

# CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF COMPETITIVENESS

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## Summary

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Conducting business activity in the contemporary economic environment is particularly difficult due to, for instance, increasing and intensifying processes related to broadly defined globalization<sup>3</sup>. It can be assumed that globalization processes are shaped by transnational corporations while small and medium-sized enterprises can only adapt to these processes and participate in them. The ability of enterprises to adapt to the conditions created by the market often determines their survival, development and the degree of their competitiveness. Competitiveness of enterprises is not a new concept. One of the first theories of competition were formulated at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and since then have been subject to a constant evolution.

**Keywords:** evolution, competitiveness, market, survival, development

## Evolution of the concept of competitiveness

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Despite the fact that the concept of competitiveness has long been present in the social and economic awareness, analysis of the pertinent literature

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<sup>3</sup> More about globalization, for example, Rynio D. (2013). *Kształtowanie nowej polityki regionalnej Polski w warunkach globalizacji i integracji*. Wrocław: UE we Wrocławiu [Wrocław University of Economics]; Oczkowska, R. (2013). *Międzynarodowa ekspansja przedsiębiorstw w warunkach globalizacji. Motywy. Strategie. Tendencje*. Warsaw: Difin; Aluchna M., Cygler J., Witek-Hajduk M. K., Materna G., & Marciszewska E. (2013). *Kooperencja przedsiębiorstw w dobie globalizacji. Wyzwania strategiczne, uwarunkowania prawne*. Warsaw: Wolters Kluwer.

does not provide a clear answer to the question of what competitiveness is – its definition is ambiguous, which is demonstrated in the following overview. Therefore, competitiveness is:

- an ability to produce products that will pass the test of international competitiveness, and citizens will benefit from a constantly increasing standard of living;<sup>4</sup>
- an ability to efficiently achieve objectives on the market competition arena;<sup>5</sup>
- it is related to the adaptation of a product to the requirements of the market and competition, especially in terms of product range, quality, price and use of optimal sales channels and methods of promotion<sup>6</sup>;
- it is rivalry among existing competitors which takes the familiar form of jockeying for position – using tactics like price competition, advertising battles, product introductions, and increased customer service or warranties. Rivalry occurs because one or more competitors either feels the pressure or sees an opportunity to improve position;<sup>7</sup>
- an enterprise's ability to face competition from other entities, maintaining and expanding the market share and achieving the resulting profits<sup>8</sup>;
- an ability to achieve or maintain a competitive advantage, which can be treated as a synonym for competitive ability of the company, if understood that way;<sup>9</sup>
- it is an ability of an enterprise to operate on a given market under competitive conditions. This term is commonly used in relation to different types of business entities, sectors, national economy, products, resources, capabilities, management systems and their characteristics, information, structures, procedures, strategies;<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tyson L. (1992). *Who's Bashing Whom: Trade Conflict in High Technology Industries*. Washington DC: Institute of International Economics.

<sup>5</sup> Stankiewicz M. J. (2005). *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstwa. Budowanie konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa w warunkach globalizacji*. Toruń: TNOiK „Dom Organizatora”. p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Pomykało W. (Ed.). (1995). *Encyklopedia Biznesu*. Warsaw: Fundacja Innowacja. p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> Porter, M. E. (1998). *Competitive Strategy. Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*. New York: Free Press. p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Nowakowski M. K. (2000). *Biznes międzynarodowy – obszary decyzji strategicznych*. Warsaw: Key Text. p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Dzikowska, M. & Gorynia, M. (2012). Teoretyczne aspekty konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa – w kierunku koncepcji eklektycznej? *Gospodarka Narodowa*, 4 (248), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Pierścionek Z. (2003). *Strategie konkurencji i rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa*. Warsaw: PWN. pp. 164–165.

