

In Defence of Monarchy

Why Monarchy is a Good Form of Government Undeserving of its Notoriety

By Amelda Sabrina Law

Australia demonstrates an outflowing of love and public sympathy for the Royal Family and Queen Elizabeth following her funeral on September 19, 2022.¹ Support for the Monarchy within the country has experienced a stark increase for the first time in years despite demands for a Republic. Research conducted by the Menzies Research Centre ascertained this statement as support for persisting as a Monarchy has soared from 43% in January to 57% in the week of the queen's death.² However, 47% still hold tight to the change from Monarchy to Republic. The question remains, should the Monarchy as a state system be more generally acknowledged as a good form of government?

State systems have been debated for centuries, specifically which system accommodates society best. One of the issues that are at the forefront of discussions is the debate of whether Monarchy is good or bad; would it be more favourable if one person retains the highest authority, or should the people as a whole have such privilege, like that which is exhibited in democratic nations? Why is it so? And what does this entail? Britannica delineates the term, 'Monarchy' as a "*political system based upon the undivided sovereignty or rule of a single person.*"³ Soehino wrote a thorough analysis of state systems and understandings concerning theories from renowned philosophers in Ilmu Negara. He promulgated how Aristoteles was the first philosopher to introduce Monarchy as we know it today.⁴ He describes it as a form of government in which one person acting in public interest holds the highest authority in a state. In the book, he goes into thorough detail about why he confers the title of 'best form of government' in which one person holds the most authority to Monarchy. However, in discussions concerning state theories, students would habitually disagree with the philosopher; they would claim that immoderate power corrupts rulers.

-
1. BBC. 2022. "Queen Elizabeth's Funeral: For One Day, the Nation Stood Still." *BBC News*, September 19, 2022
 2. Sky News, 2022. "Support for Monarchy in Australia Shifts after Queen's Death." *Skynews*. September 20, 2022.
 3. Dorling, Kindersley. 2020. "Fun Facts on History and More!" *DK Find Out* January 2, 2020.
 4. Soehino, *Ilmu Negara* (Liberty, Yogyakarta, 1980), 26.

The idea of one single wealthy, privileged family fuelled by nepotism and familial bonds retaining the highest authority permanently does not sit well in their minds. This essay encompasses the defence of the Monarchy State system, and how it does not deserve its infamous identity.

The Argument of Absolutism

During the first few months of Law classes, there is a decipherable general consensus against Monarchy in the university demographic. Students often advocate for ‘equal rights,’ and claim that Monarchy lays a path for absolutism to ensue. The most prominent arguments concern how this system does not allow room for citizens under the Monarchy to take the sovereign’s role for the crown is handed down by inheritance. After all, is not equality and impartial justice what governments and society are aiming towards?

That being said, this argument is not sufficient to underpin the impropriety of Monarchy. Not all systems of Monarchy authorise the monarch to act according to whatever they please. In the United Kingdom, the 1215 *Magna Carta* was the first legal literature that recorded the principle that delineated how the king and his government was not above the law. Hence, it can be inferred that if law is above the king, and the king has to be subservient to said law, then, the monarchy does not have to be a system to advance absolutist ideologies because the law controls the king. Consequently, the king’s rule is limited by the law. As John Locke, a liberalist English philosopher explains, the Monarch’s Rule does not have to be absolute.⁵ The system of Monarchy can either be absolute or constitutional, in which the monarch’s power is limited. To put it into perspective, it is acceptable to refer to an example to help illustrate this. The system adopted by the United Kingdom is Constitutional Monarchy.⁶ Queen Elizabeth was head of 53 Commonwealth countries covering Africa, Asia, the Americas.⁷ During her reign, the commonwealth evolved in diversity, becoming more multicultural. The Queen often proclaimed for cultural tolerance, as inferred from her frequent visits to each of the commonwealth countries to discuss issues of political

