

Evolution and systematisation of competition theory

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Abstract. The article provides a brief historical and economic analysis of the concept of «competition». Also it attempts to systematize the conceptual and categorical structure of the general theory of competition. Paper reveals the «cell» structure of separate competitive economic relations and some factors of competitive relations development in modern conditions. The following conclusions can be drawn: competitive relations as a real object, competition as a subject of research of world economic science have a centuries-long history. Competition is one of the universal driving forces and forms of development of human society, a concrete manifestation of universal laws of dialectics in social life, and first of all in the sphere of economy. The basic conceptual and categorical structure of the general theory of competition, consisting of the following concepts: competition – competitor(s) – competitiveness – competitive power – competitive will – competitive quality – competitive attitude(s) – competitive environment – competitive advantage – competitive factor – innovative competitive factor, structure of a separate competitive attitude with the author's definitions of each of them. The elementary structure of a separate competitive economic relation in the unity of competitive relations subjects (SCR) – people, economic structures and institutions; objects (subjects) of CER; economic interests (EI) of CER, economic contradictions (EC) of CER; laws (moral, economic, political, legal), regulating competitive economic relations and mechanisms of their contradictions resolution. The systematized conceptual and categorical apparatus of the general theory of competition and the developed structural model of a separate competitive economic relationship. It will allow further deepening of theoretical research of the phenomenon of competition, as well as their effective use in the implementation of government programs of a particular country, in this case the Republic of Kazakhstan on innovative development of national economy in the coordinates of modern and future world history, according to the authors. The dialectic of competition and monopoly is traced and the role of economic de-monopolization as an effective factor in the development of competitive relations in the modern economic system is revealed.

Keywords: competition, monopoly, competitor(s), competitiveness, competitive power, competitive will, competitive quality, competitive attitude(s), competitive environment, competitive advantage, competitive factor, innovative competitive factor, structure of competitive, economic relations, demonopolization of the economy.

JEL codes: B12, B41, D41

For citation: Urak Zh. Aliyev & Zhangel'dy E. Shimshikov. (2022). Evolution and systematisation of competition theory. JOURNAL OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS, 3(4), 4. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.52957/27821927_2022_4_4

DOI: 10.52957/27821927_2022_4_4

Introduction

Competition as a subject of research of the world economic science has a long (300-year) history. The beginning of the research can be conventionally considered as a fundamental work of the outstanding Scotsman, a bright representative of the classical English political economy Adam Smith in his work “The Wealth of Nations” (1776).

We say "conditionally" because long before Adam Smith, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) tried to define it, describing "competition as a war of all against all". During this period in the world economic literature thousands of books, articles, and dissertations covering mainly different aspects of economic competition were published and defended.

As we know from the Latin language "competition" translates as "to clash", and in the beginning it meant the struggle of sellers for favourable conditions for the sale of their goods. But during the historical development of human society, the concept of competition has undergone a number of metamorphoses. Adam Smith already defined competition among producers, calling it the "invisible hand" ("the power of providence") that guides the subjective aspirations of entrepreneurs in the objective direction of progressive development.

He defined the economic freedom as a "free competition". Only free competition, by setting "natural price" and differentiating commodity producers, serves as a regulator of commodity production. Subsequently, K. Marx, describing the place and role of competition, wrote that no category of bourgeois economy, not even the very first one, such as the definition of value, becomes valid otherwise than through free competition.

However, the era of free competition was replaced by the phenomenon of "monopoly". It is a kind of antipode of competition, which is objectively generated by competition itself through concentration and centralization of capital and production. It allows V. I. Lenin to justify the necessity of the socialist revolution in the monopolistic phase of capitalism, which is the decaying stage of the socialist revolution. But the resulting socialist economy turned out to be totally monopolistic and led to stagnation.

During the Soviet period, Soviet economic science in general, and, within it, Russian economic science, followed by Kazakh economic science, fell out of the sphere of world economic thought on the subject, because the Bolsheviks managed to eliminate competition as a "subject" of research by changing the socio-economic system itself.