- a property that determines abilities of an enterprise to continuously create a tendency of development, productivity growth, and to effectively develop markets under conditions of new, better, cheaper goods offered by competitors<sup>11</sup>,
- “an ability of companies, industries, regions, countries or supranational groups to meet international competitiveness and to ensure a sustainable high rate of return on the applied production factors and a high level of employment;”<sup>12</sup>
- it is an ability to resist competition;<sup>13</sup>
- means an ability to achieve or maintain a competitive advantage, and, understood that way, can be treated as a synonym for competitive ability of a company – an ability to take actions to improve attractiveness;<sup>14</sup>
- possessing abilities and potential for achieving competitive advantage;
- a very important property of an enterprise related to the formulation and creation of its development strategy.<sup>15</sup>

From a review of the above definitions it can be concluded that competitiveness in the micro dimension contains both static (competitiveness at a given moment) and dynamic (ability to increase competitiveness and achieve competitive advantage) elements. Therefore, competitiveness is greatly affected by relations between rapidly changing environmental factors and capacities and abilities to strengthen and use an enterprise's competitive capacity. For the purposes of these considerations the following definition of competitiveness of enterprises has been adopted: Competitiveness is an ability to rationally use all resources and capabilities in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantage.

Deliberations concerning the types of competitiveness should start with an attempt to define differences between the concepts of competition and

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<sup>11</sup> Adamkiewicz–Drwiłło H. G. (1998). Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstwa na tle procesów globalizacji. In *Współdziałania strategiczne w gospodarce. Prace naukowe*, 786, Wrocław: AE Wrocław [University of Economics]. p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> Wołodkiewicz–Donimirski, Z. (1998). *O niektórych aspektach konkurencyjności gospodarki polskiej*, Informacja nr 628, Biuro Studiów i Ekspertyz, <http://biurose.sejm.gov.pl/teksty/i-628.htm> (Retrieved 12 March 2014).

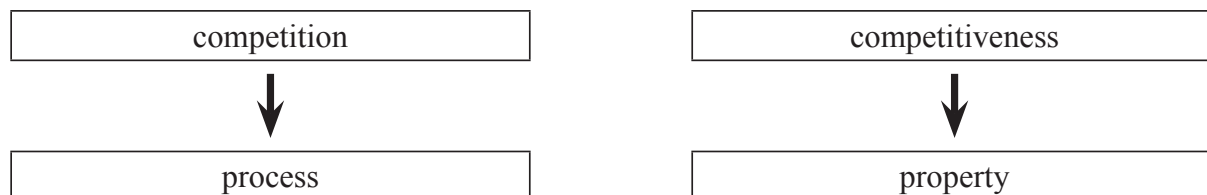
<sup>13</sup> Tomanek R. (2002). *Konkurencyjność transportu miejskiego*. Katowice: AE w Katowicach [University of Economics in Katowice]. p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Gorynia M. (2009). Konkurencyjność w ujęciu mikroekonomicznym. In M. Gorynia & E. Łażniewska (Eds.), *Kompendium wiedzy o konkurencyjności* (p. 77). Warsaw: PWN.

<sup>15</sup> Adamik A. (2011). *Kształtowanie konkurencyjności i przewagi konkurencyjnej małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw*. Warsaw: CH Beck. pp. 16–17.

competitiveness. The difference between their seemingly close meanings is considerable, which is shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1** Competition vs competitiveness



Source: Adamkiewicz–Drwillo, H. G. (2002). *Uwarunkowania konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa*. Warsaw: PWN. p. 91.

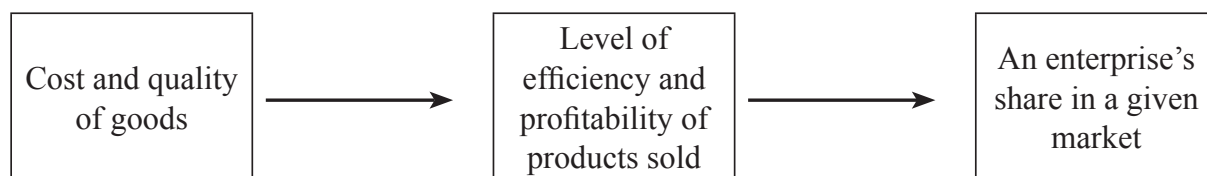
Competitiveness is, therefore, a feature, characteristic of an enterprise (object) that is of fundamental importance in the process of decision taking, formulation of strategies which determine the competitive process of an enterprise.

## Types of competition

The pertinent literature distinguishes many types of competition. Given the research problem raised and the adopted hypotheses, the author focuses only on selected, most commonly cited classifications of competition and competitiveness.

1. *Levels of competitiveness*<sup>16</sup> – presented as the first criterion, since in the author's opinion, this is the starting point for further considerations.
  - micro-competitiveness is competitiveness at the level of an enterprise. Its essence is presented in the chart below.

