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## Educating Kings and Queens: Preparing the Heirs of the 21st Century

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Executive Summary

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## ***Executive Summary***

The report *Educating Kings and Queens: Preparing the Heirs of the 21st Century* analyzes and compares the educational training models of the heirs of three European monarchies: Danish, British, and Spanish. Using a hermeneutic, qualitative, and comparative methodology, the study seeks to answer a fundamental question: how is a young person educated to assume an unelected institutional role that represents the highest head of state in a democratic regime?

The education of royal heirs presents a paradox in the modern context. While democratic education systems promote personal development, freedom of choice, and autonomy, future kings and queens are trained from childhood to occupy a predetermined role—a destiny not chosen, yet one that must be accepted and embraced by those who hold it for the good of their contemporaries.

Moreover, the longevity of monarchs raises questions about the challenges of maintaining the awareness and commitment of heirs over many years before they are finally crowned. Unlike most professions, these young individuals often spend more years being heirs than actual monarchs.

Amid this tension between personal vocation and institutional duty, the report reflects on the educational, military, university, and symbolic trajectories of heirs in Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

In Denmark, the monarchy has transitioned from an elective to a hereditary system with symbolic, diplomatic, and cultural functions. The case of King Frederik X and his heir, Prince Christian, is highlighted. Their educational paths combine public and private schooling, increasing public visibility, strong military training, and significant international exposure. Danish heirs pursue university studies unrelated to monarchy duties, recognizing that university provides not only professional skills but also

intellectual formation and openness to reality, crucial for the comprehensive development of a future monarch.

In the UK, the education of King Charles III and Prince William illustrates the tension between aristocratic tradition and the need for modernization, and the duality between normality and exceptionality in their formation. The influence of common law, the monarch's religious leadership in the Anglican Church, and the monarchy's global projection require a multifaceted education integrating history, politics, religion, diplomacy, and communication. Internal criticisms, such as elitism in certain schools, coexist with the aspiration to maintain an exemplary public profile. The continued popularity of the established British monarchy must be reconfirmed, making the ability of King Charles III and his heirs to persuade new generations about the value of the Crown a major challenge—one that is also educational in nature.

The Spanish case centers on Princess Leonor, whose coming of age aligns with a growing institutional visibility. The report examines her early education in private institutions, her International Baccalaureate studies in Wales, current military training in the armed forces, and future university access. Her life and educational path are presented as a countercultural example for Generation Z, shaped by the constraints and possibilities of a role assigned before birth. This occurs in the context of a new phase in the Spanish monarchy, guided by principles that prioritize exemplarity and demand exclusive dedication to institutional activities.

The report's conclusions are structured around six key aspects:

1. Education within royal families is more closely linked to values such as virtue, dedication, sacrifice, exemplarity, and mission, rather than to concepts like choice, autonomy, or emancipation. From a pedagogical perspective, the report questions whether freedom lies in imagining an open future or in recognizing and embracing one's limitations with a sense of duty, suggesting that accepting responsibility can also be a form of freedom.
2. Unlike most children and youth, royal heirs have a pre-modern identity—fixed and defined from birth—within a society that links identity to the freedom to self-construct. Although the exact moment a child realizes they are a future monarch is unknown, early official speeches often reveal the awakening of their sense of responsibility.
3. If heirs represent the people, should their education not reflect that of the people? This common question reflects the ongoing debate within royal households. While their future is unique, distancing them from those they represent can feel existentially impoverishing. Early educational decisions often follow family precedent and expert advice, showing a desire for normalcy within their exceptional reality. Balancing institutional solemnity with public closeness, and the monarch's constitutional inviolability with modern demands for transparency, remains a challenge.
4. As heirs often ascend the throne later in life, their siblings play an increasingly important institutional role, not merely as replacements but as supporters and value bearers. Exemplarity applies to them as well, demanding responsibility and solid education to uphold the monarchy. This shared responsibility justifies similar education paths for heirs' siblings.

5. Military training is a long-standing and significant element in the education of heirs, common in both European and other monarchies. The report raises two questions: whether such training has a deeper meaning beyond duty or protocol, and when it should occur. While Spain prioritizes it before university, the UK does so afterward. Given the personal development gained post-compulsory education, earlier military training may better foster maturity.
6. The choice of university education by heirs and their families, despite not needing degrees for their roles, reflects a belief in university as a space for self-cultivation, not just for professional preparation. In times of discredit toward academia, this conviction underscores the value placed on intellectual development.

### ***Abstract***

The report analyzes the education of the heirs to the Danish, British, and Spanish monarchies, highlighting the tension between personal vocation and institutional duty. It explores their school, military, and university paths, revealing how their identities are shaped from birth—contrasting with the autonomy promoted in modern democracies. The challenges of exemplarity, normalization, legitimacy, and symbolic formation are addressed. Military and university education emerge as key pillars of their maturity. The report concludes that the education of heirs is understood as an institutional responsibility and a matter of state, aimed at preserving and renewing the meaning of monarchy in the 21st century.

### ***Keywords***

Heirs; vocation; education; exemplarity; legitimacy.

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