We think the English-speaking reader will be interested in the studies of competition in the period of the centrally planned socialist economy. The ideological (class) confrontation between two opposing socio-economic systems, the USSR and the Western countries, led to a new direction of research – the substitution of "competition" with so-called "competition" by socialist principles. Because under the conditions of a centrally planned economy based on public ownership of the means of production, which prohibited a system of private ownership and private enterprise, the real conditions for the existence of competitive relations disappeared.

Realizing that in the face of competition the USSR economy was losing its driving force and incentive to develop, Soviet science and ideology instead of competition in the 1930s proposed the idea of "socialist competition" with an organizational centre called the All-Union Organization of Socialist Competition, led by the CPSU Central Committee. However, the surrogate for competition could not sufficiently replace competition, which eventually led to the stagnation of the Soviet economy as early as the 1980s.

Since the above, the intermediate conclusion is that Soviet science could not participate in the general development of world competition science. Instead, hundreds of pseudo-scientific papers were written, defending scientific dissertations about the outstanding role and importance of socialist competition. Thus, because of the "opportunistic-political" regulation by the country's administrative-command leadership of humanitarian science in general and scientific research in the field of competition in particular, the Soviet science was eliminated from the world competition research process.

At the same time, it is an indisputable historical fact that the Soviet planned economy of the USSR achieved enormous successes in the development of science, space exploration, education, and health care, etc. It was the basis for the victory over Nazi Germany and Japan in World War II. The successes were axiomatic. But there were flaws in the administrative-command, centrally-planned system of economy of the Soviet period. The main flaw was the all-encompassing "state monopoly" not only in the economy, but in all spheres of social life. The undeniable truth is that any national economy is leading to the stagnation outside of competitive relations, which has been proven by historical reality. That was the lesson of the seventy-year experiment to create a classless society: without private initiative, without entrepreneurship, private property and, of course, competition.

The end of the free competition era, when "free competition" was the driving force, regulator and catalyst of progress, a real mechanism for ensuring economic efficiency and establishing general market equilibrium, was marked in Western economic thought by the Austrian economist and sociologist Johann Schumpeter's concept of "effective competition" and "effective monopoly".

Later research by E. Chamberlin (Chamberlin, 1996) and J. Robinson (Robinson, 1986) led to an understanding of the compatibility of the antipode's "monopoly" and "competition" in the market structure in the form of "monopolistic competition", and the division of competition itself into "perfect competition" and "imperfect competition".

As a result of a series of metamorphoses of competitive relations in a modern market-oriented or so-called "mixed economy", four models of the market system coexist relatively "peacefully": "perfect competition" or polypoly (free competition proper), "pure monopoly" (mainly in the form of "natural monopolies"), "oligopoly" (oligopsony) and "monopolistic competition". However, from the point of view of a modern economist, an attempt to restore the former classical economic functions of free competition would not be correct; they can only hypothetically take place in societies with emerging market relations.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to deny the objective role of the competition law as a real mechanism of manifestation of universal laws of dialectics in the development of human society (the law of unity and struggle of opposites, the law of negation, and the law of mutual transition of quantitative changes into qualitative ones). Therefore, at present, it would be more appropriate and scientifically correct to operate with the category of "competitive relation(s)". However, this category in itself is very complex, and we will therefore provide a more coherent conceptual and categorical apparatus for the whole system of competitive relations in which it has its real place.

Main Part

1. The theory and structure of the individual competitive relationship through the prism of the conceptual and categorical structure of the competition phenomenon

"Competitive attitude(s)" as both a concept and a reality is a highly complex phenomenon. As a real phenomenon, "competitive attitude(s)" is (are) inherent in both the biological, social, and scientific worlds (if only in interpreting the nature, structure, and function of "competition" as a basic component of any competitive attitude). Hence a separate "competitive attitude" (competition), despite the existence of a huge number of studies of the theory and practice of competitive relations, needs a systemic conceptual and categorical analysis in order to reach its proper structure which is subsequently the basis of deployment of the entire system of competitive relations as an immanent attribute of market economic relations in general.

