

Chapter 28 : “The network”

CG has, over time, acquired an extremely extensive network of contacts, roughly two or three thousand people, the number that Honoré de Balzac considered a suitable elite for a country. The most comprehensive description can be found in the guest list for Crown Princess Victoria's wedding at Storkyrkan June 19, 2010 (about 1,200 people), the shorter guest list for the wedding party at Stockholm Castle afterwards (about 500 of the more important) and various lists of who are included in CG's inner and outer circles. The list of guests for the wedding was (groups that were left out of the wedding party in brackets):

- The King's family
- The Queen's Family
- Daniel Westling's family
- The Heads of State of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway (two kings, two presidents).
- Remaining royal houses: Belgium, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom
- Dethroned royal houses: Bulgaria, Greece, former Yugoslavia, Romania, Germany
- The state: The Government, (leading Parliamentarians, Heads of agencies & County Governors)
- (Associations: Political parties, Svenskt Näringsliv, SACO, TCO, Nobelstiftelsen, Riksidrottsförbundet, Sametinget)
- Sth's & Gbg's Opera, Konserthuset, SVT, TV4, Radio, Newspaper & ([court] journalists)
- Royal Academies & (Patronage)
- (Others: Employees, Officials at the wedding & “the outer circle” among them Industrialists)
- (Personal friends: “the inner circle”)
- The wedding couple's personal friends
- (Religious societies)
- (Corps diplomatique)
- (Chargé d’affaire a.i.)

Sweden's most ardent republicans, i.e. the Left Party and LO, refused to attend the wedding. (Lars Ohly, leader of the Left Party, had a webcam mounted in the apartment where during the wedding he could be seen solving sudoku and preparing a meal.) More than half of those present at the wedding ceremony were left out of the wedding party.

CG and Silvia keep cards on all the people they meet. The information includes when, in what context and notes. This is not mentioned. Normally the court refers to CG's personal memory.

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In contrast to Gustaf V and Gustaf VI, CG has many personal friends and acquaintances in- and outside the court, so many that “personal” is an exaggeration: Old Broms and Sigtuna schoolfriends, party friends, family friends, hunting and nature friends etc. Since CG is raised in an environment of nobility and money, they constitutes a large part of his social life, but by no means all. CG has met everybody, be it hobos or billionaires. CG never abandons his

friends. Regardless of whether they have lost their fortune or become alcoholic, they are always welcome. As long as they don't abuse drugs, talk to journalists or embarrass him in some other way. Then they get axed:

The Punch Club (Den Schwenska Punschklubben) is a relic of CG's school days and nowadays meet once or twice a year to have pea soup and punch. The group is embodied by the ambassador and former Secretary of State Johan Nordenfalk. His mother was lady-in-waiting to Princess Sibylla and he himself is chairman of both the House of Nobility and the lobbying organisation the Estate Owners' Union (as well as for the brokerage firm Öhmans) and vice chairman of the Royal Patriotic Society and the King's Hunting Club. [The idea for the club was born November 1967 in the Royal Guards officers' mess. There are 13 members. First Thursday of each month they have peas and hot punch at the home of one of the 13. Hosts are assigned in letter order and besides feeding the 13 will give a lecture, just like at Rotary or Lions. Once a year the 13 organize a big ball with ladies present.¹ Every four years an event is held called the Olympics.]

The Croquet Club (Royal Swedish Lawn Croquet Club) used to meet once a month but nowadays not nearly as often, it is not even certain that they play croquet any longer. Members of the croquet club may not be members of the punch club at the same time. Membership is said to be maximized to eight people. [If someone leaves the club, the successor must be approved by a 100 percent majority. The club has a first and a second card administrator, a person to verify the minutes and a treasurer. It's a boys only club. We would rather not have women present when we meet. Women are a downer. Club meetings are not so formal. First we eat some sandwiches and then we play. Often we play it rough.² The origins of the club is said to be that at Gustaf Vs croquet games the children were obliged to act as caddies. The members dressed in club blazer with the embroidered emblem RSLCC. In 1973 the club played in the castle's corridors. 1975 on the lawn outside Versailles' Castle. Then it seems to have entered hibernation.]