**Chart 2** Micro-competitiveness diagram



Source: own study based on Daszkiewicz N. (Ed.). (2008). *Konkurencyjność. Poziom makro, mezo i mikro*. Warsaw: PWN. p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> This division is presented after: Daszkiewicz N. (Ed.). *Konkurencyjność. Poziom makro, mezo i mikro*. However, the pertinent literature provides other divisions, as well, e.g. 1. Micro – micro, 2. Micro, 3. Meso, 4. Macro, 5. Regional, 6. Global (Gorynia M. & Łażniewska E. (2009) *Kompedium wiedzy o konkurencyjności*. Warsaw: PWN. p. 51).

The share of an enterprise in a given market shows which enterprise has satisfied customer needs in a more effective way. By adopting such a definition, attention is drawn to dynamism and competitiveness, and reference is made to the definition of competitiveness proposed by the author in the previous section.

- meso-competitiveness is competitiveness at the level of a sector, industry, division of economy, but also the region. It is, therefore, an ability to sell goods in a given industry more effectively than competitors. The effectiveness may result from the use of more targeted pricing strategies, offering of better quality or other utility values.<sup>17</sup>
- macro-competitiveness is the ability of national economies of each country to compete;
- mega-competitiveness is competitiveness at the level of groups of countries or regions of the world.

### 2. *Supply-side vs demand-side competition*:<sup>18</sup>

Competition can be seen from the demand or supply side in economy (the so-called demand side and supply side).

The supply-side competition is associated with efforts taken by representatives of the supply side to attract representatives of the demand side so that they placed their orders with specific manufacturers of goods or services. The effect of this operation is the comparison of the results of these efforts by different representatives of the supply side (competitiveness and competitive gap ex post) or comparison of their intentions for the future (competitiveness and competitive gap ex ante). Such a situation is typical of economies of developed countries, characterized by a surplus of goods. In contrast, the demand-side competitiveness refers to the situation where representatives of the demand side seek the interest of representatives of the supply side (i.e. there is a surplus of demand over supply)<sup>19</sup>.

### 3. *Competition according to the time criterion*:

- ex-post competitiveness – it is generally defined as the current competitive position or competitiveness at the moment. The achieved competitive position is the result of the implemented competitive strategy and the competitive strategy of the rivals.
- ex-ante competitiveness – it is connected with forecasts about the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Flejterski, S. (1984). Istota i mierzenie konkurencyjności międzynarodowej. *Gospodarka Planowa*, 9, pp. 390–394.

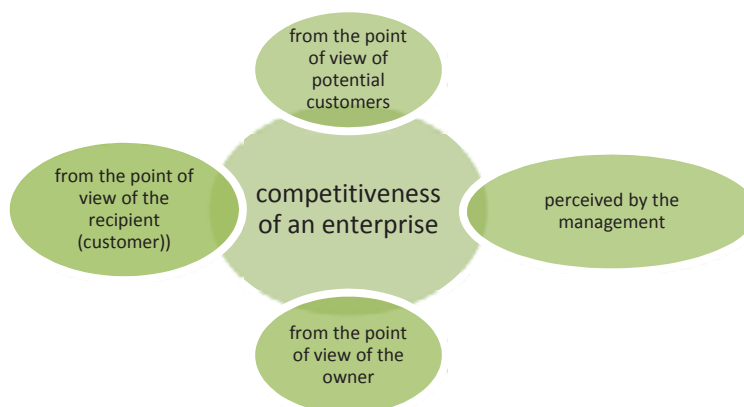
<sup>18</sup> Gorynia M. & Jankowska B. (2008). *Klasy a międzynarodowa konkurencyjność i internacjonalizacja przedsiębiorstw*. Warsaw: Difin. pp. 51–53.

<sup>19</sup> Cienkowski M. Wołowicz, T. (2014). Market reactions of entities to income tax and managerial decision. In *Zeszyty Naukowe Uczelni Warszawskiej im. Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie*, 4 (46), pp. 33-62.

future (prospective) competitive position. It may result from an enterprise's relative (compared to rivals) ability to compete in the future.<sup>20</sup>

1. *Competition by the subject of competition:*
  - a. direct competition – it is competition for a customer in one market between companies offering products/services that are the same or very similar in many respects;
  - b. indirect (substitute) competition – occurs when consumer needs are satisfied by substitute products, while the entities offering goods/services can also operate in other markets;
  - c. potential competition – it is possibility of direct or indirect competition in a given market. It is assumed that the higher the market entry barriers the lower the possibility of any competition.
2. *Classification by the viewpoint (of the stakeholders):*

**Chart 3** Classification of competition by viewpoint



Source: own study based on Pierścionek Z. (2003). *Strategie konkurencji i rozwoju przedsiębiorstwa*. Warsaw: PWN. p. 178.