We begin with a brief historical economic analysis of the background. In the Subject Index of Michael Porter's well-known book "Competition", he provides 20 concepts and expressions, including the basic concept of "competition". At the same time, not all of these concepts have an appropriate definition (Porter, 2005). It is typical for many foreign authors. The "Subject Index" of Russian economist Y.B. Rubin's monograph "Competition: Orderly Interaction in Professional Business" contains 198 concepts and expressions including the basic term "competition" and there is no definition of many basic, derived concepts and phrases related to competition theory (Rubin, 2008).

We know that one of the ways to define a concept is when "...first the concept to be defined is subsumed under a broader concept – the genus (usually the nearest genus is indicated), then the features distinguishing the defined concepts from other concepts that also belong to the same nearest genus are indicated" (Bohr, 1998). Let's see how the definitions of competition contained in economic and legal encyclopedias and dictionaries correspond to these recommendations.

V.A. Gordeev notes (2008) that among modern economic dictionaries and encyclopedias the most detailed definition of competition is given in the well-known economic encyclopedia IE RAS. It is stated there that the word "competition" comes from Latin "concurrentia" – to collide and it has two lexical meanings: 1) confrontation, competition between producers of goods and services for the opportunity to increase profit; 2) the existence on the market of a set of producers (sellers) and buyers and the possibility of their free entry to the market and exit from it. However, this second meaning of the term "competition" is close to the neo-classical theory which is widespread in modern "economics" textbooks. According to our understanding, this meaning of "competition" somewhat contradicts the characteristic of "imperfect competition", which is further correctly disclosed in the encyclopedia.

The other meaning of the term "competition" is also found in modern economic dictionaries and encyclopedias. It also corresponds to the definition given back in 1973 in the "Great Soviet Encyclopedia", except for the adjective "antagonistic". The recognition of antagonism, however, has not entirely disappeared from today's dictionaries. For example, L.I. Lopatnikov's definition (Lopatnikov, 1996) states that market participants pursue their goals (primarily – to sell goods with maximum profit or to buy goods with minimum costs) to the detriment of others, also pursuing similar goals; that is, in a sense, market participants pursue mutually exclusive goals.

"The Great Dictionary of Economics", ed. by A.N. Azrilian, besides the definition of unfair competition (such definition is also contained in the "Economic Encyclopedia" of the IE RAS), provides a detailed description of predatory competition. At the same time, a number of publications provide "antagonistic" features of competition. For example, B.A. Raizberg and L.Sh. Lozovsky's dictionary: Competition represents a civilized, legalized form of struggle for existence and one of the most effective mechanisms of selection and regulation in the market economy (Raizberg et al., 2001).

There are different methodological approaches and theoretical constructions to the analysis of competition, ranging from the well-known formula that competition is "war of all against all" (Hobbes) to the less-known use of the term "competition" as a special form of cooperation between rival firms.

To summarize the above, there are three methodological approaches to defining the economic content of this concept in the scientific literature: behavioral, structural, and functional.

1) Historically, the "behavioral" approach was the first to define competition. Neoclassical theory, adopting a behavioral approach, defines the content of competition as a struggle for "rare economic goods".

2) According to the "structural" approach, the content of competition is determined by the "type" of market and the conditions that prevail in it.

3) The "functional" approach shifts the examination of the economic essence of competition towards an examination of its place, purpose and role in economic development.

Regarding these methodological approaches, we should note that they do not contradict each other; they characterize competition at different stages and levels of its essential expression.

To comply with the "principle of consistency" of the further presentation of the subject we study – competition – it is necessary to disclose the basic range of conceptual and categorical apparatus of the theory of competition and competitive relations. The process of their cognition and research is provided with its help.

Therefore, "competition" in the sense of "to be equal to others", "to keep up with others", is an attributive property of "encounter" and a universal condition of survival of all living biological and social beings. It is the real process. This objective phenomenon gets its external expression in the behavior, structure, functioning of various organic and social systems. Hence the above-mentioned various approaches to the nature of competition, namely: behavioral, structural, functional, in our opinion, are nothing but specific forms of external expression of the unified essence of competition – an inherent attributive property of all biosocial and/or sociobiological "organism" to "collide" with each other.