H.M. The King's Hunting Club is not as small as the Punch or Croquet Club but well as exclusive with 197 members and centuries-old traditions. The King is permanent chairman and has a heavy influence on the selection of members. The purpose of the hunting club is to promote hunting and wildlife conservation, and each year the members meet at the castle where they listen to a topical lecture on hunting. Many of the members of the Punch and Croquet Club are also members of the hunting club.

Even more exclusive are Ruter dam, Måndagsklubben, Sörmlands vänner & Gubbtolvan [The Dirty Dozen]. They are a kind of free zone where CG has to endure a lack of respect: "You shouldn't think you're anything just because you're king." The members meet with or without CG for fun, making out and getting drunk.

Most anybody is welcome at CG's official parties at the Stockholm Castle. Access to the private parties, e.g. CG's and Silvia's 50th birthday parties at Drottningholm, has been significantly more restrictive. Invitations to them are awarded as a form of reward.

¹ Gösta Ollén. Reflex: Kronprinsens umgänge. Punschdrickarna och Krocketspelarna. Expressen, 1969-04-30.

² Gösta Ollén. Reflex: Kronprinsens umgänge. Punschdrickarna och Krocketspelarna. Expressen, 1969-04-30.

CG's recurring elk hunts are also highly sought after as a reward. He disposes of the hunting rights for 200-225 thousand acres of land owned by the state and managed by Domänverket. The largest is the area is in Bergslagen where CG usually arranges an annual elk hunt. CG sells shares, which usually covers the cost. Silvia does not hunt herself, but sometimes comes along because she likes the silence and the proximity to CG out there in the forest.

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CG and also Crown Princess Victoria meet many politicians, business people and public officials through their so-called “food and talk” strategy: coffee, supper, dinner, cocktails and so forth, so-called canapé politics. The talk seems to consist mainly of asking questions on different subjects and taking an interest in the answers. CG claims to have become increasingly accepted as a member of these circles. The Republican Association claims that it is a method of building a lobbying power that is at least potentially dangerous for democracy. However, none of this has been proven. CG admits to lobbying but does not know the results. “There is another possible explanation. By socializing face to face, in relaxed forms, somebody who holds power can make potential critics more friendly.”³ And this is believed to be the ulterior motive:

The reason for the Royal House needing the food-talk-power strategy is that it almost completely lacks formal *raison d'être*. To play any role in society, the king must build his own power base.

All in all, the King, despite being the Head of State, is, after the constitutional reform [of 1971], organizationally almost completely outside the parliamentary system. Most of the contexts in which we in the public are accustomed to seeing the king - national tours, inaugurations and other forms of celebration such as the Nobel Party - are not to be regarded as public activities.

The constitution does not mention the royal court as such. It is not even possible to say what the constitutional role of the royal court is. This is despite the fact that the Court now publishes an annual report and draws up a balance sheet with profit and loss.

The scholars and political scientists with whom Fokus has spoken do not know how to describe the court, they revert to describing as “a remnant of history”, “the sphere of the king” and the like.

The court is what it wants to be. Not public. Not private.

What about the appanage? The funds that the government each year allocate to the Court? No, this is not based on any law either, but is a recurring proposal in the budget every year. With the appanage, there will also be no explicit counter demands, more than what expenditure the sum is meant to cover.

Even the King's role as “the greatest representative of the kingdom in relation to other countries”, as stated on the court's website, is not regulated by Swedish laws. Instead, it comes from international law, which, however, is sparse in demanding what a Head of State means; here there are mostly customs and traditions. Ultimately, it is the

³ Anders Billing. Hovets makt. Fokus, 2010-04-29.

government that has the power, but every state visit it includes the court as a matter of form. In principle, the government could instead borrow the Head of State from a private event company, when and if he or she is required.

Thus, the court lacks formal support and needs to network in order not to be marginalized.⁴

Most politicians usually see it as a duty to participate when invited. However, the left-wing parties may be hard to convince. For example, Jonas Sjöstedt:

I've been in direct contact with the royal house twice, that's enough for me. The first time was before the European Parliament elections in 1995. The King was due to visit Brussels shortly after the elections and we who were expected to become EU parliamentarians would be invited to dinner with the Head of State. Before the invitation was sent out, just before the election, a arrogant lady from the court called me at my apartment in Umeå.

- Title? She asked.

- Metal workers, I replied, because that was what I was.

The other end of the phone fell quiet.

“It is not actually a title,” said the lady-in-waiting.

