Relationship between British subcultures and the Royal Family

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1. Introduction

This paper will discuss the phenomenon of British youth subculture, provide a brief overview of several notable examples and delve into their relationship with the British royal family. By analysing literature about the topic, mainly literature about the various subcultures, both from an academic and member standpoint. This paper aims to provide an overview on the relationship between the British Monarchy, specifically during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, and the youth subcultures emerging in post WWII Britain, namely Teddy boys, Mods, Rockers, Skinheads and Punks. The period of time taken into consideration is the 2nd half of the 20th century, roughly between 1950-1985. A specific time window is not necessary as the subcultures themselves are fluid and cannot be neatly arranged into time periods. For example, the Teddy Boys, the earliest post-war British subculture, coexisted with the punks, decades later. The chosen time window ends with the punk subculture exiting the public and media spotlight. Subcultures that will be discussed are as follows: Teddy Boys, Mods, Rockers, Skinheads and Punks. The paper will aim to provide the context in which these subcultures came to prominence, and the wider geopolitical picture regarding Britain. The main avenues through which the subcultures channel their feelings towards the government and the Monarch are music and appearance. "You could often judge someone's musical allegiance by the clothes they wore, long before you spoke to them." (Décharné 2-3) Every subculture has a distinct appearance and a musical style. Rock n roll was at the time the music of rebellion and was considered harmful to the fabric society. Most subcultures listened to rock n roll, although not exclusively. Rockers, self-evidently, listened to rock n roll. The Mods had their own brand of rock n roll best exemplified by *The Who*, the quintessential Mod rock band. "The Who were pure and complete Mod." (Cohen 215). Another important factor are migrant influenced genres and music made by black artists, such as soul, reggae and ska, which played a key part in shaping the identity of a number of subcultures, most notably ska and reggae for skinheads. In *Spirit of 69 – A Skinhead Bible*, George Marshall spends a significant amount of time listing the various ska and reggae groups that were important to the skinhead experience. This clearly illustrates the importance of that music to the subculture. Reggae emerged later than rock n roll, and did to some extent carry the same fear factor, as it was both the music of the youth as

well as the music of the migrants. “Reggae addresses a community in transit through a series of retrospective frames” (Hebdige 31). Punks as a subculture grew out of a musical movement. The most relevant, at least to this paper, punk band are the *Sex Pistols*, as they are one of the first examples of mainstream animosity towards the Monarchy and the Queen. Further details of each subculture will be discussed in their own sections.

2. Context

To define the relationship between youth subcultures in Britain with the Royal Family one must first define the term subculture itself, as well as the relevant historical context in which the subcultures presented in this work were most prominent. A subculture is simultaneously easy to spot and difficult to define. Dick Hebdige even defines the term as “loaded down with mystery”. (Hebdige 4) It is deeply connected to the concept of culture, as it can be seen as a subdivision of a wider culture. So firstly, one must define the notoriously hard to define concept of culture to be able to further define subcultures. In the *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Hebdige uses two definitions. First one, being more conservative, defining culture as something sacred, inspired by the past and something to strive for. It mostly rests on the idea that culture is defined by appreciation of concepts connected to past ideas of culture such as opera, ballet, classical music, theatre, basically the pop-culture idea of high-culture. The other definition draws from work done by Williams: “… particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture.” (qtd. in Hebdige 6). In the context of this paper the first definition can be seen as conservative, traditional and supportive of the values of monarchy, while the second definition is more progressive and offers a broader outlook on what can be considered a culture. For example, if strictly adhering to the idea that culture is defined by the past, higher social standing and what are considered great works of art, then subcultures and movements such as Mods, Rockers, Teddy Boys and countless others cannot be considered as a part of culture as they are inherently opposed to or separated from the mainstream culture. The second definition allows us to view them as separate bubbles in the wider, in this case, British culture. Being a Mod does not necessarily make one less British, at least on the surface. George Marshall often uses the word cult to describe skinheads in *Spirit of 69- A Skinhead Bible*. A cult is a group of people separated from the main body of the wider society, and perceived as external, different. The word carries a mostly negative connotation. Merriam-Webster defines the word as “great

devotion to a person, idea, object, movement, or work". This can be translated as participants of the subculture are greatly devoted to their ingroup. But are they? Is the subculture the most important thing in their lives? It may seem so but it is not exactly clear. The media muddied the water a lot during the reporting on the Teddy Boys and the violence between the Mods and the Rockers. "… they had been the first in the firing line – a newly identified target for everyone to throw stones at" (Décharné 3) Were these really fanatical groups of young people willing to fight for their cause, whatever it might be, or were they just young people with nothing much to do being pushed into the mould of "troublemakers" by the media and wider society? The latter seems to be the case. No subculture discussed in this paper can be described as a unified movement. They are closer to fashion trends than to fanatical followers of some ideology. Society was rapidly changing at that time and people seemingly were not ready for it. The war was over, it has been won, the austerity measures have passed, but the youth were unhappy and unfulfilled and the older generations were seemingly unable to cope with that. There was a growing generational divide between those born pre-War and those born after. This divide is best showcased in *The Who's* song "My Generation" and its opening lyrics:

People try to put us d-down (talkin' 'bout my generation)

Just because we get around (talkin' 'bout my generation)

Things they do look awful c-c-cold (talkin' 'bout my generation)

I hope I die before I get old (talkin' 'bout my generation)

The new generation feels alienated by those before them. "They (parents) could not see the way in which the clothes, the pills and above all the music were actively used by the kids as catalysts, and modes of expression." (Cohen, 214)

The world changed so much in so little time that parents find it difficult to relate to their children as their lives are just that much different. The values they grew up with are not the same ones their children will grow up with, the fabric of society was changing and the all of this must have been scary for them. And doubly so for their children. The rebelliousness of the music and the subcultures enjoying it obviously brought upon them the ire of the wider public as it was perceived to be an attack on the core values of society.

