.

The Guardian’s headline is longer and depicts a different context than *The Sun*’s. The reason for that could be that the headlines are immensely longer. It also adds a different context in relation to the subject. The language is more formal as well, whereas *The Sun* refers to Meghan Markle as “Meg” in countless papers such as “Meg’s Tour Guide” and “Mend It, Meg.” In contrast, *The Guardian* writes “Meghan Markle” unless it is a quote from one of her family members. In one of the newspapers, she was also called the “Duchess.” Additionally, referring to Meghan Markle as “Duchess” adds a formal tone and respect for her title in the monarchy, unlike *The Sun*.

Both newspapers report on the same events and the same family members. *The Guardian* also discusses the fraught relationship between Meghan Markle and her father, Thomas Markle. Both newspapers mention Markle’s fraught relationship; however, *The Guardian* seems more nuanced about the situation. *The Sun* has shorter headlines, such as “Mend it,” which are bold and use expressive language. Furthermore, the headlines are more sensationalized, which creates a different frame of events and perspectives of the situation and subjects. There were only two pages when discussing the family with Catherine Middleton. There were over five pages where the family was discussed in *The Guardian*. There is a vast difference in reporting and representation concerning the two women in terms of the papers. In *The Sun*, there are more than 50 pages for Meghan Markle and closer to 40 pages for Catherine Middleton. However, that is not as shocking considering that *The Sun* reports solely on entertainment and focuses greatly on drama. However, this is the case for *The Guardian*, which reports on soft

news, such as entertainment, and hard news, such as politics and business news. *The Sun* also had 937 times where the word “fashion” was brought up in the papers within the fashion category with Meghan Markle. Some of those are duplicates, which are only present in *The Sun*. In contrast, there is an equal representation in fashion than in family. However, in both cases, there are always more reports on Meghan Markle (Duchess of Sussex, the Countess of Dumbarton and Baroness Kilkeel) than Catherine Middleton (Princess of Wales, Duchess of Cambridge, Countess of Strathearn, and Baroness Carrickfergus).

To conclude, there are similarities in the events and the subjects that they portray. Some similarities are in how both *The Sun* and *The Guardian* usually use similar language and words to represent Meghan Markle (Duchess of Sussex, the Countess of Dumbarton and Baroness Kilkeel) and her family members, Thomas Markle, Thomas Markle Jr. The most common word is “estranged.” However, the newspapers had different perspectives on the relationship; these were the words they used to represent the family relationship, and the examples, such as Thomas Markle Sr not wanting to go to Meghan Markle’s wedding. However, it is abundantly clear that *The Sun* has biases towards Meghan Markle due to the negative depiction of the “drama” and because of the numerous papers portraying substance use. It depicts Markle as the catalyst for all the negative aspects, and although she is not the primary subject of the article, the article still finds a way to blame her. Both newspapers are criticizing the subjects’ behaviors. However, *The Sun* has a far greater negative depiction of Meghan Markle throughout every newspaper. The media, or *The Sun* particularly, have traditional gender roles, the idea that particular women are better, and specific behaviors.

Additionally, *The Sun* has more papers comparing the two women, Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle, than *The Guardian*. There can be multiple reasons for this, with Markle being American and different from other family members. The second aspect of the negative portrayal and *The Sun*’s racial tendencies is in how Gary, Catherine Middleton’s uncle Gary, is described as “naughty” while involved in criminal behavior. However, *The Sun* portrayed Markle Thomas Jr as a criminal for allegedly using and distributing illicit substances, as well as Meghan Markle. However, when Middleton’s uncle is buying sex, he is portrayed as “naughty,” as his behavior is almost silly and not that wrong or criminal in comparison to Markle’s family members. One difference is that there is a lot of portrayal and description of the monarchy from *The Sun*. The second difference is that Samantha Markle is not portrayed in *The Guardian*.

