

Introduction

Actually, the book has already begun. The short experiences at the beginning have probably left you a bit perplexed. And there shall follow a whole series of further, also longer experiences, called "thrillers" for short, all of them more or less experienced by me. If I simply string them together, you will soon put the book down shaking your head. "What does this writer want? Does he want to show us that he doesn't like Afghans?" That he doesn't want to show. In fact, he likes them. But the social behavior of Afghans is clearly different from that of "Westerners." There are reasons for this. When you have some idea of these reasons, the thrillers don't leave you quite so perplexed.

The population of Afghanistan has a very different history "in its bones" than the population of Germany. For thousands of years, people in Central Asia have lived together in a very different way than in Central Europe. For us, Afghans are often not "normal", they do not behave according to the "norms" of our society. In their own society, however, their behavior is normal. The norms that have developed in the course of history are very different here and there. I consider it a gain that I have learned about the quite different norms of the Afghans. Since then, I have been much more concerned about the norms of living together. Since then, some things that are "normal" in our country are no longer self-evident to me. Since then, I know what a functioning legal system or thorough health care is worth.

The rules that apply to living together in society shape each individual very deeply. If you put him in a completely different society, you can't just reprogram him to get along in the new environment. Real integration of Afghans in the West takes several generations.

In order not to leave you alone with the thrillers, I will mix these crime stories with "teachings" about Afghan society. Don't be afraid. I am not a sociologist or ethnologist who wants to show you the beauties of his technical language. What I tell, I have made clear to myself and I tell it to you as I tell it to myself – as a layman to a layman.

I will start with a short lecture, which I had actually prepared for older students. It will make clear that the rules of the game in Afghan society are quite different. In the second half of this lecture, I will only briefly touch on the fact that these rules have a considerable impact on various areas of life, e.g. on the lives of women, on the education of boys and girls, on the individual's need for happiness, on population growth or on attitudes toward violence and war. These effects on specific areas of life are dealt with in later "instructional chapters," which I call "ethnos". The totality of the ethnos helps to better understand how Afghans live together. The book can also be seen as a guide to Afghan society and its workings, though it does not claim to be scientific. I call the personal experiences with more or less criminal depth "thrillers." One can see the crime stories as recovery breaks from the ethnological teachings or the ethnos as a background for the thrillers. Two such whodunits are already before this introduction. From now on an ethno is always followed by a crime novel.