3. *Classification based on expected and actual results* (usually it is used to describe an enterprise's relationship with broadly understood stakeholders):
  - normal competitiveness – it occurs when the “results of specific interactions equal expectations of the stakeholders participating in these interactions. Then they are not motivated to terminate their relationship with the enterprise. It will continue as long as other, more attractive enterprises, do not take decisive steps to take over existing stakeholders of a given enterprise;

<sup>20</sup> Gorynia M. (2001). Luka konkurencyjna – koncepcja i metodyka badań. In *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej. Organizacja i Zarządzanie*, 32. Poznań: PP [Poznań University of Technology].

- less than normal competitiveness – when the actual results do not meet the expectations. Then stakeholders affected by this situation take actions to withdraw from interactions with a given enterprise and to initiate them with another, a more attractive one;
  - more than normal competitiveness – when the actual results are better than expected. Stakeholders who have grounds for such assessments try to strengthen their relationship with the enterprise. The number of those willing to become new stakeholders will also increase”.
4. *According to D. Faulkner and C. Bowman competitiveness is divided into:*
- basic competitiveness – when a company increases utility value of its products in a manner clearly visible to the consumer, thanks to which a company can achieve a leadership position in the sector (industry);
  - key competitiveness – it is related to skills, qualities that are necessary for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage.<sup>21</sup>
5. *Competition related to the application of the principles of fairness:*<sup>22</sup>

**Chart 4** Fair and unfair competition



Source: own study

## **The Polish statutory law prohibits unfair competition**

The Polish statutory law prohibits unfair competition, which involves, primarily, the following:

- fixing, directly or indirectly, purchase or sale prices or other trading conditions;
- limiting or controlling production, sales, technical progress or investment;
- sharing markets or sources of supply;

<sup>21</sup> Faulkner D. & Bowman C. (1995). *The Essence of Competitive Strategy*. London and New York: Pearson Education.

<sup>22</sup> In Poland the issue of unfair competition is regulated by the Act of 16 April 1993 on combating unfair competition (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] No 47, item 211, as amended).

- applying onerous or dissimilar conditions to similar contracts with third parties, thereby creating different conditions of competition for them;
  - making the conclusion of a contract dependent upon the acceptance or provision of another service by the other party, where this additional service has no material connection or connection in commercial usage with the subject of the contract;
  - limiting access to, or eliminating from the market, enterprises that are not parties to such agreements;
  - collusion between bidders or between these bidders and the tender organizer in respect of conditions for the submission of bids, in particular as regards the scope of work or the price;
  - abuse of a dominant position (it is not prohibited to hold a dominant position) through such activities as: *fixing prices*, involving direct or indirect imposition of unfair pricing or contract conditions (for instance, unfairly low prices or long payment terms); *limiting or controlling the level of production or supply of products in an artificial way*, to the detriment of business partners and consumers; *discrimination*, meaning applying onerous or dissimilar conditions to contracts with business partners, thereby creating different conditions of competition; *tie-in contracts* that make the conclusion of a contract dependent on the acceptance or provision of another service by the other parties; *hampering the development of competition* by counteracting the formation of conditions that are necessary for competition to emerge or develop; *imposing onerous contract conditions* that bring businesses unjustified benefits; dividing the market according to territorial, product or subject criteria.<sup>23</sup>
6. *classification according to the market characteristics* – a detailed description of 5 types of competition in selected areas is provided in the table below:

If we assume that a perfect market economy exists, its sectors should be characterized by perfect or imperfect competition. Perfect competition has the following characteristics:

- prices of individual goods are determined by the relation between demand and supply;
- prices of goods lead to a balance between demand and supply in every sector of the market;

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<sup>23</sup> More information on unfair competition and Polish legislation in this respect [http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/sell-abroad/free-competition/index\\_pl.htm#poland\\_pl\\_competing-fairly](http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/sell-abroad/free-competition/index_pl.htm#poland_pl_competing-fairly) (Retrieved 1 April 2014).