I didn't know what to answer, just decided to turn down the invitation. Certainly in their world one could have been wholesaler, court jester or drum major, but not a welder or the like. That was enough for me. It was not my world.

Another time [probably autumn 1997] I had, I did not ask myself why, accepted a lunch with [Crown Princess] Victoria in the European Parliament. No, do not ask me why, I still do not understand it myself what I was doing there. As I remember it Victoria was professionally polite, super shallow and nice. That was to be expected. But the behaviour of the others! Their servility was curse me incredible! That's what I like the least about monarchy. What it does to otherwise intelligent people. It's worse than drugs. People get all strange and unrecognizable. The Crown Princess here, the Crown Princess there and a completely bland conversation. Brrrr.⁵

It does not seem to be publicly recognised that CG's public duties not only include opening the Parliament and chairing certain cabinet meetings, but that he in a ceremonial sense legitimises the government and that it ultimately answers to his authority by keeping him informed of it's doings: internal and foreign policy, civil society and the armed forces. For that, the cabinet meetings provided for in the constitution do not suffice. Moreover Göran Persson limited these cabinet briefing to three minutes each, at one time two minutes, in order to keep the time. Probably a reason for CG's many “private” audiences.

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As emphasized, CG is associated with nobility and money. In 1973, the nobility was 20 thousand people, ¼ percent of the population. The monetary elite is not so clearly defined but assume that the groups are equal in size. (Money ≈ Wealth > 50 million.) Both are poorly

⁴ Anders Billing. Hovets makt. Fokus, 2010-04-29.

⁵ Jonas Sjöstedt. Vilket bröllop? 2010-06-09.

represented in party politics. They defend their interests more through lobbying, but above all by keeping a low profile and rather fleeing the country than fighting. As a political base, this is insignificant. The group that actively supports CG is even smaller. Ballpark estimates are in the hundreds. CG's public relations activities to broaden the support are of the utmost importance. (CG's passive support is considerably larger though, in fact 2/3 of the population.)

Silvia seems to have no part in this political game of foxes about the survival of the monarchy. She does her job. Like Sibylla before her, she is quite isolated from Swedish society. At first, she socialized with the wives of CG's friends and then also with the mothers of the children's friends. Her other relations come from her charity work and her German and Brazilian family.

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There is a Sifo study from 1978⁶ (see table below) concerning what Swedish people expect from CG in terms of networking. First of all, he is supposed to meet the political elite, then the representatives of civil society, and ultimately the remnants of the old civil society. He should definitely not meet celebrities = socialites, artists, athletes etc:

One can also see the demand [from the population] that the king keep in touch with the various “elites” in society. Here the new elites, scientists, entrepreneurs, trade union leaders, dominate the old elites of officers and priests. It is also a clear expectation that the king should devote himself to those who are struggling: the sick, the elderly, the disabled and immigrants. However, there is no expectation among the public that the king should keep contact with “the high and the low society” of nobility and celebrities. Only one percent believed the king should associate with celebrities.

[It was also important that CG came into contact with the “working people”: manual labours, lower-ranking civil servants and the like. It was thought that CG's surroundings were preventing him.]

As can be seen, CG has only half complied with expectations. In particular, he has dedicated himself to hiding his less gallant celebrity life at Alexandra's and similar places which has indeed punished his reputation. Nor has he shown any particular will to meet with manual labours - rather with royalties and Nobel laureates. However, he is very interested in small business and entrepreneurs.

The nobility has gradually disappeared from the context. At the beginning of the 20th century, the High Guard, the Foreign Ministry and the castle offices were still a sanctuary for nobles. Now it's just the castle offices. The subject is sensitive. The castle's information department avoids answering questions on the employees' social background.

⁶ Sifo, 1978-04. I: Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter & Svenska Dagbladet, 1978-05-30.

Table. What types of people should the king meet? Percentage. Source: SVT Studio S & Sifo, 1978-04.

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| Swedish politicians | 63 |
| Foreign heads of state | 50 |
| Foreign royal houses | 33 |
| Diplomats | 32 |
| Foreign politicians | 28 |
| White and blue collar workers, the handicapped and the sick | 25 |
| Union and business leaders | 24 |
| Activists within popular national movements | 23 |
| ... | |
| Civil servants | 8 |
| Officers | 7 |
| Immigrants | 7 |
| Priests | 4 |
| Swedish nobility | 2 |
| Celebrities | 1 |