"Competitor" – rival(s), i.e. personified bearers, subjects of competition, in this case economic entities (systems) of different levels of organization.

"Competitiveness" is an inherent property, an intrinsic attribute of competition as a real process, a phenomenon and of competitors as personified subjects (bearers) of competition.

"Competitiveness" is a measure (degree, level, acuteness) of expressed competitiveness of a system (entity) as an inherent property, an immanent attribute of competition as a process, phenomenon, and real competitors as the main subjects of this process, phenomenon. This measure, i.e. competitiveness, is in turn determined by the "competitive power" and "competitive will" of the competing systems and actors.

By "competitive strength" we mean the set of traits and parameters that make it possible, the willingness of a system (entity) to act actively in order to achieve greater benefits and advantages relative to others.

By "competitive will" we mean the highest manifestation of the universal, intellectual and spiritual-moral tension and orientation of action (entelechy) of the subject of competition in achieving the cherished desires and the ultimate goal of being the best, having more benefits and advantages over others.

The unity of competitive force and competitive will can be denoted by the notion of "competitive quality" or "competitive advantage" which consists of a set of specific quantitative and qualitative "force" and "will" features and parameters of the system (entity) inherent in it potentially and currently, naturally and artificially acquired, so necessary to achieve the goal sought and realized under certain conditions. The competitive quality (competitive advantage) is a kind of "hard core" of the competitor(s) and the competing system(s). In this status it is an internal (endogenous) factor of competition, competitiveness of this system.

Competitiveness is both potential, possible in principle, and actual, actualized competitiveness. Potential competitiveness of an entity is determined by a combination of competitive strength and competitive will i.e. the competitive quality of that entity, whereas its real, actual competitiveness is determined by comparing and contrasting its competitive quality with the competitive quality (competitive strength plus competitive will) of its counterpart or competitor. It is only when they actually meet (in person or in absentia) the criteria that competitiveness of both the former and the latter is determined in the process of their clash.

Thus, the final, realized, competitiveness is determined and depends on the competitive will of the counterparties. If their competitive strength is equal, the competition is won by the one who has a more pronounced, powerful and expressive will (calculation: tactics and strategy, patience, coolness, wisdom), i.e. the desired goal. In other words, the "winner" in competition is the one who has the most expressive competitive quality (competitive advantage) as the unity of competitive strength and competitive will.

Thus, ultimate, real competitiveness is formed by the synergistic synthesis of competitive forces, competitive wills – "competitive qualities" (competitive advantages) of counterparties (actors) in their real, actual collision in a particular space and time, i.e. in their attitude and relationship with each other in the process of competitive interaction.

Competition as a process, as a phenomenon, as an attitude takes place only in a specific spatial and temporal environment, which can be called a "competitive environment". If "environment" is everything that surrounds the system and interacts with it in any way, then "competitive environment" refers to the totality of all geographical space external to the competing system, all sorts of conditions, factors and norms that predetermine its actual behaviour, structure and functions.

In other words, the competitiveness of a system depends not only on the internal competitive qualities of that system, but also on "external factors and conditions", i.e. other, more general systems and structures called, for the first system (entity), the "competitive environment" surrounding, enveloping and interacting with that system. At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish between "specific" potential competitive environment" and "actual competitive environment", i.e. actually affecting this system, as well as "general" competitive environment affecting all competing systems in the same way. The latter is formed, first of all, within the formal and informal institutional environment available, as well as a broad "social background" in the form of the system of social relations. Therefore, competition, competitiveness, competitive quality, respectively, are a competitive attitude, as a process, as an activity, as a form of discovering a certain phenomenon, thing. The phenomenon cannot be other than productive attitude(s) in the form of socioeconomic relations.