In the *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* Stanley Cohen details how, the perception of Mods and Rockers changed in the eyes of the British public due to the influence of the press. They went from being simple loosely defined youth subcultures to folk devils threatening the very core of the British way of life. They were demonised in the media to the point of exclusion from the main group, a soft wall of separation between the culture and subculture was hardened, but not

to the point of them being considered separate, new cultures, only to the point of them being perceived as a hostile threat which corrupted the youth and the nation.

> In the gallery of types that society erects to show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated, these groups have occupied a constant position as folk devils: visible reminders of what we should not be. The identities of such social types are public property and these particular adolescent groups have symbolized – both in what they were and how they were reacted to – much of the social change which has taken place in Britain over the last twenty years. (Cohen, 2)

Another important actor in this work will be the British royal family, officially known as the House of Windsor, or Mountbatten – Windsor. In the case of this paper the most important member of the Royal family is the Queen. Queen Elizabeth II ruled from 1952 onwards, being the longest reigning British monarch and the public face of the Royal family during the interval this paper is concerned with. When considering the relationship between the subcultures of Britain and the Royal family, we must keep in mind that it is her that is the at the centre of that relationship. The Queen is one of the most, if not the most, important and recognizable symbols of the UK. Hebdige describes her as one of the "traditional notions of Britishness", on par with the Union Jack. (Hebdige 65) She is praised in the national anthem, she is the head of the Anglican church, she is the face on the money, the face on the portraits in government institutions, the highest authority of the land and beyond. The Queen can be seen as the ultimate representative of the authority, and also the highest representative, the literal face of Britishness.

Another important factor which influenced the youth subcultures was the changing political and economic landscape in post WWII Britain. Although they were the victors of the war and managed to avoid most of the war's destruction, when compared to the rest of Europe, Britain was still deeply affected. Although the war had ended, rationing of various commodities stayed in place for almost a decade. Décharné and Cohen mention multiple times that the Edwardian style adopted by the Teddy Boys came as a result of post-war austerity. Most importantly for this paper, in 1952 Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne. The relationship between the people and the Monarchy is the relationship between the people and her as she was the face of the Royal family, the Queen in the national anthem, the face on the money in people's pockets. Although the royal family is not deeply involved into the dealings of the state, they are still influential and are a powerful symbol of the British empire, and empire which was at a turning point after WWII. "She also had a special relationship with her Prime Ministers, meeting with

them on a regular - usually weekly - basis. She was famously able to 'encourage or warn' whilst always remaining politically neutral." (royal.uk)

The rapid technological advances of the time brought the royal family closer to the common people. In 1957. The Queen held a Christmas address to the nation, a tradition established in 1932 by her father. This was the first televised Christmas address and it reduced the distance between the monarch and the people from thick palace walls to the thin television screen. The Christmas address is sourced from the official website of the British Royal Family. "Today is another landmark because television has made it possible for many of you to see me in your homes on Christmas Day… I very much hope that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct." (Queen Elizabeth II, 1957)

Even in victory the empire began to crumble as various colonies demanded self-rule. The period from the late 1940s to the early 1970s was characterized by rapid decolonization, violent repression of independence movements, botched partitions (India) and loss of international prestige. BBC describes it as such: "By the end of the decade (1950s), things were not going well." This paper will avoid going into much detail in every major happening at the time but will focus on a few key moments that shaped society in Britain. Probably the biggest shock to the entire global order of things was the massive shift in geopolitical world order following the end of WW2, where Britain went from the most dominant empire in the world that could project power anywhere at any time was replaced by the USA and the USSR and went from the leading player in global goings-on to almost a secondary actor. Writing for BBC, Dr. John Darwin puts the position in which Britain found itself thusly: "The British found themselves locked into an imperial endgame from which every exit was blocked except the trapdoor to oblivion." This loss of global influence led to American cultural exports gaining ground in Britain and beginning to influence the youth. American music became the music of young people, with the Teddy Boys being a prominent early example. Décharné describes them as a mixture of uniquely British fashion trends and American music. American influence especially was a great signifier of the changing times. From WWI to the end of WWII the UK and the US had a "special relationship", as Winston Churchill put it, in which they were more or less equal partners. Although this relationship was of a geopolitical nature, it was still important to the cultural goings-on in both nations. The relationship changed after the end of WWII as Britain has lost its position of leading global power to the US and the USSR, now being a supporting ally in NATO. "Britain was now overshadowed by the United States and Soviet Union." (Darwin)