One aspect that is abundantly clear throughout all the themes is that there are gender norms and stereotypes in all of them. When *The Sun* writes about Meghan Markle and her family, it is always in a negative connotation, which is racial stereotypes. Interestingly, *The Sun* pins the two women against one another on all accounts.

Thomas Markle Sr, Thomas Markle Jr, Samantha Markle, and lastly, Philippa Middleton are being discussed. Both Meghan Markle's family and Catherine Middleton are investigated in relation to criminality. There is one specific theme that overlaps with the representation of Samantha Markle, which is criminality. However, *The Guardian* speculated that Markle's childhood seemed to be wrong. *The Sun*, or Thomas Markle Sr., portrayed Meghan's childhood and their road trips as good. The family relationship is immensely nuanced, which is seen through Thomas Markle Sr.'s actions and the specific language used. There are many emotions and passion about Markle's family members, using words such as "pleading" and "I just want a father-daughter relationship." Moreover, there is an excellent emphasis on emotion within the family. *The Guardian* and *The Sun* constantly report on the subject's feelings. There is also a difference between Thomas Markle Sr. and Samantha Markle, their family, and The Royal Family, using words such as "abandoning your family." which refers to women's gender norms.

In the drama category, there are contrasting views of Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton and their partners. There is also an interesting aspect of the vast difference in how King Charles is portrayed in *The Sun* compared to Thomas Markle. However, this is immensely speculative considering that only one newspaper, *The Sun*, discusses King Charles concerning Meghan Markle.

In the following section, I will introduce and examine the second category of royal etiquette and fashion and have a separate discussion with newspapers from *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. The concept of fashion and how that is portrayed in regards to Meghan Markle (Duchess of Sussex, the Countess of Dumbarton and Baroness Kilkeel) and Catherine Middleton (Princess of Wales, Duchess of Cambridge, Countess of Strathearn, and Baroness Carrickfergus) will be analyzed. Additionally, I will examine the relationship between etiquette and fashion in connection with Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle.

Royal Fashion and Etiquette

Fashion has always been a topic portrayed in The Royal Family, and it is especially relevant in the period this research is concerned with, particularly with these two women. Newspapers and media have always portrayed what members of the Royal Family wear as they are seen as trendsetters. Fashion can be a form of self-expression and curate a lifestyle one should obtain. The lure of fashion trends lies in how society and the public interpret and use them. The topic of fashion and the monarchy has always been relevant and depicted because of what the clothes represent. The clothes have been used as symbols for a national institution (Merck, 2016, p. 12). The clothes that the monarchy wears are part of promoting the British fashion industry (Merck, 2016, p.12).

Additionally, fashion can help curate an image of the monarchy and how the public should perceive it. One vital aspect is that the media coverage of fashion promotes Britain not only as a fashion center but also as a manufacturing nation, a center of craftsmanship endorsed by royal appointment (Meck, 2016, p. 258). In other words, there is a correlation between the visibility of the monarchy and how essential outfits are because of the symbol of the nation. Once a member of the monarchy puts on a hat or a dress, they are promoting their nation and the image of the monarchy. Additionally, the use of fashion permits the audience identification with the royal family (Meck, 2016, p. 258). Although, there is also the idea that fashion has become privileged (Meck, 2016, p. 258). This is why fashion is a focus of this research, and the source material is highly focused on it. There are many mentions and presentations of each woman through the lens of their etiquette and their style in each newspaper.

Etiquette

One central theme is etiquette and how members of the Royal Family should present themselves in fashion and appearance. This is prominent in both Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle's depiction in the newspapers and is seen throughout every paper on fashion. Manners and etiquette are already recognized as a source of data on class-cultural behaviors, signals, social valuations, and justifications of status (Voyer et al., 2022, p. 3). Etiquette is associated with class. The fashion that the Royal Family wears is a symbol of class (Voyer et al., 2022, p. 3). Etiquette is also concerned with presenting ourselves in certain situations, such as shaking hands when meeting regular citizens.