Thus, the competitiveness of a system (entity) consists of the internal (endogenous) competitive qualities of both this system and its competitor (counterpart) as well as the external (exogenous) factors arising from potential and actual relations and interactions between competing systems and entities which, in turn, are expressed in the notion of "competitive attitude" (competitive relations). The concept of "relation" is from the Latin "relatio" – relative. So "relation" is from "relative", from relating something to something, someone to someone on some "basis" (object, weight, condition, volume, norm, significance, degree, etc.). Consequently, "relation" is derived from the dependence and interdependence (objective and subjective) of the subjects on some correlated basis – the object, the attribute, behind which, ultimately, there is a universal connection. Although it should be emphasized that not every relation is a direct relation; it is, rather, a mediated relation, an "eventual relation".

Transferring this understanding of "attitude" to competition leads to the concept of "competitive attitude(s)". "Competitive attitude(s)" – is (are) the relationship(s) which occur between various like-minded (in this case business) entities in relation to a certain object (subject matter) of activity in order to achieve

certain advantages and benefits in relation to each other, i.e. "competitive advantage". In turn, the competitive advantage of a given economic entity (system) depends on many driving forces – competitive factors": subjective and objective, general and specific, internal (endogenous) and external (exogenous), intra- and extra-(inter)state.

The consideration by a business entity of all its competitive advantages and competitive factors must ultimately lead to the development of its 'competitive strategy' – whether to conduct a single, profitable business or a reasonable diversification activity across the time-space continuum: in the short, medium, long and ultra-long term. Here competitive strategy is implemented through 'competitive tactics' and is closely intertwined with the 'corporate strategy' of the firm, the company, the country's industry as a whole.

So, at this stage of the conceptual and categorical analysis of competition theory, the logic of the concepts discussed above is as follows: competition – competitor(s) – competitiveness – competitive ability – competitive power – competitive will – competitive quality – competitive attitude(s) – competitive environment – competitive advantage – competitive factor(s) – competitive strategy.

Therefore, there is no market without competition, but competition in its "primordial" form – as "rivalry", i.e. as "competition" will always be present, for example, sports competitions or cultural contests. But a market will only be a market if there is competition which, in turn, will only become stronger or weaker if there is a "competitive factor" or a whole system of "competitive factors" – geo-territorial, resource, political, social, legal, cultural, moral, and international.

Of the above system of conceptual and categorical frameworks, the key concept is that of "competitive relation(s)". The issue is the structure of the individual competitive economic relationship which is the starting point of the whole system of competitive relations in human society. We present the structure of an individual competitive economic relation of creatively using and developing the methodological approach by Professor O.Y. Mamedov to the structure of an individual industrial relation (Mamedov, 1997) as follows (Fig.1).

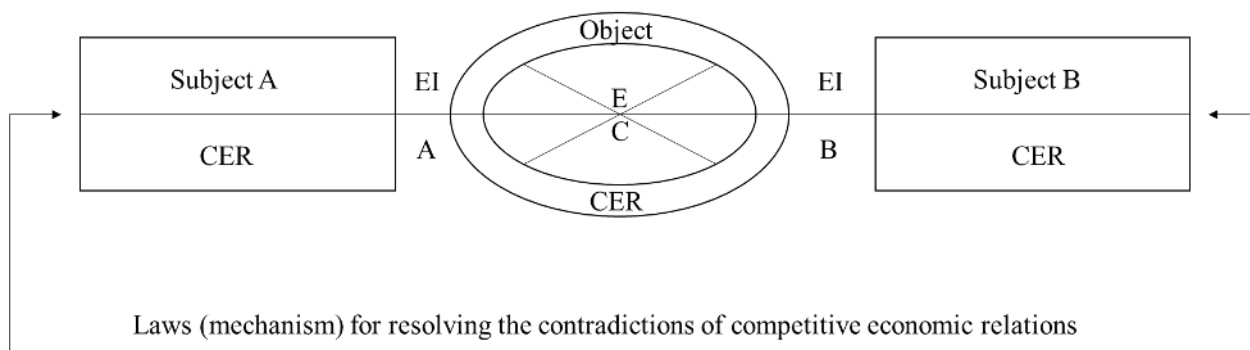


Figure 1. "Cellular" structure of a separate competitive economic relation

Source: composed by the authors

Competitive economic relations (CER) of people as a subject of market economy is an organic unity: subjects of competitive relations (SCR) – people, economic structures and institutions; objects (subjects) of CER; economic interests (EI) of CER, economic contradictions (EC) of CER; laws (moral, economic, political, legal), regulating competitive economic relations and mechanisms of their contradictions. This theoretical "structural-cell" model of an individual competitive economic relationship has not only an important gnoseological (cognitive), but also a huge practical-applied value, having the greatest "explanatory and solving power" in solving any specific socio-economic problem arising from the mismatch of economic interests of the subjects of competitive economic relations.