**Table 1** Characteristics of 5 types of competition

| Characteristic                  | Perfect competition             | Imperfect competition | Monopolistic competition           | Oligopoly                                    | Monopoly                   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Number of competitors           | Unlimited                       | Large number          | Many                               | Several                                      | None                       |
| Product                         | Homogeneous                     | Diversified           | Many substitutes                   | Homogeneous, diversified or many substitutes | Homogeneous or diversified |
| Market entry barriers           | None                            | Small                 | There are several significant ones | Many significant ones                        | Limited entry              |
| Knowledge of the market         | Limited                         | Average               | Average                            | Extensive                                    | Considerable               |
| Importance of price competition | Not important (lack of control) | Important             | Important                          | Quite important                              | Not important              |
| Importance of promotion         | Not important                   | Very important        | Important                          | Very important                               | Not important              |
| Examples of markets             | Food products                   | Employee training     | Beauty products                    | Automotive industry                          | Postal service, waterworks |

Source: Flak O. & Głód G. (2012). *Konkurencyjni przetrwają*. Warsaw: Difin. p. 30.

- consumers seek to satisfy their needs;
- market is full of well-defined capital and consumer goods;
- consumers have information relating to the supply of products/services and conditions of their purchase;
- acquisition of goods and services by consumers is associated with complete freedom to choose the conditions, place and time;
- entrepreneurs have reliable information about the needs, expectations and preferences of consumers or buyers;
- by satisfying buyer needs, entrepreneurs seek to maximize profits;
- none of market participants can have a significant impact on the overall volume of demand and supply.<sup>24</sup>

The assumptions of perfect competition, as already noted, are explanatory in nature; it is a starting point for illustrating economic dependencies on the basis of economic sciences.

<sup>24</sup> Flak O. & Głód, G. (2012). *Konkurencyjni przetrwają*. Warsaw: Difin. pp. 3–32.

The behaviour of modern enterprises may be described in a better manner by the model of imperfect competition, in which:

- the aim of consumers is to satisfy their needs to the extent limited by moral and ethical considerations, and standards of behaviour;
- consumers' preferences and choices are very diverse and are subject to continuous, dynamic changes;
- obtaining full information about the supply is connected with certain expenses, therefore, buyers do not have complete information in this regard;
- there is an increase in the importance of the entrepreneur – the entrepreneur determines not only the quantity and price of a product but is also responsible for developing, implementing and modifying a company's development strategy;
- the goal of an enterprise is to achieve a better financial position in relation to competitors and not always to derive profit in absolute value;
- the process of obtaining information about tastes, preferences and needs of customers by an enterprise is quite difficult and at the same time cost-intensive and time-consuming;
- resources of an enterprise can be divided and classified in many ways;
- resources of an enterprise are characterized by diversity and imperfect mobility, as well as varying rarity;
- the environment has a significant impact on the operations and development of an enterprise.<sup>25</sup>

Other elements of the characterized division are:

- monopolistic competition (many manufacturers who have a different share in the total production of the market/sector/industry operate on the market and the products they offer are mutually substitutable, although there are differences between them related, for example, to the packaging. This product diversity allows manufacturers to apply their own price, which is also facilitated by the fact that consumers have incomplete knowledge of the market. Financial barriers to market entry are characterized as rather small and are related to costs of attracting buyers in the first stage of market presence.)
- oligopoly (on the market there is a small number of manufacturers operating in a given sector and they may offer homogeneous or diversified

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 32; cf Krugman P. & Wells, R. (2013). *Microeconomics*. New York: Worth Publishers; Marciniak, S. (Ed.). (2013). *Makro i mikroekonomia. Podstawowe problemy współczesności*. Warsaw: PWN; Varian, H. R. (2009). *Intermediate microeconomics: A modern approach*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

products. Due to the fact that there are only few manufacturers, each of them contributes significantly to the total production. It should be noted, however, that oligopoly is characterized by lack of price competition between participants in that market. Competition between enterprises is held in other areas (quality, advertising, additional services, etc.)