Furthermore, fashion in relation to class has always been present, and there are rules by which one has to know. The notion of etiquette concerning the royal family differs between them and other classes and people. Etiquette also concerns how to differentiate classes (Voyer et al., 2022, p. 3). Furthermore, changes in etiquette lead to social changes (Voyer et al., 2022, p. 3). There is etiquette for particular situations, such as work and weddings (Voyer et al, 2022, p. 3).

Etiquette is vital to fashion for The Royal Family. Every Royal Family member must follow etiquette, such as wearing dresses of appropriate lengths and clutches to hide the chest. Some other fashion rules are bags, clutches for hiding cleavage, no cleavages, hats for formal occasions, and pantyhoses (Adhav & Grego, 2019, *Cosmopolitan*). Black dresses are usually worn in mourning, and one must have at least one in one's wardrobe. One of the royal etiquette is to wear tights not only for weddings but also for other formal occasions. All the royal women have to wear purses in their left hand, and the reason for that is that they can wave, shake hands, and greet the public. One of the rules for weddings is that the late Queen Elizabeth II has to approve of the wedding dress (Adhav & Grego, 2019 *Cosmopolitan*).

Furthermore, there are rules about which color of nail polish is allowed, and they are permitted to wear natural colors. Another fashion rule is to wear gloves, which are used to protect themselves from getting germs from other people. Lastly, makeup should look natural (Adhav & Grego, 2019 *Cosmopolitan*). Pop culture sources such as *Cosmopolitan* have emphasized Royal family members and their etiquette, which justifies the use of this source in connotation to a pop culture topic.

Catherine Middleton: Epitome of Royal Etiquette

Catherine Middleton has seemingly mastered the rules of royal etiquette. This chapter will discuss and examine the representation of Catherine Middleton in the fashion category. She is perceived by the public to be the epitome of royal etiquette and is portrayed positively in the media because of it (*The Sun*, 2018). The data presented in this section will demonstrate her positive portrayal.

The Guardian primarily portrays Catherine Middleton positively. 25 papers portray fashion about Middleton from 2015 to 2018. Furthermore, she is being praised for repeating the same

outfits. One headline reads, “Kate Middleton: fashion saviour for Patsy Kensit and women everywhere - Women’s lib takes another leap forward: thanks to the Duchess of Cambridge, it is now OK to wear the same outfit more than once.” *The Guardian* portrays Middleton and praises her solely because of her actions and social status.

Catherine Middleton is the epitome of etiquette, which means that she follows the fashion rules that are expected of her, such as dresses covering shoulders and wearing huge hats and gloves to formal occasions (Adhav & Grego, 2019, *Cosmopolitan*). This is highly portrayed in the material, and the papers praise her appearance in multiple ways. One of the papers highlighted that her hair was “an envy of the nation” (*The Sun*). This quote discusses two aspects: one is her beauty, and the second is the symbol of the nation through the representation of her appearance. Another example of being the epitome of royal etiquette is when *The Sun* describes her hat as “THIS elegant design” (*The Sun*, 2018). One striking aspect of the representation of Catherine Middleton has been described as classy and elegant. To summarize, Middleton is described as beautiful and someone who comprehends the monarchy’s image through her fashion.

One area of criticism from *The Guardian* is the media’s obsession with Middleton’s fashion when she is pregnant. In one paper, the author criticizes the idea of appearing presentable while pregnant and the media’s constant obsession with women’s appeal and beauty. Freeman writes, “I think the fact that Kate Middleton-as-was wears anything that could even be described as “a wardrobe” while eight months pregnant – as opposed to, say, a giant sack, a pair of mismatched pyjamas from The Gap in XXXL or an animal onesie from the Primark sale – proves superhuman qualities on her part” (Freeman, 2018, *The Guardian*). Throughout the paper, there is an argument about how the main focus or objective should not be on how or what Middleton wears. The headline “Forget the Duchess of Cambridge’s pregnancy wardrobe – the woman is a superhero - Why are the media obsessed with how Kate is dressing during her difficult pregnancy? It’s a miracle she can even smile in public, let alone wear anything other than a giant sack”. questions the media’s fascination with Catherine’s pregnancy and fashion choices yet again (Freeman, 2018, *The Guardian*).