2. From the theory of competitive relations to the practice of competitive relations

The development of competitive relations is the establishment of optimal ratios between the various market models in a country's economy. The higher, other things being equal, the higher the proportion of perfectly competitive market structures and the lower the proportion of monopoly structures, the higher the degree of intensity of competitive relations in society.

However, the relationship between the different patterns of market structures in an economy depends

on many economic factors such as the aggregate of goods and services produced and sold the nature of the elasticity of demand for them, which is related to the availability of substitute goods, economies of scale in production, etc. They all derive from the specialization of the main branches of the national economy of a given country and the level of effective demand of its population.

The latter factor is also important because it is the result of consumer competition, which unfortunately has not received sufficient attention. But in a market economy, where the buyer-consumer "commands", their wishes and actions are in no small measure governed and counterbalanced by consumer competition as much as free competition fulfills its functions in production, exchange, and distribution.

Conceptually, the development of competitive relations in a country's economy should not be based on the classical or neoclassical constructs, but rather on the theoretical constructs of institutionalism.

The well-known neoclassical concept of comparative advantage, transformed into a model of "relative abundance of one of the factors of production" or Heckscher-Ohlin theory. Samuelson's theory that a policy of free-trade will lead to an international division of labour. Also there is a rational specialization for both the capital-intensive rich country and the labour-intensive poor country, an optimal allocation of resources at the world level maximizing national income for both partner countries, is no longer exist.

For example, statistics on the national income gap between traditionally rich and poor countries show that the gap is steadily widening. For example, the gap between "developed" and "developing" countries is steadily growing from century to century: if at the beginning of the 19th century the income level of these countries differed about twice, and in the middle of the 20th century it was already 17-25 times, then at the beginning of the new third millennium it was 60-70 times!

Thus, the objective automatism of universal world equilibrium is in interactions between different countries on the basis of their comparative advantages. In our view, of crucial importance in such partnership relations is the worst international specialization for poor countries, which excludes the necessary conditions for the development of competitive relations within the 'poor' economy and thus makes it uncompetitive. After all, the generally accepted criterion of economic competitiveness, developed by M. Porter, is productivity measured by the ratio of GNP per capita. And by this indicator, for example, the Republic of Kazakhstan lags far behind many foreign countries.

Consequently, in our opinion, the competitiveness of the economy of a certain country cannot take place spontaneously, on the basis of free world competition, without government intervention. This is evidenced by the experience of a number of economically advanced countries of the world.

Let us start with the UK's experience as reflected in its "White Paper". It notes that the UK government will play a key role in the economy. Thus, while British public policy in the 1960s and 1970s emphasized anticipation. Now, by mastering the appropriate tools and mechanisms for managing the economy, the government is creating a new model of public policy aimed at productivity growth and business efficiency, i.e. working towards a competitive (competitive quality) national economy as a whole. At the same time, one of the primary tasks for the government of this country is to gain business confidence, i.e. to create conditions for entrepreneurs to invest their capital for the long term without fear of losing it, and for business to become more productive.

The UK government also intends to influence the development of new ideas vertically – through local organizations and horizontally – by developing a supply chain of mutual benefit (clusters). In this way, it will play a significant role in the endorsement business alongside universities and benchmarking research institutes.

In the past post-Soviet period in Kazakhstan, following the Russian Federation, a large number of studies on various aspects of competition have been carried out. During this time there has been a growing demand for coverage of the problems of de-monopolization, understood not as a single regulatory action but as a global process of restoring the foundations of competition in the economy and in all spheres of social life.

