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**Contemporary challenges posed by changes in regional development factors:  
a territorially integrated approach**

The modern rules of socio-economic development show a tendency to its ever widening divergence, thus exposing the poor efficiency of regional policy measures undertaken so far. External determinants of development are connected with changes in the economic system, controlled by rules of a transformation that results in the appearance of postmodern conditions of economic activity characteristic of the present stage of development of cognitive capitalism. Those changes are reinforced by globalisation, its symptoms intensifying with the advancing process of economic integration. What is a real challenge in those difficult conditions is an effective control of regional development factors in order to increase convergence, because the definition of those factors and the interpretation of the mechanism of their operation keeps changing, and they greatly differ in space. Hence an efficient regional policy requires a reorientation towards an integrated, territorially oriented approach. This new regional policy paradigm rests on an integrated and dedicated intervention adjusted to individual characteristics of the territorial capitals of particular areas that determine various responses to the dynamic socio-economic changes.

The goal of this analysis is to determine changes in regional development factors in the new conditions of integrated, territorially oriented intervention. The research procedure embraces three stages. The first offers a synthetic presentation of the theoretical foundations of and changes in the conception of the paradigm of a territorially oriented regional policy, with special attention paid to the significance of territorial capital, the diffusion of development, and its integrated planning. Presented in the second are findings concerning the direction of modern mega-trends in socio-economic development and their contribution to changes in the factors of regional development. The third, fundamental stage of analysis involves the identification of the changing factors of regional development for an efficient intervention of a regional policy implemented in accordance with the integrated, territorially oriented approach.

The research is conducted in the framework of the OPUS 10-2015/19/B/HS5/00012 project of the National Science Centre, *New regional policy challenges in the formation of factors of the socio-economic development of less advanced regions*. Its results will help to work out an *ex-ante* model of regional development factors providing a basis for their operational indexing and for an empirical verification of the assumptions adopted in studies of development differences at a variety of spatial levels in the European Union and Poland.