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## Introduction

As a research category, disability becomes organized into problems only when it is juxtaposed to a subject burdened with disability and the surrounding conditions. Attributing the dimension of a phenomenon, state or possession to disability, as well as taking into account its processuality and its dynamics as the basis of a scientific problem not only encourages to but also necessitates reaching beyond the borders of one discipline. Breaking free from the conceptual tradition rooted in a particular scientific discipline brings about the multiparadigmatic nature of research approaches. The two last decades constitute a significant period in the development of paradigmatically differentiated research formulas and the concepts constructed within them which have aimed at recognizing and understanding the daily routine of people with disability. This development has intensified the migration of the notion of disability, which was at first situated in medical and psychological approaches to human functioning but now is also considered in social and cultural contexts. This is illustrated in the transformations of special education, initiated by turning the researchers' focus on not only what caused the disability but also what causes it – providing it with the dynamic dimension<sup>1</sup>. As Reinhart Koselleck (2012) notices, such a dimension is a typical sign of the historical migration of many notions and is associated with scientific advancement.

What can be viewed as an important factor of the state of a particular scientific discipline is the developmental level and the specific condition of methodology (Lewowicki, 2001, p. 9). In other words, the developmental condition of a particular scientific discipline is measured through methodological correctness (Hajduk, 2012, p. 11). Moreover, maturity and methodological specificity form the foundation for the process of distinguishing a certain scientific discipline (Bronk, 2003, p. 47). Among the criteria of independence of a particular scientific discipline, there is the presence of a set of questions addressed to a certain fragment of the world, seen in the precise aspect of the existing cognitive aim, the distinguished notional apparatus and research method, as well as the systematization of the acquired knowledge (Bronk, Majdański 2009, p. 59). Most frequently, it is the research method or the distinguished set of problems which mark the scientific quality (Kamiński, 1981, p. 168). The formal subject (a set of research objects) does not determine the independence of a scientific discipline, as long as it does not belong to any other discipline (Bronk, Majdański 2009, p. 59), although it is a distinctive feature of major natural or humanistic sciences. In the case of sciences located in the common discipline, the object of interest often constitutes their common denominator – by spe-

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<sup>1</sup> According to Koselleck, attributing dynamics to historical notions is a typical manifestation of their migration. See: Koselleck, 2012.

cifying several disciplines (and subdisciplines within them), it divides the research subject without the use of clear criteria (Rubacha, 2008, p. 7). This can be exemplified by special education, which focuses on the issues overlapping with many other disciplines and subdisciplines, such as sociology of disability, clinical psychology, pathophysiology, and in a broader approach – pedagogy with other disciplines, such as philosophy, economy, law, medicine, cultural studies, etc. (see: e.g. Gnitecki, 2006). Therefore, special education does not seem to constitute a separate scientific discipline – especially due to the fact that its aims and methods of cognition as well as its notional apparatus belong not only to the canon of pedagogy, but also of many other social and humanistic sciences.

The contents of this volume do not make up a step towards obtaining methodological independence of special education – just the opposite, they are a part of the common issues of all indicated scientific fields. However, at the operational level of the formulated research concepts and the conducted studies, they aim at the identification and exemplification of the specific methodological problems typical of disability studies. Some of these issues result from undertaking the problems which are ethically difficult, conceptually sophisticated, or located in the labyrinth of migrating meanings.

The volume consists of two parts. The first comprises some general issues, the second – detailed ones. Both parts have the same research object – the disabled and their daily routine perceived from different standpoints. Most of the texts have originated from the discussion conducted within *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Seminar of Research Methodology in Special Education – the Garden of Multiparadigms*, which was held in December 2015 in Cieszyn.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee, we would like to express our special gratitude to the Authors of the texts and to all participants of the discussion who, by expressing their opinions, views and observations, have largely contributed to the present shape of the volume.

*Zenon Gajdzica, Magdalena Belza, Dorota Prysak*