There is only one negative representation in the newspaper *The Guardian*, where the title is “Do I want to dress like Kate Middleton? Everyone knows that celebrities don’t buy their own clothes, right? We can’t applaud the Duchess of Cambridge for her fashion sense when she has a stylist” (Freeman, 2016, *The Guardian*). The newspaper criticizes Catherine Middleton as a

fashion icon. It points out that it is only because of her accessibility to fashion stylists, and “Kate Middleton should be a fashion icon because her late mother-in-law was.” It states that the public should not follow trends or wear the same outfits solely because Middleton is royal and privileged, as seen in “You are better than this. we all are better than this. Even Kate, probably”(Freeman, 2016, *The Guardian*). A strong criticism from *The Guardian* is that most newspapers report on multiple fashion trends and how readers can and should keep up with them. However, the trends are never-ending. There is also criticism about whether to follow these trends and the consumer culture that both women and the media perpetuate. The second criticism is the idea of putting these royal women on pedestals due to their privilege.

The Guardian uses fashion trends to catalyze different issues and Meghan’s personality. *The Guardian* has fewer newspapers concerning fashion than *The Sun*. Both newspapers use Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton as fashion ideals. However, *The Sun* does more than *The Guardian*—there are numerous comparisons between Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle’s fashion decisions. There is a positive representation of both women within this category, although there is a tremendously more negative representation of Meghan Markle.

This category has substantial similarities and differences; interestingly, if there is a positive representation, it concerns the female subjects’ appearance. There is a greater focus on how Markle dresses than Middleton, possibly because she is newer to the required etiquette than Middleton. Catherine Middleton has been a member of the monarchy for several years. More papers depict Markle in comparison to Middleton.

All of the papers written in *The Sun* are positive about Middleton, using words and phrases such as “Make your winter coat a fit-and-flare style - Kate Middleton has long favoured the figureflattering shape” (2018, *The Sun*). Middleton is portrayed as more conservative in her fashion style than Markle. One of the most common words that *The Sun* portrayed Middleton as “classy” about her fashion. Even Middleton’s makeup is described as “Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton’s make-up is the royal deal.” However, there is a strong contrast in the more “hard-edged” Markle regarding her fashion. In conclusion, the representation of Catherine Middleton is positive because she follows the etiquette rules and does what is expected of her, which is why both the public and The Royal Family admire her. Through the analysis of headlines about Catherine Middleton, it is demonstrated that she is perceived as the ideal figure of a royal woman because she submits to the rules that were set as royal precedents in past generations.

Meghan Markle: Breaking Royal Protocol

Meghan Markle is contrasting the idea of royal etiquette when she enters the Royal Family. *The Guardian* is concerned with popular culture topics in British media. There are 44 papers about fashion in *The Guardian* regarding Meghan Markle from 2015 to 2018.

The newspaper “100 days a Duchess: what Meghan’s style has shown us about her new royal life - Since marrying Prince Harry, her tights, messy bun and the way she crosses her legs have all caused controversy. But what do her fashion choices really tell us?” (Cartner-Morley, 2018, *The Guardian*) includes three images of Meghan Markle that depict the evolution of her style until she meets Harry.

In the first image, right under the headline, Markle wears a black dress with a sleek bun and a hat. It is expected to wear huge hats when you are associated with The Royal Family because it is the royal attire, so she fits the royal rules. The second image is of a blue and white striped shirt with rolled-up sleeves, white pants, a sunhat, and a black purse in her hands. Her hair is in a messy bun. The third and final image is lighter colors, closer to the royal attire than the rest.