- monopoly (characterized by the fact that many buyers and only one supplier or manufacturer of goods/services, which controls the supply and prices, are present on the market. Market entry barriers are reported to be large (e.g., legislation, patents, costs, etc.) and the product of monopoly is very unique (original).<sup>26</sup>
7. *Competition according to M. J. Stankiewicz* may be investigated according to the following aspects:
- a. arenas of competition,
  - b. subjects of competition,
  - c. object of competition,
  - d. scope (range) of competition,
  - e. nature of competition,
  - f. intensity of competition.<sup>27</sup>

Re a. – An arena of competition is an area where operating entities compete with each other. Competition in this aspect can be divided into:

- market competition – occurs between market participants both on the demand and the supply side (there is competition between buyers and in the group of sellers, but there is no competition between buyers and sellers<sup>28</sup>);
- competition between sectors of the market (typical for enterprises offering substitutes);
- competition between strategic groups (involving companies that compete using similar instruments).

Re b. – The subject of competition refers to determining who the competitors are. Adoption of such an assumption allows distinguishing competition between:

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Dach Z. (2002). *Mikroekonomia*. Cracow: AE [Cracow University of Economics]. pp. 174–181; Png, I. & Lehman, D. (2007). *Managerial Economics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>27</sup> Stankiewicz M. J. (2005). *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstwa*. Toruń: TNOIK Dom Organizatora. p. 18, cf. Byczkowska M. (2011), *Bezpośrednie inwestycje zagraniczne w transferze nowych technologii do regionu lubuskiego w latach 2005-2010 [in:] Funkcjonowanie regionalnego systemu innowacji w województwie lubuskim. Analizy i prognozy*, A. Świadek (Ed.), Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Lubuskiego, Zielona Góra

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Wrzosek W. (1998). *Funkcjonowanie rynku*. Warsaw: PWE.

- blocks of countries,
- national economies,
- companies,
- organizational units within enterprises,
- individual persons in the company.

Re c. – The object of competition – clarification what is the purpose of a competitive struggle:

- fight “at the inputs” is associated with different types of resources (information, know-how, materials, semi-finished products, licenses, location-related benefits, staff, etc.) and takes place in many markets (financial, labour, product, etc.);
- fight “at the outputs” is related to the market acceptance of an offer by consumers.

Re d. – The scope of competition:

- branch range – defines in how many and in which branches of economy an enterprise operates (related, substitutive, complementary, unrelated branches, etc.);
- range of products – describes with how many product range a company competes;
- segment range – refers to the customer profile;
- vertical range – indicates how many links of the collaboration chain are covered by the company;
- geographical range – points to territorial boundaries within which an entity competes;
- competence range – a description of specific skills that are used in the operation of the company.

Re e. – The nature of competition (perfect and imperfect competition).

Re f. – The intensity of competition – can be expressed by means of two interrelated phenomena:

- degree of each seller’s dependence on the conduct of competitors and on the market operation instruments used by them;
- degree of each seller’s capacity and opportunities to exert influence on the conduct of its competitors.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Stankiewicz M. J. *Konkurencyjność*...op. cit. pp. 18–27; cf. Begg D., Vernasca G., Fischer S. & Dornbusch R. (2011). *Economics, 10th edition*, New York: McGraw-Hill.; Czarny E. (2005). *Mikroekonomia*. Warsaw: PWE; Zalegała T. (2001). *Mikroekonomia współczesna*. Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski [University of Warsaw]; Czyrka K. (2013), *Scorecard Balanced- modern public sector management tool*, Инновационное развитие России: условия, противоречия, приоритеты, том II, Moscow.

## Conclusions

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The above characterization does not exhaust all the classifications available in the pertinent literature<sup>30</sup>. The approach to competitiveness has changed over the years. This results, among other things, from a redefinition of factors affecting strategies of competition and as a consequence competitiveness of the entities.

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<sup>30</sup> More information about the types of competition can be found in: Kirzner, I. (2010). *Konkurencja i przedsiębiorczość*. Warsaw: Fijor Publishing; Bossak J.W. (2006). *Systemy gospodarcze a globalna konkurencja*. Warsaw: SGH; Bossak J.W. (2013). *Konkurencja i współpraca międzynarodowa*. Warsaw: Difin; Armentano D. T. (2007). *Antitrust: The Case for Repeal (3rd ed.)*. Ludwig von Mises Institute; Świtalski W. (2005). *Innowacje i konkurencyjność*. Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski [University of Warsaw]; Olczyk M. (2008). *Konkurencyjność. Teoria i praktyka*. Warsaw: CeDeWu.

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