3. Teddy Boys

Teddy boys were the first proper, widely recognized by the public, British youth subculture. They originated in the early 1950s while post-war austerity was still in place, and although greatly influenced by American Rock N Roll music, they predate it by a few years. Their name comes from the shortened form of Edward, Teddy, stemming from them dressing in Edwardian style clothing. Due to the austerity measures in place at the time the British fashion industry was struggling and attempted to revive the Edwardian style of dress which was popular during the early years of the 20th century. Although intended for the wealthier populous, the style was taken on by the working-class youth and juvenile gangs, as it became more acceptable to dress flamboyantly, regardless of social status. "The idea was gaining ground that you didn't need to have been born wealthy to cause a stir with your choice of clothing, and that you should not care whether it offended society's conceptions of good taste or appropriate behaviour." (Décharné, 19)

"The post-war revival of Edwardian styles began as the artificial creation of exclusive fashion houses, aimed specifically at the few people rich enough to be able to ignore rationing restrictions." (Décharné, 25)

This association with gangs and troublemakers distanced the fashion style from the higher and middle classes and linked it to gangs of bored youth roaming the streets looking for trouble.

"...they were not only one of the most recognisable working-class youth movements, they had also been the first. Trailblazers for a long line of fashion-conscious teenagers who were accused of dragging the country into the gutter, they were the council-house inheritors of a dandy tradition stretching back to the eighteenth century, minus the money and the indulgent parents." (Décharné, 3)

They were easy to spot and distinguish from other youth gangs and from "regular" people. Décharné describes them as "and exotic breed", and as "creatures from another planet". He also explains how Due to them being the first subculture to emerge in post-war Britain, they would coexist with later groups. By the late 60s and early 70s Britain was home to a mosaic of different subcultures that were fairly easy to differentiate by glance, as every subculture had a distinct look and fashion sense which distinguished the from both the other youth subcultures and the wider society. "Clothing was a serious business, and could have consequences." (Décharné, 3).

If you dressed outside the norm you were setting yourself apart from everyone else, and if a group dressed differently that usually meant something. Clothing was a unifying aspect of a subculture, an easy way to signal which group you belonged to and to signal to the wider society

that you were different. This was not without risk as there were ever present tensions between different groups and between the British identity itself. There were other youth gangs not belonging to certain youth cultures. Groups of young men and boys were a common sight on street corners long before the Teddy Boys. There was no shortage of young people bored out of their mind looking for trouble. "Shouted insults from strangers in the street were often the least of your worries, and if you stood out even slightly from the norm, there was very often someone – and probably a few of their mates – waiting around the next corner looking for any excuse to punch you." (Décharné, 3)

What was different was the amount of media coverage the violence in the streets got. The Teddy Boys were "a newly identified target for everyone to throw stones at" (Décharné, 4). They became the public enemy number one, the first moral panic of post war Britain. As every subculture, they were not a unified force with singular ideas or leadership, they were not a monolith, but a collection of groups connected through certain signifiers, such as clothing or music. They were not a force for violence with the purpose to terrorise peaceful British streets that the media made them out to be. "The press had a field day with these young people… Anti-social behaviour, burglaries, car thefts, grievous bodily harm, race riots and sometimes murder – all this was laid at their door, and 'Ted' became a multi-purpose shorthand for someone below a certain age who was causing trouble, or was considered likely to do so." (Décharné, 4). They were an easy scapegoat for the problems plaguing the country at the time. Due to their visibility and exposure they were very easy to single out. To some extent they became real-life bogey men, as people would cross the street to avoid passing by a group of Teds in fear of getting into trouble, as if they weren't doing the same with already existing youth gangs. As with every moral panic, the main justification was the defence of children. The children must be protected from the moral corruption caused, in this case, by the Teddy Boy lifestyle. Due to the Teds being young, there was a fear that every young person could easily turn into this folk devil. This animosity would later on be repeated in reporting on Mods and Rockers.

They became the template for how the media would demonize a group. The media would name the group, document a few cases of the members causing trouble, usually nothing out of the ordinary for youth gangs of the time or before, and constantly report on it, playing a game of telephone where you end up with a folk devil at the end. In *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* Cohen mentions that the media would sometimes publish brief interviews with the involved parties, the integrity of which is questionable.

The groups would be named, labelled as delinquent and troublesome, and othered, becoming a warning for the wider public. This would later spill over to the coverage of other subcultures, namely the violence between Mods and Rockers, which was sporadic and fairly uncoordinated,

but was morphed into something resembling an all-out war in the streets by the media. “That is not to say there were no clashes between members of the different subcultures or with other members of the public. Another way of looking at the situation is to see in what ways – if any – the Mods and Rockers were thought to constitute an entirely new phenomenon. A new type of deviance is usually seen as more threatening than something which has been coped with in the past and the media tended to stress the supposedly new elements in the situation: more violence, more mass hysteria and a higher level of organized gang warfare. the wider public, but the UK was no stranger to youth gangs and delinquency.” (Cohen 69)

What was new was the amount of new coverage it was getting and the role it was playing in the public consciousness. This brought the threat these groups posed to the status quo into people’s living rooms. “I hope you’re not going to grow up to be a Teddy boy?” (Décharné 5). Décharné shares his childhood experience, retelling an interaction he had with a shopkeeper in the early 1970s. It serves to illustrate that the fear that anyone can become a member of the deviant sub-group, in this case a Teddy Boy, was very much real and prevalent. Instances such as this serve to show how these subcultures were perceived negatively and participation in them was a moral and social failure. One could not be an upstanding citizen and a Teddy Boy.

