

### **The patterns of masculinity in the Podhale region**

After the political transformation in 1989, some rapidly progressing economic, social and cultural changes took place in Poland. We became a democratic country, with a civil society and a free market. This of course had to lead to changes within the world of the feminine and the masculine, endangering the traditional division of social roles of men and women.

All this had a big impact on men. The political transformation left its mark on the social role of man, leading to changes in the economic sphere, and thus disturbed the position of man in the sphere of home and family. We face a crisis of the dominant model of masculinity. The traditional paradigm is still functioning, but has ceased to be a universal norm.

The traditional paradigm associates masculinity with dominance. So far, masculinity has been built around issues such as authority, economy, domination, access to the public sphere, strength and aggression, and man has been seen as a breadwinner and head of the family. The new man, next to traditionally accepted male virtues like honor, courage and resourcefulness, is also required to show sensitivity or solicitude, which are features culturally assigned to women.

Women began to be independent of men. They work, they earn and have successful careers. Gradually they have accepted informal relationships and the number of divorces has increased. Being a single is no longer stigmatized. Marriage has become a voluntary arrangement between two people, free from social pressure. A lot of women have decided to be a single parent for their children.

Being many times in Podhale, I have had the opportunity to observe a fairly traditional division of social roles. Podhale is also subject to cultural transformation processes. However, my multiple visits to the region have allowed me to observe some elements of traditional society still persisting in the cultural imagination, including patterns of gender ideas that are taught to succeeding generations from an early age. That is why I chose this region as an area of my research. I wanted to find the answer to the following questions: what male models are present today in Podhale? how has the new paradigm penetrated the structure of this society? in which areas of life and age groups is it implemented?

For this purpose, I have analyzed the transformations taking place in the surrounding world which have an impact on the attitudes and patterns of behavior, checking which of them have the strongest influence on the deconstruction of the cultural model of masculinity. My study therefore shows the male models that are currently being implemented in Podhale and the factors that shape

them.

I conducted my research from 2010 to 2015. My methodology was based on interviews with residents of Podhale. All interviews were conducted on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by me. It consisted of a lot of questions pertaining not only to gender issues, but also the history of Podhale and customs of Tatra highlanders. During the interviews I dealt with issues of private life, religious life, social life, public life, appearance, attitudes and patterns of masculinity. I collected 55 interviews and a lot of pictures.

Based on the collected material, I worked out the expectations of man living in Podhale – his appearance, role in family life, commitment to religious life, lifestyle, education and work undertaken, attitudes and character traits.

The material presented in my study and its subsequent analysis allowed me to draw the conclusion that the patterns of masculinity are very closely linked with the values prevailing in the region. The most powerful factors shaping attitudes in Podhale, are: family, religion and locality.

After a long analysis of the collected material, I conclude that although the deconstruction of the model of manhood also takes place in the Podhale community, it is still a slow process, which is hindered by strong cultural patterns characteristic of the region. In many aspects of life the dichotomy between the realm of men and the realm of women is still retained.

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