

Role attributions rule where female empowerment is lacking.

According to the Federal Statistical Office, just under a third of managers in Germany in 2021 were women. In the EU-wide ranking of the 27 member states, this was a shameful 20th place. In the past ten years, the proportion of female managers in Germany has hardly developed at all.

Why? Because the striving for power is still a male domain in Germany - and women are not aware of their own creative power or do not allow themselves to strive for power, sometimes even being afraid of it. This is why social role attributions are so strong and persistent. This phenomenon is not by chance, but is based on several factors that run like a red thread of permanent disempowerment through women's lives:

The curse of history

The development of female power is slowed down by an internalized prohibition to reach for power. It is enforced with subtle soft violence - in offices, production halls, families or institutions. The prohibition is based on transgenerational transmissions that have their origins in the history of women and their German homeland. Conformity and obedience are transmitted from one generation to the next, the violence (from victim and perpetrator) is unconsciously passed on to the offspring, according to Sigmund Freud. As a result women's self-worth cannot develop as it should, and the development of power remains stuck in its infancy, just like women's self-esteem.

The importance of the family of origin

Speaking of children's shoes: the family of origin plays a key role in the development of women's power. For example, the developing power of an adolescent is curbed for example, by the dominant father and/or mother, who compete with their daughters. Dysfunctional or functional family constellations are decisive for girls' development of power - and continue to have a massive impact on their thinking, behavior and actions when dealing with partners, colleagues and superiors.

When hormones take the lead

Young girls look for orientation and identification to build an identity as a future woman. They are soon looking for men, guided by hormones and "programs" that are millions of years old, they look for men with whom they can reproduce or male role models of their childhood - but usually not men who support them in their professional development. When deciding on a partner and starting a family, many women lose power over their own lives. Their development of power is overridden by the hormonally driven desire to reproduce. All the self-worth, competence and qualifications they have acquired up to that point suddenly becomes fragile.

The balancing act between partnership, motherhood and career

Hormones during pregnancy also influence women's emotional lives, as well as afterwards as a mother. If the choice of partner was influenced by the patriarchal role model from childhood, the traditional distribution of roles usually lives on in the partner. This choice of partner again restricts the woman's scope for power and development: The

female career is tolerated, but limits are placed on it. These limits are also experienced by women in companies, where subtle structural violence slows down women's careers - and motherhood is used as a way out of this system. Women who nevertheless make it into top management with the help of quotas and staying power and perseverance find it difficult to fully develop themselves further.

What are the psychological reasons behind this undesirable development?

Blind spots: Women find it difficult to develop a clear view of their environment.

The clear perception of their counterpart (partner, boss, colleagues) is usually only achieved after realization.

Helplessness: Women can do little to counter soft violence or powerfully dominant men because they have never been taught how to deal with power appropriately.

Individual combat: Women make too little use of their existing power and do not use it in a powerful collective. Female networks tend to be stages for self-presentation and places of exchange rather than active support.

Fear: Women conform because they are afraid of falling out of role and of the resulting consequences. Fear is a main motive for remaining in the regiment of role ascriptions.

Dependence: The dependence on the patriarchal system continues because women believe that their male counterparts are responsible for equal treatment and equality. But equal treatment starts with the women themselves - by placing themselves on the same level as men, developing their own power and thus come to eye level.

It is a misconception to think that power can only be achieved through status and hierarchy. True power comes from within. Women have to develop their inner power because they have few opportunities to do so through status and level! If they succeed in doing this through growing awareness of this and appropriate strategies, then this is the lever with which gender relations in offices, production halls, families or institutions can really move towards parity.

Every woman holds the key to this in their own hands.