There are similarities in all three images and the clothes that she is wearing. In all of them, she wears dresses covering her shoulders and a hat, indicating that her style is changing and that she is learning royal etiquette. This is a royal family member’s etiquette, hence the fashion decisions. The first images are all outfits post-her wedding, and then further down the article, it portrays her style before her wedding. There is a vast difference. She wears lighter, more neutral colors, which is one of the attire she expected to wear. Meghan’s natural style had to evolve into a more “appropriate” style to curate the Royal Family’s image, such as wearing tights and clothes that do not show her shoulders. This article emphasizes how crucial it is for the Royal Family to present themselves and the consequences of not doing that.

The central aspect of representing Meghan Markle in fashion could be described with three words: “Breaking royal protocol” in *The Guardian*. These three words refer to her fashion decisions, such as wearing her hair in a “messy bun,” a more “casual” look, and her actions. The word choice is fascinating because it shows that Meghan Markle contrasts royal etiquette regarding how to behave within the royal family and monarchy. The traditional way of dressing and how Meghan Markle conveyed that particular image are discussed and criticized.

Moreover, it contrasts with the rest of the family members' classy attire, where Markle has a messy hairstyle and a more casual look. This is a theme that is very much present in both the categories. The Newspapers point out how Meghan Markle is different from the members of the monarchy. As a member of the monarchy, one should have no cleavage and shirts or dresses that cover the shoulders. This is the etiquette and rules of the late Queen Elizabeth II (*The Sun*, 2018).

This paper reflects a difference in Meghan Markle's style before becoming a member of the monarchy. It touches on the adaptation one needs to do to be accepted within the monarchy. Before her marriage, her hair was mostly down, and she wore pants instead of dresses. This article mentions, "As a rule, the British public likes its royal women to be as glamorous as possible, but around the duchess there is a new appetite for *deshabille*." In other words, this quotation points out expectations within the Royal Family, and Markle goes against that notion by wearing pants.

Furthermore, her style is more casual than expected or desired. In conclusion, this article brings up points about how Meghan Markle discourages or disobeys the rules within the monarchy, and this theme is exclusively related to Markle's portrayal. By contrasting "royal women" to be as "glamorous" and the word "*deshabille*," she is directly portraying not wearing any clothes while also not being classy enough.

One interesting point in this newspaper is the public's contrasting opinions on Meghan Markle and the contrasting idea of the social expectations being put on her primarily. One example is when the paper discusses

Our new royal is compelling to watch because the balancing act she must pull off is almost impossible. The Duchess of Sussex is expected to show us the way towards the royal family of the future, but without showing disrespect for the royal family of today. We cheer her on for breaking royal protocol, but we admire and praise her when she remains aloof of the scandals that swirl around her. (Cartner-Morley, 2018, *The Guardian*)

In other words, this quote discusses the expectations of how the public wants Markle to act. Not only does she need to appease the Royal Family, but she also needs to appease the public. To stop contrasting the royal etiquette, Markle needs to look appropriate but also not look too classy because the Queen should be in focus. "In the royal glamour stakes, the duchesses must

do the heavy lifting on the global stage without looking as if they are upstaging the monarch” (Cartner-Morley, 2018, *The Guardian*).

Meghan Markle and Harry are being praised for knowing how to pose. The image shows Harry and Meghan Markle hugging and walking away from the camera. Harry is wearing a blue tux, and Meghan Markle is wearing a white coat and a dress underneath. This article mentions the best way to pose and how fashion is an essential aspect of that. Cartner-Morley compares Meghan Markle and Harry to Philippa “Pippa” regarding their fashion. Meghan Markle and the power of a stylish rear-view image - How you look from behind is now as important as how you look from the front, as the royal engagement pictures, Roland Mouret and Instagram will attest (Cartner-Mortley, 2017, *The Guardian*). The back view has form as a way of showcasing a pert bottom. “Meghan’s soon-to-be sister-in-law once removed, Pippa, knows a thing or two about that, ever since her backside became the breakout star of the last royal wedding” (Cartner-Mortley, 2017, *The Guardian*). The paper brings up the impact of “rear view.” Cartner-Morley discusses the latest fashion and how that is to “wow from the back, as from the front” and uses Meghan Markle and Harry as an example of the trend. To summarize, the newspaper highlights fashion trends, using Meghan Markle as the pinnacle of “trend.”

