

## Crown Princes and Their Brothers

While girls are separated from the family they were born into by their marriage, boys stay at home. They are the ones who will one day protect and lead the family. Here we must distinguish. They are to protect all of them. But if the family has several sons, not all of them can lead. One of the sons, usually the eldest, must grow into the task of the head of the family. He is the crown prince.

The father is responsible for the external relations of the family. If at all possible, he works as a farmer in the fields, as a civil servant, as a laborer, as a merchant. He does not have much to do with his children. Fathers of many children often have trouble remembering their names. The women take care of the inner life of the family. They raise the children. The daily life of the children takes place around the mother and the other women. Women prepare the children for their future roles. And early adolescence is known to be particularly formative. The father has nothing to do with his sons until later.

The mother and the other women treat boys better than girls anyway. The future head of the family is especially pampered. He is denied almost nothing. The little crown prince receives plenty of praise and recognition, even without any action on his part. He hardly has any duties. He cannot realistically assess his abilities. He hardly has to deal with setbacks. Young boys grow up who have almost never been shown limits. They are full of themselves and find it difficult to fit into a community. Many crown princes develop an inflated ego that later has trouble dealing with the realities of the world. Deep down, they know they are great. They are made to lead, not to serve.

If they later have to subordinate themselves to a superior, they cope poorly. Common is the manipulation of superiors by a subordinate who has grown up as a crown prince. In this way, the subordinate appears to himself and to those close to him as the real boss. He can live with that. But he also does something for it. He is not just imagining the role of manipulator. Afghan subordinates are often quite active manipulators. I know what I'm talking about.



An Afghan acquaintance has become the head of an organization. He explained to us the political situation of the country and the policy of his organization – more precisely, he explains his personal policy. He distances himself in all conceivable respects from all existing parties, including the Taliban or even more radical subversives. No grouping suits him. One cannot imagine him supporting or constructively cooperating with any other direction. The whole misery of Afghans politics is concentrated in this person. Our acquaintance is the normal case. Very many Afghan politicians function that way. After all, almost all Afghan leaders and politicians were once crown princes. Most of them were given the conceit of their own glory by their mother.

In the last century, I taught at the Faculty of Science of the only Afghan university. In the meantime, the faculty has split into faculties of mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology and biology. And the splitting continues. Biology is divided into botany and zoology, chemistry into organic chemistry and anorganic chemistry. Why not? There is no cooperation between the lecturers. In addition, several other universities have been established, both public and private. Thus, there are many small kingdoms in which rulers work on a modest level and do not let anyone interfere with them.

Usually, several sons are born in a family. But only one can become the head of the family. Sometimes the boundaries between the crown prince and his brothers are not so strictly drawn. Then there are competitive fights. Often the affection of the mother plays a role. But in the vast majority of cases, the other brothers are urged to serve the crown prince.

The brothers still recognize the crown prince as an authority even after they are married and have families of their own. Several times we wanted to hire girls as employees. Father and Mother came and looked around the office. Finally, they agreed that their daughter would work for us. But two days later, the daughter called, crying. She was not allowed to come after all. When the father's eldest brother learned that his niece was to work for foreigners, the uncle forbade it. Should the father still send his daughter to us, he would deprive him of the brotherhood.

The boys who do not grow up as crown princes are hardly predestined to become leaders. They do not like to make decisions. Even when they know what to do, they wait for instructions. They can wait patiently. They should not be expected to take much initiative.

When men who were not crown princes work outside their family in an organization, a company, a factory or a government agency, they like to join a person with leadership qualities – as a substitute for the big brother in the family. However, this attachment figure is rarely the formal superior within that other structure. This choice of an external crown prince is an individual step from tribal society to client society.