In her 1957 Christmas address Queen Elizabeth II warns that the Commonwealth is in a troubled time and “The trouble is caused by unthinking people who carelessly throw away ageless ideals as if they were old and outworn machinery”. This can easily be applied to the trouble caused by the dissatisfied and bored out of their mind youth roaming the streets of British towns, and later, as was the case with the Mods and Rockers, seaside resorts, which was described by Cohen.

Teddy Boys were not necessarily replaced by later emerging subcultures, such as hippies, skinheads, punks, mods, rockers and others, but remained as a phenomenon throughout the 60s and 70s. This is substantiated by Décharné, who mentions Teddy Boys brawling with punks after rock shows. “In reality, when I emerged from the *X-Ray Spex* gig with the rest of the sparse audience, we were met by hostile groups of local Teds seemingly eager to engage in the King’s Road sport they had been reading about in the tabloid press: punk-bashing.” (Décharné 9)

4. Mods

Unlike the teddy boys which were confrontational towards the migrant population, the Mods embraced parts of the style brought by mainly black and mixed-race arrivals. They also embraced black music such as soul and ska. Hebdige proposes that the "black man" was a doorway through which the Mods entered the hidden underworld in which their true life would go on, separate from work or school. Mods were defined by fashion.

The mods invented a style which enabled them to negotiate smoothly between school, work and leisure, and which concealed as much as it stated. Quietly disrupting the orderly sequence which leads from signifier to signified, the mods undermined the conventional meaning of 'collar, suit and tie', pushing neatness to the point of absurdity. (Hebdige, 52)

Hebdige goes on to explain that they always maintained the look, whether on the street, at work, or at school. Their style was on the surface quite conservative and in-line with the values of society. Unlike the Teddy Boys, whose appearance immediately signalled trouble, the Mods looked decent, they can be seen as a model to which a young person was to strive for. It was the image of upwards mobility, contrasted by the Teddy Boys and their adoption of the Edwardian style, which was rejected by upper classes. The Mods wearing tailored suits were commendable while a Ted wearing an Edwardian suit was seen as subversive. In short, Mods were cool and dressed cool, while the Teds were a product of austerity and were stuck in a rut of the lower class.

There are many different things that define Britain, but one of the most British concepts, in regards to everyday working and middle-class populations, is the seaside resort. Thus, it can be understood why the media made such a fuss out of the trouble caused by Mods and Rockers clashing in seaside resort towns, causing chaos and property damage. Such deviant behaviour can be interpreted as an attack on the peace of everyday life. It was a disturbance of the status quo. This greatly vilified both groups in the eyes of the public and the ensuing media storm and dragging through the mud likely inspired further acts of rebellion. The young boys and girls were bored out of their minds, feeling betrayed by the promise of a comfortable life and took to publicly showing their discontent. They would not be placated by a vacation under the overcast skies and next to the cold North Sea, they were not content to live life like their parents did. A generational divide was forming and was rapidly growing. The culture of the youth and of their parents begin to differ greatly. As previously mentioned this divide was best showcased

in the culture of the time, namely music. The best example is the previously discussed My Generation by *The Who*, which was widely popular with the Mods.

5. Rockers

Rockers are a bit harder to define than Mods. The name is pretty self-explanatory, these were people that listened to Rock music. But so did the Mods and the Teds, and many others. So, what characterises this group? This subculture mainly grew out of the existing motorcycle subculture, and was characterised by leather jackets, motorbikes, and American rock n roll. They were a product of post-austerity prosperity boom and increase in options available to young people. Even the working class was now able to afford motorcycles and vinyl records. Unlike the previously discussed Mods, they remained closer to their working-class roots. But the difference was not major, as both subcultures stemmed from the working class, one (Mods) was just more upwardly mobile, at least in appearance. "...the typical Rocker was an unskilled manual worker, the typical Mod a semi-skilled manual worker" (Cohen 31). According to Cohen, at the time (early to mid-60s) there was a pervasive idea in the public consciousness that almost all young people were split into two camps: The Mods and the Rockers. This idea was fuelled by the media and by public paranoia seeds of which were planted in the reporting on Teddy Boys. These subcultures would be presented as icons of degradation of society, leading young people to a path of violence and away from the norms of society. The identity of the subcultures themselves is easily lost here. The Mods got out of it almost unscathed, while the Rockers seem to have been swallowed by the folk devil and panic born out of their scuffles with the Mods, being relegated to the second part of the duo.

6. Mods vs. Rockers

The events that had the biggest impact on British youth subcultures in the period of 1964 – 1966 surely have to be the series of violent disturbances perpetrated by the Mods and the Rockers in English seaside resorts. These events were the catalyst for the media wildfire which would birth the Mod and Rocker folk devils, creations built on existing subcultures but, in essence, perversions of the them. An image was formed in the public consciousness, an image of violent scooter and motorcycle riding gangs fighting each other in the streets, thrashing public and private property. An average person could easily see this as an attack on their way of life. The disturbances were mainly localised in seaside resort towns, a place where most common people expected to vacation. A disturbance of this kind threatened everyone's peaceful vacations. Unrest is more likely to grow out of a price hike in essential goods than due to regime change. And a summer vacation was a working man's bright spot in an otherwise

dreary year spent at a factory or doing some other menial labour. But on the other hand, one must consider the fact that the same youth that caused the disturbances was also there with the same intent. Cohen explains that they were dissatisfied by their lives, they could "get no satisfaction", to quote the Rolling Stones, and they showed their displeasure. The Mods and Rockers participating in these quasi-riots were almost entirely working-class and definitively not wealthy. Most of them did not ride scooters or motorcycles, but arrived by train or coach. "At every event the majority of young people present came down by train or coach or hitched. The motor-bike or scooter owners were always a minority; albeit a noisy minority that easily gave the impression of ubiquity" (Cohen 31)

Cohen also makes it clear that most of them did not come with the intent of causing trouble, but to vacation, to find escape from everyday life.