Additionally, particular clothing items and the connotation of that specific item are highlighted. This is seen in one of the papers from *The Guardian* titled “The meaning of beige tights: they show what the Windsors will do to Meghan - The Duchess of Sussex isn’t bringing her plucky Americanness to the royals, as many had hoped. Instead, they are forcing their flesh-coloured hosiery on her” (Freeman, 2018, *The Guardian*). When discussing Meghan Markle and fashion, the title concerns how she has to adapt or change her style because she is part of the royal family. “Beige tights” is one of the examples on how the Royal Family needs to dress, and they are not allowed to wear flesh colored tights.

Additionally, by analyzing the title solely, there is resistance because of the word “forcing,” which means the paper claims that this was not her idea or what she wanted. The pronoun “they” refers to The Royal Family. The journalist analyzes and decodes the tights’ representation and how Meghan Markle would have never worn sheer tights before her engagement and that she would have most likely not used any tights, let alone one with sheer color. This shows a clear theme of etiquette when associating with the Royal Family. The paper investigates that some of the public is opposed to these fashion rules and is eager for some

change by writing as “many had hoped.” The condemnation of royal etiquette is clearly different from how *The Sun* describes the fashion rules.

The theme of contrasting the royal etiquette is also presented in *The Sun*: “QUEEN RULES OK, MEG? - Fabulous DAILY NOW SHE’S A DUCHESS: THE ROYAL FASHION REGULATIONS.” (*The Sun*) This newspaper discusses the etiquette that the late Queen Elizabeth II decided, which is what the title refers to: “Queen Rules.” Those rules include royal women wearing nude stockings in public and “no black at that day time events.” The sentence after that is, “The former Suits star will have to ditch the dark shade she favours.” The word “favours” means that Meghan Markle enjoys wearing that color but is forced to stop. Moreover, the reason is that the late Queen Elizabeth II decided that wearing black is solely for mourning. Furthermore, this headline alone examines the idea that there are rules that one needs to obey and that there is no fighting that. Additionally, this article examines the lack of agency in presenting yourself. By starting the headline as a question, it discusses the lack of control in that representation and the etiquette. It refers to Meghan Markle and the late Queen Elizabeth II. Moreover, the consequence of adapting is that it strips away her identity. The paper is written almost as a list, with an example of the fashion rule and then an example of how Markle contrasts that.

To conclude, *The Guardian* and *The Sun* explore the theme of etiquette and conforming to the standards or expectations of the Royal Family and the public. In contrast to the paper above, the title “QUEEN RULES OK, MEG?” (*The Sun*) portrays Meghan Markle as the sole person who opposes these norms and expectations within the monarchy.

There are some positive representations and instances where Markle conforms to royal etiquette. The author Kelly writes, “Meghan Markle looked absolutely stunning at the British Fashion Awards this week in this deceptively simple frock that showed everyone in the room how to dress to impress.” The end of that quote, “showed everyone in the room how to dress to impress,” could refer to everyone who dislikes her and perpetuates the fashion ideal. However, even if there is a positive representation, it is only because of the adaption or because she is similar to Princess Diana’s fashion style (*The Sun I Did It Di Way - PRINCESS INSPIRES MEG’S TOUR STYLE TRIBUTE TO MUM-IN- LAW*). *The Sun* describes, “Meghan’s clean, classic looks strongly resembled those that made the late Princess of Wales a fashion icon.”