But, unfortunately, de-monopolization by the existing authorities of Kazakhstan (and Russia, too), was perceived in a one-sided way and it referred only to the sphere of interaction of separate economic entities, mainly enterprises and companies. Because of it all carried out market reforms were at a level of performance

of Programs of privatization and denationalization. As a result, the task of creating a third class, i.e. a class of entrepreneurs, was carried out formally and was external in nature, without touching the inner structure of the economic system. Instead of real, active entrepreneurs, who have evolved over the centuries from people with entrepreneurial abilities, with the quality of competitiveness and enterprise, we have more entrepreneurs in form than in content, as well as such "businessmen", who were closer to the power structure – in fact, non-competitive entrepreneurs.

In addition, the tradition of "state monopolism" has proven to be stronger than anticipated. As a result, the monopoly of large state-owned enterprises persists, while small and medium-sized enterprises, unable to compete with large businesses, and cannot rise to the top. Large enterprises, on the other hand, enjoy the protection of the state, as they are national companies with significant state ownership in their assets. At the same time, the national large companies, without bothering to partner with small and medium-sized enterprises, have started to create new structures in the form of so-called "quasi-public enterprises". All this is currently hindering economic development and preventing the achievement of the required rates of economic growth and, moreover, economic development and the required economic proportions both between the various stages of the reproduction process and between the branches (spheres) of the economy as a result of competitive forces and factors.

In our opinion, the reason for these negative processes is primarily the lack of a common methodology in understanding by the authorities of the country of the essence of competition as a universal social phenomenon, as well as the essence of de-monopolization as a general effective reform of all aspects of social life that was especially important during the transition from a totalitarian system to the rails of a market economy. Of course, strategic objects of the national economy should remain in the orbit of state ownership and, consequently, state monopoly. In this respect, the policy of the leadership of modern Kazakhstan aimed, firstly, at de-monopolization of the economy and, secondly, at the governmentalization of a number of objects of strategic importance, we believe, will play a very positive role in establishing normal (healthy) competitive relations in various sectors, spheres and structures of the national economy as a whole. Let us then briefly consider the "de-monopolization policy" of the economy as a factor for strengthening competitive relations.

As we know, the antipode of competition is monopoly. The word "monopoly" in the "Etymological Dictionary of the Russian language" by M. Fasmer, from the Greek means *monopoleo* "a single right to sell". And the term "monopoly" has traditionally been closely associated with economic activities of people. Only in the "Dictionary of the Russian language" by S.I. Ozhegov the word "monopoly" is given in a broader interpretation, namely: "a preferential right, a special position of someone in comparison with others".

In our view, a monopoly is a dominant and exclusive right which provides someone (state, clan, firm, institution, organization, representatives of certain types of activity, etc.) with special prevailing, predominant (privileged) conditions in acquiring limited resources and goods.

We note that types and areas of competition are also characteristic of monopolies. The general philosophical and methodological basis, i.e. the dialectic of the theory of competition and monopoly in unity, is known to have been developed by K. Marx. In particular, he wrote: "In modern economic life you will find not only competition and monopoly, but also their synthesis, which is not a formula but a movement. Monopoly gives rise to competition, competition gives rise to monopoly" (Marx, 1968). Monopolists compete with each other, competitors become monopolists. The synthesis is that a monopoly can only hold on because it is constantly engaged in competitive struggle.

The dialectics of competition are such that it is unable to maintain itself in its "pure" form and leads to the emergence of monopoly. A monopoly in an economy, by breaking the mechanism of market self-regulation based on competition, paralyzes its development and leads to stagnation. However, the power of monopoly in an open market economy is temporary and relatively limited. With world integration, a domestic monopoly competes with its counterparts on the external market, and with globalization and the formation of a single world market, monopolies are not particularly dangerous. Nevertheless, within a single country, the operation of monopoly significantly threatens the development of normal competitive relations between economic entities, reducing the productivity of social labour as an indicator of the country's international

competitiveness. Therefore, since a certain time individual countries of the world have started to develop and apply anti-monopoly measures.