5. UK Parliament. 2022. “Magna Carta.” UK Parliament. 2022.

6. Soehino, *Ilmu Negara* (Liberty, Yogyakarta, 1980), 110.

7. Rose Slavin, “The Royal Family’s Visits around the Commonwealth.” *The Royal family*, 2018.

and economic significance. In July 27, 1979, the Queen flew to Lusaka, Zambia, just four days prior to a Commonwealth heads of government conference aiming to ameliorate an impending conflict between the African Commonwealth Nations and then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Dr Sue Onslow from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies described the specific political climate that backdropped this event, the establishment of a black moderate government led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. However, the general belief maintained that the former prime minister, Ian Smith, who was a white man, had a hand in discreetly controlling the establishment. There was an underlying public presumption that Margaret Thatcher was going to maintain a predominantly white stance in the conference. This disconcerted the Commonwealth Member States. The Queen recognised that she had to ease tensions between Thatcher and the Member Nations that were involved. Thus, she brought the subject to Zambian President and host of the meeting, Kenneth Kaunda. She encouraged support for Thatcher, rather than condemning her. This, and her legitimate presence within the conference played a substantial role in how the Commonwealth Member States and then British Prime Minister reconciled their differences.⁸ This instance exhibits how monarchs have the power to limit governmental rule and influence. If the Queen had not been at the event and tensions had risen, there would be unrest between Great Britain and the Member States as Thatcher would have absolute power, this may not be to Britain's benefit in this case. The Queen hindered this from happening. She acted as a form of 'checks and balances' to ensure that friction did not continue and negatively implicate England and its international relations. This instance illustrates how Absolutism can be prevented through Constitutional Monarchies. Thus, systems of Monarchy may become the opposing force needed to impede absolutism.

8. Channel 5. 2020. "The Queen's Relationship with Margaret Thatcher | Elizabeth: Our Queen | Channel 5." Channel 5. November 3, 2020.

Monarchy as a Tool for Economic Advancement

Systems of Monarchy have been proven to avail economies. Monarchies and their outward exhibitions of kingships entail a certain name surrounding them, their presence can be commodified as a part of their brand. This can be a tool for economic advancement as evinced by the chart below.⁹

Does The Monarchy Benefit The UK's Economy?

Annual contribution of the monarchy to the UK economy in 2017



The graph above puts into perspective how the British Monarchy plays a role in advancing The United Kingdom's Economy. Brand Finance has gathered that the British Royal Family is worth £67.5 billion with a great part of this number coming from its brand. In 2017 alone, it has had an effect on the UK's economy with a total contribution of £1.8 billion with a £550 million contribution to the industry of tourism, crown estate surplus to the tune of £329 million, as well as £150 million contribution to trade affairs. The UK brought in more profits because of the Crown. This substantiates how the Monarchy is beneficial to the UK's economy.

9. Niall McCarthy. 2017. "Infographic: Does the Monarchy Benefit the UK's Economy?" Statista Infographics. Statista. November 23, 2017.

Good Monarchies

Systems of Monarchy, when implemented correctly, are compelling tools to achieve great power and national advancement. Monarchy is not as bad as it is frequently painted out to be. To further advance the argument that Monarchy is not deserving of its notorious title, it is agreeable to refer to one of the greatest monarchs in classical history. During the Neoclassical age, Louis the Great, also known as Louis XIV was the perfect illustration of a triumphant absolute monarchy and a robust, centralised state. He ruled as the king of France from 1643-1715 from his palace at Versailles. His rule is considered by many scholars to be France's most brilliant period, often being referred to as "Le Grand Siècle" (the Great Century). Between 1667 and 1697, he led a military conquest to increase France's rule by broadening its eastern borders. He also went on to take part in a hostile European coalition during the War of the Spanish Succession with aims to certain the Spanish throne so that his grandson may sit upon it.¹⁰