"The bulk of young people present at the resorts came down not so much to make trouble as in the hope that there would be some trouble to watch. Their very presence, their readiness to be drawn into a situation of trouble and the sheer accretion of relatively trivial incidents were found in convenient and offensive; but if there really had been great numbers deliberately intent on causing trouble, then much more trouble would have resulted." (Cohen 31)

Only when they realised that there was no escapism to be found even at the resort towns did they start to cause some trouble. And it is important to keep in mind that those causing trouble were just a small minority. Cohen states that in Clacton, where the largest disturbance took place, less than a quarter of all arrested (23 out of 97) had previous convictions. And only around 10% of them would be taken in for violent acts. But these events did have an impact outside of the media coverage. The Mods and the Rockers seemingly became another tourist attraction, with questions like "*Where are the Mods and Rockers today?"* being asked. (Cohen 34)

Overall the biggest damage was done to the reputation of the Mods and Rockers, who were now seen as violent thugs and deviants. Just like with the Teddy Boys earlier, there was now a fear that every young person could become a member of such a subculture and wreak havoc on the British society. To some extent those fears would come through, later on, with the rise of the skinheads and punks, but this increase in violence can be contributed to the worsening political and economic situation in the country.

7. Skinheads

The skinhead subculture, or "cult", as George Marshall puts it in the *Spirit of 69 – A Skinhead Bible,* grew out of the waning Mods during the latter half of the 1960s. By the late 60s the Mods were falling apart as a coherent (coherent as a youth subculture can be) group. There was a growing split between the hard-mods and soft-mods or peacock mods, those that were keeping in with the whole 60s style, and were slowly merging with the hippie movement. Differences between the two groups were obvious, in style of dress, in music, in behaviour. The hard mods dressed in working boots, jeans, wore suspenders and had short hair, while the soft-mods wore bright colours, had long hair and dressed extravagantly.

"Aggressively proletarian, puritanical and chauvinist, the skinheads dressed down in sharp contrast to their mod antecedents" (Hebdige 55)

As the Mod music scene was dying down the soon-to-be skinheads turned to music made by the growing migrant communities, such as ska and reggae. They also became greatly influenced by the styles of dress of migrant subcultures. But time is always passing and relationships are fluid. By the early 70s black music became more black-centric and less reliant on white listeners, thus alienating the white audience. Lyrics about Jah and Babylon did not interest white kids anymore. "By 1971, reggae was losing of its charm for white kids anyway. The change of direction towards singing about Babylon, Jah and all things African, left most skinheads out in the cold" (Marshall 22)

The most important aspect of the skinhead subculture is its splintering throughout the 1970s, as it distanced itself from the working-class and migrant influences of its early days and drifted closer to punk and new wave. This makes them a very diverse subculture with different sub-groups in conflict with each other. Just like the Teds, the Mods and the Rockers, the Skinheads also got the media treatment, turning them into another folk devil. "It took another few years before the drug-taker and the student radical – destined, one thinks, for fairly permanent occupancy – were joined in the folk devil role by a more traditional working-class representative, the Skinhead." (Cohen 228) But unlike the previously mentioned subcultures, the skinheads were much more aggressive and prone to violence and they were much more political. Political violence always carries more weight than apolitical violence. "You could fill an entire book on how the British media has misrepresented the skinhead cult.

And then you could go on to fill hundreds of others on how it had misrepresented other groups and individuals over the years." (Marshall 62)

A large fight between Mods and Rockers which causes some damage to a pub or some shops is less threatening to the fabric of society than a scuffle between a handful of far-right skinheads and migrants. The anti-migrant violence itself differs from the kind perpetrated by the Teddy Boys decades earlier, as skinheads acted with political backing, although it has to be said that they were backed by fringe groups. Still, it was ideologically motivated. There also were (and there still are) far-left skinhead groups opposed to the far-right groups. By the early 1980s there was a large patchwork of various skinhead and skinhead-adjacent groups that had differing ideals and ideologies, and were very loosely connected by the umbrella term "skinhead". This makes analysing their position on the British monarchy difficult if not impossible as the skinhead subculture spans the entire political spectrum.

"We've all got our crosses to bear, and since the late Seventies, the skinhead cult has laboured under the strain of politics. And that's particularly true of the tinpot variety. Both the left and the right have attempted to use and abuse skinheads with varying degrees of success, and to such an extent that today, extremist politics have become as much a part of the cult as Doctor Marten boots." (Marshall 133)

The radicalisation of the skinheads did not happen in a vacuum. The political and economic climate was shifting and British youth were caught up in it. The spirit of the times is best summarised by the 1981 song "Ghost Town" by *the Specials* and the lyrics:

This town, is coming like a ghost town
Why must the youth fight against themselves?
This town, is coming like a ghost town
Government leaving the youth on the shelf
This town, is coming like a ghost town
No job to be found in this country
Can't go on no more
The people getting angry

People were indeed angry. The youth were feeling left out and ignored. And this manifested into violence. Unemployment and poverty are great fuel for radical ideas. The decaying image of Britain portrayed in this song struck a chord with the youth of the country who could easily relate, as every town was slowly "coming like a ghost town".

