

Death and the experience of dying in Magdalena Sokolowska's research conceptions

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ABSTRACT

One of the many research passions of Magdalena Sokolowska, regarded as the founder of Polish and co-founder of European medical sociology, was socio-thanatological problems in the broad sense. Magdalena Sokolowska's version of "socio-thanatology" presented at the end of the nineteen-seventies and the early eighties consisted first of all in sociodemographic considerations. The deontological and ethical-moral problems, as well as individual existential experiences associated with the process of dying, being disregarded during the period in question, appeared in M. Sokolowska's research conceptions and papers in the nineteen-eighties. She was particularly concerned with the patterns of dying in medical institutions, conceptions of dying trajectories, processes of "waiting for death", mechanisms of the institutionalization, commercialization and medicalization of dying, differences between the conditions and context of

dying at home and in the hospital, consequences of "slow dying" for the range of social roles performed by the doctor and the nurse, the scope and character of changes in the function and structure of the family in the course of the process of dying and as a result of the death of one of its members, analysis of social behaviors after death in the institutional and non-institutional context (hospital, hospice, home), etc.

The analysis of Magdalena Sokolowska's "socio-thanatological" achievements allows us to notice a clear evolution of her conception: from the "epidemiological-demographic" approach, oriented towards analysis of mortality, to a preference for "qualitative" interpretations based on the investigation of "subjective emotions" that accompany dying persons.

Keywords: Magdalena Sokolowska, death, dying, medical sociology

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