By revolutionising and realising the peak of absolute power for the French monarchy, King Louis XIV secured France as a dominant European power. He had an agenda for the advancement of France's economy. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a minister during the king's reign introduced mercantilist policies that inhibited imports from outside the country by means of imposing high tariffs. He also invigorated export industries as sales abroad generated more income for France. In this way, Louis XIV promoted economic development through the promotion of trade and industry.¹¹ Moreover, France experienced a period of great betterment in arts and culture, it was a golden age of art and literature. His residence, the Palace of Versailles became a symbol of grandeur, art, authority, and ultimate power.¹²

10. BBC. 2018. "BBC - History - Historic Figures: Louis XIV (1638-1715)." Www.bbc.co.uk. November 11, 2018. https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/louis_xiv.shtml.

11. History.com Editors. 2018. "Louis XIV." History. A&E Television Networks. August 21, 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/france/louis-xiv>.

12. Jarus, Owen. 2017. "Palace of Versailles: Facts & History." Live Science. Live Science. October 5, 2017. <https://www.livescience.com/38903-palace-of-versailles-facts-history.html>.

Thus, in many ways, Louis the Great, propelled France to glory and cemented the country to be one of the strongest nations standing today in the twenty-first century. Though he is but one of the myriads of monarchs who have had benevolent influences for the betterment of their nations, whose rules if all explained within this essay will take an undetermined amount of time to finish. But for the sake of argument, the list of names comprises Suleiman I of the Ottoman Empire for codifying a centralised legal system (kanun),¹³ James I of England for unifying Scotland and England,¹⁴ Cyrus II of Persia for being the founder of the Achaemenian empire,¹⁵ and Victoria of the United Kingdom for the extension of the British Empire,¹⁶ among many others.¹⁷ The rules of each of the mentioned names, including Louis XIV's, exhibit and evince what an influential means a Monarchy can be for state development, and how good Monarchies do exist. As long as the type of Monarchy that is implemented coincides with the needs and is upheld without adherence to forms of absolutism, Monarchy remains an appreciable form of government.

Conclusion

To conclude, Monarchy is one of the better forms of government and is not deserving of the negative stigma surrounding it. When implemented precisely according to the needs of the nation, it can ascertain economic growth, political welfare, and stability. Not every system of monarchy confers governance and executive, legislative, and judicative powers to the monarch to act according to whatever they see fit. Other forms such as constitutional monarchies exist, and as seen in the case of the United Kingdom, proves to be greatly beneficial for nations that uphold it.

13. Parry, V.J. 2019. "Suleyman the Magnificent | Biography, Facts, & Accomplishments." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

14. Connie Fisher. 2016. "James I (R. 1603-1625)." *The Royal Family*. February 26, 2016. <https://www.royal.uk/james-i>.

15. Frye, Richard N. 2018. "Cyrus the Great | Biography & Facts." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cyrus-the-Great>.

16. Williams, Edgar. 2019. "Victoria | Biography, Reign, Family, & Facts." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Victoria-queen-of-United-Kingdom>.

17. ListVerse.com Editors. 2010. "Top 10 Greatest Monarchs." *Listverse*. August 11, 2010. <https://listverse.com/2010/08/11/top-10-greatest-monarchs/>.

Arguments against Monarchy with fear of absolutism underpinning them should be subsided, for Monarchy may just become the opposing authority needed to hamper absolutism. By having multiple entities such as Parliament and Crown to corroborate that certain motions are not made to fulfil a certain political agenda that may, in the long run, hurt the nation. Moreover, the brand and public admiration that comes with a Monarchy can be commodified for the betterment of a state's economy. The British Royal Family has demonstrated this as in 2017, the total contribution gathered from the royal family's branding comes to the tune £1.8 billion, money that can be utilised to ameliorate state welfare and advance the British society in the way the government sees best. Furthermore, History has proven that Monarchies have been successful in economic developments and trade, state regulation and administration, as well as advancements in arts and literature. Examples include Louis the Great, who, through economic reformation and cultivation of art and literature, ascertained France's place in history and in the world today among other competitive nations.