8. Punks

Punk is a subculture born out of music. Unlike the previous subcultures which were centred around fashion or hobbies, punk grew out of the punk rock genre of music. It came about as a reaction to the music scene at the time, namely the perceived bloated state of rock. Songs became long and self-indulgent, rock stars were as distant from common people as they could get, rock n roll was no longer the sound of teenage rebellion but of everyday mundanity. Leading idea of punk rock was to wipe the slate clean, get back to basics and make music as simple and accessible as possible. Take rock n roll away from the music industry by implementing a DIY mentality. "Punk's gutter-snipe rhetoric, its obsession with class and relevance were expressly designed to undercut the intellectual posturing of the previous generation of rock musicians" (Hebdige 63)

Although it was intended to be a new clean slate, it still drew inspiration from music which came before, namely garage and pub rock. Like previously discussed subcultures, punks had their own fashion style. Hebdige explains that punks dressed to provoke and to signal displeasure with the state of things. Just like skinheads, with whom they share a musical and cultural overlap, punks were split along ideological and political lines, with the vast majority adopting leftist and anarchist beliefs, although a notable far right influence did exist. Hebdige makes a connection between reggae and punk:

"Reggae is as likely as punk rock to be dismissed by 'serious' people as nonsense or as an irrelevant distraction from the major issues of life in contemporary Britain. Elsewhere, both forms are liable to be condemned as degenerate or reduced to 'good clean fun" (Hebdige 132)

Both musical genres and subcultures associated with them were dismissed as not serious. They were at best seen as a low form of entertainment and at worst as a dangerous corrupting influence. Furthermore, the subcultures connected to them were not considered as "proper" by the wider public, but as deviant. Thus, the rejection of the subculture by the wider public leads to tensions. All of this was discussed before, every subculture mentioned previously went through a similar process, in which it was demonised and turned into a folk devil.

Another way in which they opposed the Monarchy was by opposing the Anglican church. According to Section A7 of the Canons of the Church of England, the Monarch is "the highest power under God in this kingdom, and has supreme authority over all persons in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil." Church as an institution is itself highly authoritarian and traditional, representing the rigid structure and values of the past punks were rebelling

against. The lyric “I am an Antichrist” is to some extent still controversial today, but at the time it was nothing short of scandalous. To a religious person hearing those words on the radio evokes the images of the book of Revelations and the oncoming apocalypse. Punk did not bring down the world or the system, but it did shake up the self-indulgent and bloated musical landscape. In doing so it also affected the lives of all music-listening youth. Punk did not last long in the cultural or musical spotlight. Sonically it split into various sub-genres and continued to thrive underground, represented by commercialised caricatures on the mainstream stage. As a subculture it never went away, although similarly to skinheads, it is divided along ideological lines with countless sub-divisions.

Out of all the previously discussed subcultures, punks have the most negative views on the monarchy. Finding direct quotations and data is difficult, or nearly impossible, but I believe that their anti-monarchist sentiment is clearly visible just from hearing the lyrics of any punk song concerning the political or economic situation in Britain. The best example being the previously mentioned “God Save The Queen”, an open attack on the nation’s anthem and the Monarch the anthem glorifies. Lyrics such as: *“God save the queen / She's not a human being”* and *“God save the queen / The fascist regime”* are a clear enough sign of animosity towards the institution of Monarchy itself as well as the person of Elizabeth II, the Queen Mother. What was veiled behind inter-generational conflict in the music of the Mods and the Rockers, and struggle against poverty and racial discrimination in reggae and ska, was now plainly laid out by the *Sex Pistols* and that sentiment was readily embraced by countless young persons with whom the sentiment of *“no future, no future for you”* and the Monarchy as an oppressive force resonated. Another parallel can be drawn between the struggle against authority and the struggle against the rock establishment. A common nickname for rock stars of the time was “rock royalty”. A paradoxical idea, as rock itself was a disruptive force. But by the 70s and 80s rock and roll was king in more ways than one. Punk was a shock to the system which had a profound influence, but it did not deviate from the norm as much as it seems on the outside. “The punk aesthetic, formulated in the widening gap between artist and audience, can be read as an attempt to expose glam rock’s implicit contradictions” (Hebdige 63)

Punks themselves were just another youth subculture, taking influence from those coming before, and their music was also greatly influenced by music that came before. Although it styled itself as revolutionary, punk was, much like the hippies before (which were only lightly touched upon in this paper), a social movement with no clear results. The Monarchy

remained, the Queen was unbothered, the future remained bleak and rock and roll still continued on its trajectory

9. Relationships with the Monarchy

Throughout the earlier chapters it may be noticeable that there was little to no mention of the Royal family or the institution of Monarchy. This is because there was very little direct involvement between the Royal family, namely the Queen, and the various subcultures previously discussed. The reason for this is simple. The youth subcultures of Britain were not of national importance. Even though they were present in the media, and could be seen on the streets, they were in no way a phenomenon the Monarchy had to concern itself with. The Queen simply does not concern herself with some youthful delinquents and scuffles on the street. But as mentioned earlier, the Queen was omnipresent in everyday life. In the national anthem sang at sporting events, in pictures and on television, and most commonly on money. The law in Britain is, at least on paper, the Queens' law. The laws are made and approved of by the parliament to which the Monarch can appoint members, but the Monarch themselves does not make the laws and is also subject to the same laws as everyone else. On the official website of the British Monarchy the system is described like this: "We have developed Parliamentary Government by which the rights and freedom of the people are maintained. It allows change to take place temperately and without violence. And when time demands, it can reflect and give a voice to the determination and resolve of the Nation."