She is referred to as “classy” in this quote, but that is only because of the comparison to Princess Diana.

However, despite a positive representation of her etiquette and fashion, there is still a theme of contradicting the etiquette, such as when *The Sun* reported in the paper titled MEG AND ME - THE TAG TEAM - Fabulous DAILY, that she left the tag of her clothes on. “When the Duchess stepped out on her tour of Tonga wearing a red Self Portrait frock, she left the clothing tag on. There it was, trailing underneath the hem—and the world cringed”. Surprisingly, Markle is not being ridiculed for this but praised. The article does not seem to share the same opinion as “the world”; instead, it explains. We totally get it, Meg - you’re trying to save the royal coffers by wearing that £380 number once then returning it afterwards. For that, we salute you”. Another example of the importance of fashion rules is “I’m sure it’s a wellknown but unspoken rule” (Dirvanauskas, 2018, *The Sun*).

Interestingly, breaking royal protocol had massive repercussions, which are seen in the massive negative depiction of it as “wrong” by the public. This could be one reason for Markle’s alteration of representation. The minute that she did, she was described as “chic,” “royal,” and “stunning” (*The Sun*).

There is criticism from *The Guardian* regarding fashion trends, how readers can and should keep up with them, and how Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton are a primary example of contributing to this. However, the trends are never-ending. There is also criticism about whether to follow these trends and the consumer culture that both women and the media perpetuate. *The Guardian* uses fashion trends to catalyze different issues in relation to Meghan’s personality. *The Guardian* has fewer newspapers concerning fashion than *The Sun*. Both newspapers are using Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton as fashion ideals. However, *The Sun* does more than *The Guardian*—numerous comparisons between Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle’s fashion decisions. There is a positive representation of both women within this category, although it is tremendously more negative of Markle.

This category has substantial similarities and differences; interestingly, if there is a positive representation, it concerns the female subjects’ appearance. There are many royal fashion rules that the members of the Royal Family have to follow. There is a greater focus on how Markle dresses than Middleton, possibly because she is newer to the required etiquette than Middleton. When she enters the Royal Family, she wears jeans and has messy buns because she is still

learning to present herself as royal, and she comes from a background where wearing jeans does not seem to be anything wrong. Catherine Middleton has been a member of the monarchy for several years. Within that time, she presented herself as a “royal,” which is dominant in the media’s positive representation of her.

In contrast, the media portrays Markle more negatively. However, once Markle starts to dress appropriately, she is suddenly “fashionable,” “classy,” and “gorgeous.” All the papers compare Markle to Middleton regarding their personalities or fashion choices.

In summary, both categories, royal etiquette in fashion and family, are used to compare Meghan Markle and Catherine Middleton. There is a belief that to depict one of the women, one has to do it differently. Most newspapers regarding Meghan Markle point out how her style became more “royal” after she met Harry, which is highly reflected in her fashion styles. Some papers also question whether Markle needs to adapt her style to be accepted.

One aspect similar to this category is how the newspapers use these two women as fashion ideals by telling the readers or the public to dress like them. This is evidently seen in newspapers such as “*Kate: The Savoir* and “*The Sun I Did It Di way - PRINCESS INSPIRES Meg’s TOUR STYLE TRIBUTE TO MUM-IN- LAW*” (*The Guardian, The Sun*). According to *The Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers, the royal women are the epitome of beauty when dressed as expected of them. The women’s styles mirror one another regarding fashion items, colors, and associates. Both of them wear huge hats, which is one of the royal etiquettes that is needed when being in the monarchy. These hats are all required for formal occasions in this category. It is also clear that there is much criticism concerning Markle’s outfits from *The Guardian* and *The Sun* when she has not worn the appropriate clothing. The media mirrors the idea of royal etiquette in how they portray Meghan Markle. This furthers the notion of the emphasis on presenting as “royalty” in terms of the social expectations being put on them. There is also an expectation to adapt seamlessly to the Royal Family and royalty role. To summarize, the newspapers portray royal fashion and royal etiquette through the two women.