Queen Elizabeth's recent death has highlighted the necessity for a good monarch, who is able to fulfil the nation's goals and aspirations, and who has the people's welfare at the forefront of their minds. Monarchy as a state system should be more generally acknowledged as a good form of government. It is undeserving of its notoriety and the negative stigma that surrounds it. Thus, If absolutism is to be hindered, if economic development is to be attained in a timely manner, and if welfare and state development are to be promoted suitably, then, Monarchy should be the state system of the highest consideration.

Bibliography

- BBC. 2018. "BBC - History - Historic Figures: Louis XIV (1638-1715)." Www.bbc.co.uk. November 11, 2018. https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/louis_xiv.shtml.
- . 2022. "Queen Elizabeth's Funeral: For One Day, the Nation Stood Still." BBC News, September 19, 2022, sec. UK. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-62960196>.
- Channel 5. 2020. "The Queen's Relationship with Margaret Thatcher | Elizabeth: Our Queen | Channel 5." Www.youtube.com. November 3, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7oQWfXSNbU&t=165s>.
- Connie Fisher. 2016. "James I (R. 1603-1625)." The Royal Family. February 26, 2016. <https://www.royal.uk/james-i>.
- Dorling, Kindersley. 2020. "DK Find Out! | Fun Facts for Kids on Animals, Earth, History and More!" DK Find Out! January 2, 2020. <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/more-find-out/special-events/how-is-british-crown-inherited/>.
- Editors, History com. 2021. "Louis XIV." History. November 10, 2021. <https://www.history.com/topics/france/louis-xiv..>
- Frye, Richard N. 2018. "Cyrus the Great | Biography & Facts." In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cyrus-the-Great>.
- History.com Editors. 2018. "Louis XIV." History. A&E Television Networks. August 21, 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/france/louis-xiv>.
- Jarus, Owen. 2017. "Palace of Versailles: Facts & History." Live Science. Live Science. October 5, 2017. <https://www.livescience.com/38903-palace-of-versailles-facts-history.html>.
- ListVerse.com Editors. 2010. "Top 10 Greatest Monarchs." Listverse. August 11, 2010. <https://listverse.com/2010/08/11/top-10-greatest-monarchs/>.
- Niall McCarthy. 2017. "Infographic: Does the Monarchy Benefit the UK's Economy?" Statista Infographics. Statista. November 23, 2017. <https://www.statista.com/chart/11972/does-the-monarchy-benefit-the-uks-economy/>.
- Oram, Kirsty. 2016. "The Role of the Monarchy." The Royal Family. December 9, 2016. <https://www.royal.uk/role-monarchy>.

- Parry, V.J. 2019. "Suleyman the Magnificent | Biography, Facts, & Accomplishments." In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Suleyman-the-Magnificent>.
- Rose Slavin. 2018. "The Royal Family's Visits around the Commonwealth." The Royal Family. April 17, 2018. <https://www.royal.uk/royal-familys-visits-around-commonwealth-0>.
- Sky News, and 2022 - 12:32pm. 2022. "Support for Monarchy in Australia Shifts after Queen's Death." Skynews. September 20, 2022. <https://www.skynews.com.au/australia-news/politics/support-for-the-monarchy-soars-among-australians-following-an-outpouring-of-love-during-queen-elizabeths-funeral/news-story/16cc255e6a193542a34a648aacf44e2a>.
- Soehino, *Ilmu Negara* (Liberty, Yogyakarta, 1980).
- UK Parliament. 2022. "Magna Carta." UK Parliament. 2022. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/originsofparliament/birthofparliament/overview/magnacarta/>.
- Williams, Edgar. 2019. "Victoria | Biography, Reign, Family, & Facts." In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Victoria-queen-of-United-Kingdom>.