And as she was the main embodiment of Royal authority in Britain, everybody rebelling against authority would in turn be rebelling against her. Most of these infractions were minor, a scuffle on the street really had nothing to do with the authority of the Royal family, but some were a bit more serious, as is the case with punks' anti monarchist sentiment, best embodied in the *Sex Pistols* song God Save the Queen. It can be seen as a natural evolution of earlier subcultures disillusionment with the status quo, the youth being bored and unhappy with how things are. A line can be drawn which connects *The Who's* "My Generation", and its "I hope I die before I get old" attitude, the *Rolling Stones'* "Satisfaction "with its lyrics about the emptiness of modern life and to songs such as "Holiday in the Sun" by the *Sex Pistols* with its "London feels like a prison camp" mentality. As time passed the anti-establishment spirit present in almost all the youth subcultures narrowed its target from the emptiness of life and alienation to the highest authority in the land – The Queen. The Anglican Church is an important entity in Britain that was hardly previously mentioned in this paper, as it plays a minimal role in the happenings mentioned throughout. The Queen is

the head of the Anglican church, thus also the highest religious authority in England. As every infraction against the secular order of society can be seen as an infraction against the one atop of the societal pyramid – the Monarch, so can every infraction against the Anglican church be interpreted as an offense against its head – The Monarch. No subculture discussed previously was openly anti-Anglican or had any religious agenda, but opposition to authority is a key element in their existence. Punk raged against religion the most. The *Sex Pistols* went against the Queen, religion, organised government all in one song – Anarchy in the UK.

I am an Antichrist
I am an anarchist
Don't know what I want but I know how to get it
I wanna destroy the passersby
'Cause I, I wanna be anarchy

These opening lyrics immediately get to the heart of it all. Punk wants to tear down the current system. It is aimless hostility, not centred on the government or the monarchy, or the Anglican church, but aimed at everything and everyone. Punk wants to fight the passer-by, fight religion, fight the government, all in order to find some meaning in life, to somehow bring about change in society. And to those in power, those at the top, there is nothing scarier than societal change. It leads to them loosing relevance, importance and power. And atop of the British society sits the Monarch, the Queen Mother, a symbol of the old oppressive order which the youth are raging against. But how does one even fight powers that are so far removed, so distant yet so omni-present? For punks the answer was to destroy society itself. They built on the foundations that were laid by subcultures that came before, that were demonized for behaviour which was present for countless years and decades before, but were unlucky enough to be caught in the web of media coverage and public outrage. The folk devils of old just gave rise to newer more destructive folk devils. The fear that the Teddy Boys or Mods would cause damage to the fabric of society came true with the radicalized skinheads and anarchist punks. These groups were more aggressive and violent than their predecessors, although only a minority were proper "troublemakers" who would get into fights and damage property.

Hebdige claims that all subcultures are inherently opposed to the powers at the top of the societal hierarchy. They exist in a constant low-scale conflict with the society around them.

"Subcultures are therefore expressive forms but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives." (Hebdige 132)

Everything in Britain can be somehow linked back to the Royal family, so it wouldn't be too hard to link, for example the race riots and violence against migrant communities, to the Monarchy, by virtue of the Monarch being the head of the Commonwealth and allowing those migrants in in the first place. But that is not exactly constructive or paints a real picture of the relationship at hand. It appears the relationship between the youth subcultures of Britain and the Royal family is one sided. Most subcultures, even punks, had other things on their mind, more immediate issues and problems they wanted dealt with, than the institution of Monarchy. The Queen on the other hand is not very involved in the British society, as she is mostly just a figurehead. But a figurehead has its purpose and the purpose of the Queen is to inspire unity in the nation, and throughout the decades under her rule she has managed to do so, in spite of all the external and internal hurdles Britain and its conservative leaning majority faced. It is also important to remember that before Elizabeth II the Monarch was much more distant from their people. Her coronation was the first one to be televised, her speeches were often broadcasted on the TV and radio, and she travelled more, visiting not only the UK but touring other parts of the Commonwealth as well. According to the official website of the British Royal Family, she requested the coronation be televised and broadcasted by radio.

She was the most accessible to the public monarch to date, she was the most visible, and that was the closest the institution of Monarchy got to the wider public. "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust." With these words she ascended to the throne. During the second half of the 1950s the Royal Family shifted from being one of the core institutions of the state and one of the symbols of Britain to celebrities, tabloid fodder, slightly higher on the social hierarchy than actors and pop-stars. The media exposure began to remove the veil of royalty from them. But this was all to an extent, as the Queen herself was still treated with reverence and remained an important symbol of Britain and the wider Commonwealth. According to royal.uk, the official website of the Royal Family: "The Sovereign acts as a focus for national identity, unity and pride; gives a sense of stability and continuity; officially recognises success and excellence; and supports the ideal of voluntary service." In other words the Sovereign is a figurehead, a national symbol, and not an involved political entity.