The reason for the negative representation could be racism. *The Sun* has biases against Markle, as seen in their representation and extensive criticism of her in their headlines and the language used. The biases are seen through their language when portraying and discussing her clothes. Interestingly, when examining the fashion category, the women have the same style as what is expected by the monarchy. When the two women wear and act as “royals,” which is how they

curate their image in public, the media portrays them positively. The description of royalty and acting as a royal was not portrayed in the media for Meghan Markle until she changed her wardrobe in 2017. Still, even then, there was a more significant deal of negative depiction, and *The Sun* uses different versions of Markle's name negatively, such as "Meg Exit" and "Meg's Stiff." To summarize, *The Sun* portrays Markle as someone who is not only different in relation to her fashion etiquette but also in her personality.

The contrasting ideas of fashion rules, such as wearing black jeans, mean that Meghan Markle appears in opposition to traditional ideas that stem from the monarchy, which results in a negative portrayal of her personality and character.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analyzed findings have been fascinating. The newspapers represent these women more differently than similarly. This thesis investigates whether the representation of royal women has similarities and differences. One substantial difference is the expressive language when representing Markle with Middleton. I have explored the representation of Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle within *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. Catherine Middleton's representation is far more positive than Meghan Markle's.

In the first part of the analysis, there were themes of criminality, social class, and relationships between Meghan Markle's family and Catherine Middleton's. *The Sun* and *The Guardian* extensively reported on the dysfunctional relationship between Thomas Markle and Meghan Markle. *The Sun* often portrayed Markle's family as criminals in terms of illicit drug use, which is related to intersectionality and racial stereotypes in feminist media theory. Some findings were also the conflict between not only Catherine Middleton and Meghan Markle but also their husbands, William (Prince William of Wales, Prince William, Duke of Cornwall and Cambridge, William Arthur Philip Louis, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn and Baron Carrickfergus) and Harry (Prince Henry Charles Albert David, Duke of Sussex, Earl of Dumbarton, Baron Kilkeel). *The Sun* portrayed Meghan Markle as the catalyst of all the friction in her relationships with both Catherine Middleton and her father, Thomas Markle Sr. The theme of social class is directly related to gender norms and intersectionality because of the privilege and the social class they belong to.

The second and final category, royal etiquette and fashion, discussed the importance of understanding etiquette within the monarchy. The result negatively portrays Meghan Markle because of her diverging and contrasting fashion styles. She opposes the patriarchal traditional norms within the monarchy. Catherine Middleton is portrayed as royalty because she wears fashion etiquette and complies with her expectations, resulting in a predominantly positive representation of her. In summary, the most striking finding is the emphasis on royal etiquette and the different representations.

Further research is needed on the vitality of etiquette within the monarchy. Substantial evidence on that topic has yet to be available in a modern context. Additionally, due to the need for more scholarly evidence, more evidence is needed about the relationship between the monarchy and fashion. Further research on the monarchy and media also needs to be done. Another example of additional research regarding media relationships with famous women in the modern era is required. More substantial research within the persuasive era regarding social media with women in the monarchy needs to be conducted. Additionally, further research is needed on the visibility of the monarchy and the repercussions of that visibility through the media landscape.

Lastly, this thesis is immensely topical regarding the recent controversy with Catherine Middleton and the monarchy's portrayal of themselves. The second and final reason this thesis is also topical is because of the public's exploration of social and gendered expectations. Moreover, it draws attention to diverse perceptions and norms that differ based on gender and how they are perceived about gender roles. Media has a crucial role in this because it can either perpetuate these expectations or challenge them, which both royal women do individually. To summarize, this thesis is timely due to the controversy regarding Catherine Middleton and the examination of different gendered expectations.

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