Global historical antitrust practice dates back to the end of the US Civil War (1870-1880); the antitrust laws of Alabama (1883) and Kansas (1889); the first antitrust legislation in world history – the "Sherman Act" (1889); the second US law – the "Clayton Act" (1914). The main result of these laws was the recognition of monopoly and "limited trade", e.g. collusion in pricing, division of markets among competitors, certain types of mergers, and criminal offence against the federal government. In this way, the world of market economy has embarked on a civilized, legislative struggle against monopolization, for the development of competitive relations.

Whereas de-monopolization, as understood by economists in traditionally market economies, means only the unbundling, reorganization or splitting up of individual large monopolistic enterprises with a large market share, for post-socialist countries, which had a command economy in the past, the meaning and significance of de-monopolization is much broader and deeper. De-monopolization in the transitional economies of the post-Soviet countries means deep fundamental changes in the economic system as a whole, affecting the essence of all ongoing market transformations. In the course of such de-monopolization all the prerequisites of the necessary conditions are created and objective factors emerge for the formation and development of a system of competitive relations in the economy.

The institutional transformation of the economy, including de-monopolization, with the exception of state monopoly on certain strategic objects and occupations, primarily involves the establishment of a genuine meritocratic regime as the basis for the development of competition in all spheres of social life. Competition and meritocracy presuppose each other. Multiparty system, rule of law, free expression of will within the framework of accepted public morality, equality of all before legal laws, open the way for the development of competition in political, ideological, economic, cultural, educational, scientific and informational spheres of life.

De-monopolization of the economy should contribute to the formation of a competitive structure of social production; there should be a sufficient number of producers of different kinds of goods on the market to ensure full competition in the course of their production and sale. The freedom of competing economic subjects is impossible without their full responsibility for the results of their economic activity, based on the equality of all forms and types of ownership. After all, the meaning of ownership is to clearly define who bears property responsibility for the results of economic activity.

Meanwhile, the social, economic, moral, and even elementary legal responsibility for the final results of activity of owners – subjects of state, quasi-state and private property in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet period was, unfortunately, a complete mess, if not chaos. All this could not but play a negative role in the formation of effective competitive relations and competitiveness of the country's national economy both domestically and internationally, for example, within the framework of the EEU. At the same time, there is hope that the new top leadership of our country will make every effort to revitalize and transform Kazakhstan's society under the slogan of a new economic course and a fair social policy.

Conclusions

Concluding this analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Competitive relations as a real object, competition as a subject of research of world economic science have a centuries-long history. Competition is one of the universal driving forces and forms of development of human society, a concrete manifestation of universal laws of dialectics in social life, and first of all in the sphere of economy.

2. The basic conceptual and categorical structure of the general theory of competition, consisting of the following concepts: competition – competitor(s) – competitiveness – competitive power – competitive will – competitive quality – competitive attitude(s) – competitive environment – competitive advantage – competitive factor – innovative competitive factor, structure of a separate competitive attitude with the author's definitions of each of them.

3. The elementary structure of a separate competitive economic relation in the unity of competitive relations subjects (SCR) – people, economic structures and institutions; objects (subjects) of CER; economic interests (EI) of CER, economic contradictions (EC) of CER; laws (moral, economic, political, legal), regulating competitive economic relations and mechanisms of their contradictions resolution.

4. The systematized conceptual and categorical apparatus of the general theory of competition and the developed structural model of a separate competitive economic relationship. It will allow further deepening of theoretical research of the phenomenon of competition, as well as their effective use in the implementation of government programs of a particular country, in this case the Republic of Kazakhstan on innovative development of national economy in the coordinates of modern and future world history, according to the authors.

5. The dialectic of competition and monopoly is traced and the role of economic de-monopolization as an effective factor in the development of competitive relations in the modern economic system is revealed.

In summary, this article examines the most general issues of competition and monopoly theory and competitive relations as a kind of introduction to these fundamental categories of market economics.

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Received 11.11.2022

Revised 01.12.2022

Accepted 12.12.2022