10. Conclusion

The various youth subcultures of Britain discussed in this paper are, for the most part, very much distinct and easily distinguished. They were defined mainly by the music they listened to and by the clothes they wore. To some extent they all still exist today, although most of them in a form different that in their prime. They were all at the peak of their popularity and influence only for a short time, and although undeniably influential to the wider British society, they did not result in any changes to the fundamental values at the core of British culture. Undeniably a part of that culture, although at the same time also at odds with it, the subcultures were a response to the boredom of everyday. This response was, in some cases violent, deviant and to some extent detrimental to the peacefulness of everyday life. Although anti-authority and revolutionary sentiments lingered in all subcultures discussed here, they were mostly too diverse and decentralised to properly act on it. Even Punks, with their clear disdain for authority, did not achieve much more than normalisation of criticism the government and figures of authority, namely the Queen. That said, liberalisation of free speech is a process constantly ongoing in democratic countries and Britain, although a Monarchy, and in some aspects slightly authoritarian, is such a country. There were very few clear attacks on the Monarchy and the Queen herself, the main one discussed here was the *Sex Pistols* song God Save the Queen. The song's anti-monarchist, no future mentality is, like the sentiment felt by most of the members of discussed subcultures, just another way of expressing dissatisfaction with and alienation from everyday life. The main enemy of the British youth at the time was varied. According to the media it was themselves, clashing subcultures battling in the streets, Mods versus Rockers, Teddy Boys fighting Punks after shows, Skinheads clashing with everyone. According to the youth it was the older generation, those in charge, to such an extent they swore they would never be like them, to die before they get old. Another enemy was the government, which was seemingly doing not to fix the ailing economy, to provide a normal, fulfilling life. The Queen which became a figurehead, no longer a symbol of a proud empire, but a tourist attraction and a drain to the economy. According to the government the enemy was once again the youth itself, corrupted by deviant influences, music, subcultures and media. A generational divide formed rapidly after the end of the Second World War and just kept on growing, year after year. In the changing world of the 2nd half of the 20th century old values of country, religion, and monarchy were losing favour with the youth. The constant, decade long scream, from the Rolling Stones' Satisfaction and the lyric: "I can get no, satisfaction", all the way to the *Sex Pistols* "No future for you" lyric, seemingly nothing changed for the average

young person. They all tried to find meaning and sense of belonging. And the topic of this paper, the British Royal Family, served as a constant reminder of the old values, old times in which their parent and grandparents lived, the time in which everything was alright and life made sense. Those at the top were on their side and now they were seemingly leaving them to rot. “The government leaving the youth on the shelf”. (Ghost Town, The Specials, 1981).

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12. The relationship between British subcultures and the Royal Family: Summary and key words

This paper aims to provide an overview of British youth subcultures during the 2nd half of the 20th century and their relationship to the institution of the Monarchy. This relationship is relevant still, as it explores the generational divide growing between the pre-and post-war generations, as well as relationships between subcultures and forms of authority. The timespan covered in the paper is from the early 1950s to the early 1980s. Subcultures analysed are: Teddy Boys, Mods, Rockers, Skinheads and Punks. These are not the only subcultures present at the time, but others were not analysed for the sake of brevity. The main goal of this paper is to, through an overview of the previously mentioned subcultures, try and form a picture of their relationship to the Monarchy. This is achieved by analysing music made and enjoyed by the members of various subcultures, as well as literature. The main takeaway of the paper is that the relationship between the British youth subcultures and the Royal Family was extremely one-sided, with the discontent present in all subcultures being divided among all forms of authority, not just the Monarchy. On the other hand, the Royal Family did not involve itself in any direct dialogue with the subcultures, or responded to the criticism.

Key words: subculture, Monarchy, authority

13. Odnos Britanskih supkultura prema Kraljevskoj obitelji: Sažetak i ključne riječi

Cilj ovog rada je pružiti pregled britanskih mladenačkih supkultura u drugoj polovici 20og stoljeća, i njihov odnos s institucijom Monarhije. Taj odnos je još uvijek relevantan, jer se odnosi na generacijski jaz koji je rastao između pred i poslijeratnih generacija, kao i na odnose između supkultura i autoriteta. Rad pokriva vremenski period od ranih 1950-ih do ranih 1980-ih. Supkulture kojima se rad bavi su: Teddy Boysi, Modsi, Rockeri, Skinheadi i Punkeri. To nisu jedine supkulture aktivne u to vrijeme, ali ostale nisu analizirane zbog vremena. Glavni cilj ovog rada je, preko pregleda prije navedenih supkultura, pokušati formirati sliku njihovog odnosa sa Monarhijom. To je postignuto analizom glazbe i literature. Glavni rezultat rada je spoznaja da je odnos između britanskih mladenačkih supkultura i Kraljevske obitelji bio izrazito jednostran, jer je nezadovoljstvo prisutno u svim supkulturama bilo podijeljeno na sve forme autoriteta, ne samo Monarhiju. S druge strane, Kraljevska obitelj se nije uključila u nikakav izravan dijalog sa supkulturama, niti reagirala na kritike.

Ključne riječi: Monarhija, supkultura, autoritet